

**EDITORIAL:**

**FROM INCEPTION TO INSTITUTION: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE PAKISTAN PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY**

Afzal Javed, Ghulam Rasool, Khalid A Mufti, Abdul Malik, M Iqbal Afridi

CORRESPONDENCE: DR AFZAL JAVED *SI, OBE*

Email: afzalj@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT**

The Pakistan Psychiatric Society (PPS), established amid growing concerns for mental health in the 1960s, has emerged as a driving force in the development of psychiatric services in Pakistan. Budding from the foundational efforts by pioneering psychiatrists in the 1960s, its formal establishment in 1973 marked a turning point in the organised promotion of mental health. Over the decades, PPS has contributed significantly to policy advocacy, professional training, public awareness, and international collaboration. Despite facing political turmoil and limited resources, the society has maintained its momentum through institutional resilience and strategic leadership. This historical account outlines the society's evolution, key organisational milestones, and its ongoing role in shaping psychiatric education, practice, and research in Pakistan. The trajectory of PPS reflects broader shifts in mental health priorities and serves as a testament to sustained professional commitment in the currently challenging national and global mental health landscape.

**KEYWORDS**

Health Policy; Health Priorities; Leadership; Mental Health; Mental Health Services; Pakistan; Psychiatric Association; Psychiatrists.

Establishment of the Pakistan Psychiatric Society is a story of struggle and dedication that spreads over years. Following account is taken from brief descriptions about the history of Pakistan Psychiatry Society published in different souvenirs at various conferences and chapters from the book 'Psychiatry in Pakistan' (ed) S Haroon Ahmed, Qazi Irshad Ahmad & Inam ur Rehman Khan published in 1988 and a chapter by S Haroon Ahmed as an expanded version from the book "Current State of Psychiatry in Pakistan" (ed) IAK Tareen, M Sharif Chaudhry & Afzal Javed published in 1994.

It is a source of much pleasure to recognise the support of the Pakistan Medical Association for allowing an opportunity to psychiatrists to meet during their meetings. During one of the bigger ventures of Pakistan Medical Association, the joint meeting of Pakistan Medical Association and British Medical Association, few psychiatrists met to discuss the possibility of organising a platform in December 1966 using the hospitality of Dr Afzal Habib. Besides the host, those present included Dr. G.A. Asghar, Dr. Zaki Hasan, Dr. H.A.G. Kazi, Dr. Iftikhar Akther, Dr. Raihana Beg, Dr Rashid Chaudhry & Dr S Haroon Ahmed. Dr. Farrukh Hashmi from U.K. also attended.

The salient features of these discussions focused on the following points:

- In developing countries where a variety of killing and crippling diseases are still rampant, mental illnesses are given the lowest priority. It is less likely that the planners can be attracted, or convinced, to make resources available for those who suffer silently.
- There are very few psychiatrists in Pakistan and the enormity of the problem was clearly visible to all of us.
- We, ourselves, were also using terms as Neuropsychiatry, Neuro-physician and Mental Health rather than using the term psychiatrists.

This meeting took a historic decision to form a committee and to organise a formal group of psychiatrists. Dr S Haroon Ahmed was nominated convenor of this committee and was assigned the task of drawing the policy, aims and objectives for this newly formed group including calling further meetings to develop consensus from the psychiatrists from both the provinces of Pakistan for the functioning of this group.

Everyone was enthusiastic, but to various colleagues the objectives remained hazy, but these meetings at least brought all psychiatrists together. The initial fears and apprehensions were ironed out and this group became a friendly crowd. It is worth quoting one of the aims and objectives that provided directions for the future - to inculcate brotherly feelings and spirit of comradeship among fellow psychiatrists. In time, everyone who attended these initial meetings came to be convinced that this is an organisation which is not established to promote a person or personality but was created to improve the service of psychiatry.

The most significant policy perception was that the planners and providers of health will never appreciate the nature and size of the mental health problems, and the psychiatrists will have to approach it differently first, with our own medical profession which is to be made aware through continuing education. During that time, there existed no formal teaching of psychiatry in medical colleges except for a few at Dow Medical College (Karachi) and King Edward Medical College (Lahore). The group, therefore, decided to create awareness and project their health needs in the hope that public opinion can also take the cause more effectively than the isolated cry of psychiatrists.

#### **Milestones in the formation of Pakistan Psychiatric Society**

- During the PMA Conference, on November 16, 1968, at Dhaka a meeting of Psychiatrists in East Pakistan and those attending from West Pakistan was held.
- An ad hoc general body meeting of the Pakistan Psychiatric Society was held on Saturday March 1, 1969, at the P.M.A. House, Garden Road, Karachi. Col. M.H. Shah was in the Chair. Dr. S.M. Afzal Habib was nominated as the Proposed president of the first committee along with other office bearers (Two Vice Presidents - Dr. N.D. Chaudhary (East Pakistan) & Dr. Rashid Chaudhry (West Pakistan) & Dr. Iftikhar Akther (West Pakistan) as Secretary General. Dr S Haroon Ahmed was continued as convenor to support this adhoc committee.
- The Society was formally registered on 17th February 1973 under the Registration of Societies Act XXI of 1860 at Karachi.
- At a first general body meeting (after the registration of PPS) on December 8, 1973, Dr. Afzal Habib's resignation was accepted & Prof Muhammad Rashid Chaudry, senior Vice President was elected as President and Dr. M. Shafique as senior Vice President. Dr. Haider Ali Kazi was elected as Vice President and Dr. S. Haroon Ahmed as Secretary General. The meeting was attended by seventeen psychiatrists from all over Pakistan.

During the PMA Conference, on November 16, 1968, at Dhaka a meeting of Psychiatrists in East Pakistan and those attending from West Pakistan was held. It was attended by Dr. N.D. Chaudhry (East Pakistan), Dr. R. Rehman, (East Pakistan) Dr. Samad (East Pakistan), Dr. Fakhruddin (East Pakistan), Dr. Rashid Chaudhry, (West Pakistan), Dr. Zaki Hasan, (West Pakistan) Dr. Iftikhar Akther (West Pakistan) and Dr. S. Haroon Ahmed (West Pakistan).

The agenda included discussions about the proposed constitution and suggestions for the office bearers to be finalized in a General Body Meeting in Karachi. It was also decided that in view of the difficulties the members from East Pakistan may not be able to participate, but a similar meeting should be held in Karachi inviting members from West Pakistan.

As decided and in continuation of the meeting held at Dhaka, on 16th November, 1968, a meeting of the Pakistan Psychiatric Society was held on Saturday March 1, 1969, at the P.M.A. House, Garden Road, Karachi.

Col. M.H. Shah was in the Chair and the following members attended:

- |                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Col. M.H. Shah  | 2. Dr. Afzal Habib    |
| 3. Dr. G.A. Asghar | 4. Dr. K. Zaki Hasan. |

- |                                 |                      |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| 5. Dr. Iftikhar Akther          | 6. Dr. Nayyer Azam   |
| 7. Dr. Riahana Beg              | 8. Dr. Zainab Hasan  |
| 9. Dr. Zaheer Khan              | 10. Dr. Anwar Balkhi |
| 11. Dr. Ijlal Mazhari           | 12. Dr. Adam Memon   |
| 13. Dr. Haroon Ahmed (Convenor) |                      |

A brief resume of the decisions taken in previous meetings to form the Pakistan Psychiatric Society and of the subsequent efforts in this direction, was given by Dr. S Haroon Ahmed. The work of the ad-hoc committee and the decisions of the meeting held in November 1968 at Dhaka was also presented. This followed the discussion on the next item on the agenda i.e., the election of the ad hoc office bearers for the committee till PPS is registered.

Dr. Adam Memon proposed the name of Col. M.H. Shah as the President. Despite a popular demand, he withdrew his name & the following office bearers were then unanimously elected as presented to the house. The proposals for the posts were made in a friendly atmosphere and accepted in the same spirit. Although the name of Dr S Haroon Ahmed was not noted in these discussions, everyone considered him as a convenor of this new committee for its future work.

President.	Dr. S.M. Afzal Habib
Vice President.	Dr. N.D. Chaudhary (East Pakistan)
Vice president.	Dr. M Rashid Chaudhry (West Pakistan)
Secretary General.	Dr. Iftikhar Akther (West Pakistan)
Joint Secretary.	Dr. R. Rehman (East Pakistan)
Treasurers.	Dr. Rehana Baig. (West Pakistan)
Five Members.	Dr. Samad (East Pakistan)
	Dr. Farhana Hussain (East Pakistan)
	Dr. Tahir Chaudhary (East Pakistan)
	Dr. G. A. Asghar (West Pakistan)
	Dr. K. Zaki Hasan. (West Pakistan)

The discussion on the future activities was brief and it was left to the executive committee to chalk out a plan. The meeting was adjourned with a vote of thanks to Col. M.H. Shah who played an important role in bringing psychiatrists together.

Unfortunately, there was a big gap of around four years from 1969 – 1973 for any further activities. During this period the only activity was that Dr. Iftikhar Akhter conceived and produced our beautiful logo. Later, Dr. Iftikhar Akhter went to U.K. for his membership in 1971. Then Dr. Afzal Habib who was well settled in Pakistan also re-migrated to USA. The country was regrettably passing through severe political crises which eventually led to the greatest tragedy, and we lost Eastern Wing and all the members there.

Sadly, society did not have any major activities during a period from 1969 to 1973 due to the uncertain political situation in the country. However, a major milestone in the formation of Pakistan Psychiatric Society was achieved by getting it registered on 17th February 1973 under Registration Act XXI of 1860. The formal registration of the society helped in the revival of further activities. Prof Haroon Ahmed then approached Prof. M. Rashid Chaudhry, the vice president, to call a meeting of psychiatrists. Four years after its last meeting, the group met on December 8, 1973. Dr. Afzal Habib's resignation was accepted with a vote of thanks for his contributions and efforts for the establishment of society. At this meeting Dr. Rashid Choudhry, Senior Vice President was elected as President and Dr. M. Shafique as senior Vice President and

Dr. H. A. Kazi Vice President. Dr. S. Haroon Ahmed as Secretary General. The meeting was attended by seventeen psychiatrists which accounted to 80% of total membership from all over Pakistan.

In 1988 came a crucial period of constitutional amendment for shifting/rotating the head-quarter. The issue was discussed and debated earlier during many executive committee and general body meetings. It was the first time that the matter was taken to court. However, the issue was settled, and the court case was withdrawn with mutual consent in the best interest of the organization.

In 1990 constitutional amendments were made for rotating our head-quarter & PPS remained as active, thriving and going forward in facilitating teaching, training, research and innovative methods to reach the unreached through primary health care and most important of all projecting the cause of psychiatry, mental health and behavioral medicine.

It is heartening to note that ever since there has been no looking back. PPS started having regular annual conferences and biennial international conferences. In between, the continuing education program especially for family physicians in small towns and big cities of Pakistan were undertaken by young and energetic psychiatrists.

Pakistan Psychiatric Society has to re-register under the Societies Act and PPS was thus registered in Quetta on 31 December 2015 and required annual renewals.

The official logo of the PPS was also developed and added to the PPS website [www.ppspk](http://www.ppspk)

The vision, mission and strategic plan along with Special Interest Groups (<https://ppspk.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Special-Interests-Group.pdf>) were developed in the tenure 2019-2020, under the presidency of Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Afridi, which are as follows:

**The vision:**

“Promotion of Mental Health, professionalism, ethically sound care for patients & their caregivers, teaching & training along with research & development in the field of Psychiatry globally in liaison with the global community.” The vision focused five areas:

- Mental Health
- Professionalism
- Ethically Sound Care for Patients & Caregivers
- Teaching & Training
- Research & Development

**The Mission:**

PPS is committed to:

- Highest level of compassionate, specialised and effective care to psychiatric patients.
- Facilitate research activities at all levels.
- Education and Dissemination of knowledge regarding Mental Health education.
- Multidisciplinary training based on Biopsychosocial model.

**Journal of Pakistan Psychiatric Society (JPPS)**

JPPS was founded in 2004 by Prof. Amin Gadit and Prof. Dr. Saeed Farooq formally published it from Peshawar till 2014. In the beginning it was published biannually, but now it is regularly published quarterly, simultaneously in print (ISSN: 1726-8710) and online (ISSN: 2224-8897).

After 2014 it had been published from Faisalabad under the chief editorship of Prof. Dr. Mowadat Hussain Rana; since 2021 Prof. M. Iqbal Afridi has been serving as the Editor-in-Chief.

JPPS is indexed in WHO Index Medicus (IMEMR) and also recognized by HEC (Higher Education Commission), PMDC (Pakistan Medical & Dental Council) and CPSP (College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan). It is pertinent to note that JPPS have been encouraging and facilitating research at all levels and in all fields of Psychiatry and Mental Health, that too, without any publication, processing and subscription fees for Mental Health Professionals from Pakistan and abroad.

### **Presidents of PPS**

#### Important dates:

- **1<sup>st</sup> March 1969:** Dr. S.M. Afzal Habib was nominated as the president of the first proposed ad hoc committee of PPS along with other office bearers [Two Vice Presidents - Dr. N.D. Chaudhary (East Pakistan) & Dr. Rashid Chaudhry (West Pakistan) & Dr. Iftikhar Akther (West Pakistan) as Secretary General. Dr. S. Haroon Ahmed was continued as convenor to support this ad hoc committee].
- **17<sup>th</sup> February 1973:** The Society was formally registered under the Registration of Societies Act XXI of 1860 at Karachi.
- **8<sup>th</sup> December 1973:** At its first general body meeting (after the registration of PPS), Dr. Afzal Habib's resignation was accepted & Prof Muhammad Rashid Chaudry, senior Vice President was elected as the President of PPS.

#### **List of Presidents of PPS:**

<b>TENURE</b>	<b>NAME</b>
1969	Dr. S. M. Afzal Habib, President of First Ad hoc Committee.
1973 -1980	Prof. Muhammad Rashid Chaudry was elected President of PPS after the registration of PPS.
1981-1982	Prof. Zaki Hasan
1982-1984	Prof. M. Shafique
1985-1986	Prof. Hyder Ali Kazi
1988 -1990	Prof. S. Haroon Ahmed, Dr. Habib Ullah Chaudhry interim President as S Haroon Ahmed resigned
1991-1992	Prof. I. A. K. Tareen
1993-1994	Prof. M. Sharif Chaudhry
1995-1996	Prof. Ijaz Haider
1997-1998	Prof. M. H. Mubashar
1999-2000	Prof. Khalida Tareen
2001-2002	Prof. Khalid A. Mufti
2003-2004	Prof. Musarrat Hussain
2005-2006	Prof. A. Malik Achakzai
2007-2008	Prof. M. Riaz Bhatti
2009-2010	Prof. Haroon Rashid Chaudhry (Dr. Khalid Mughal acting president after death of Prof Haroon Rashid Chaudhry from Oct 2010-Dec 2010).
2011-2012	Prof. Rizwan Taj
2013-2014	Prof. Mazhar Malik
2015-2016	Prof. S. Muhammad Sultan
2017-2018	Prof. Dr. Nasar Syed Khan
2019-2020	Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Afridi
2021-2022	Prof. Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad Dogar
2023-2024	Prof. Dr. Ghulam Rasool
2024-2026	Prof. Wajid Ali Akhonzada

### **International Psychiatric Conferences organised by PPS**

The first psychiatric conference was held under the chairmanship of Dr. Haroon Ahmed.

As there were only 25-30 psychiatrists in the country at that time, it was decided to co-opt college of family physicians whose then President Dr. S. H. Naqvi was a Pro Psychiatry family physician. A joint first International psychiatric conference and first national convention of family physician was held on 11-12 and 13 April 2005; it was a big show where representatives of Royal College of Psychiatry and World Psychiatry Association also participated.



First International Psychiatry Conference held at Karachi 1975

From right to left: Prof. Rashid Chaudhry, Prof. S. Haroon Ahmed, Dr. Hashmi of College of family Physician, Chief Justice Sindh.

#### International Psychiatric Conferences

PPS INTERNATONAL CONFERENCE	VENUE/CITY	DATE
1 <sup>st</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Karachi	1975
2 <sup>nd</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Lahore	1978
3 <sup>rd</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Karachi	1980
4 <sup>th</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Peshawar	1984
6 <sup>th</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Lahore	1986
7 <sup>th</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Karachi	1988
8 <sup>th</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Rawalpindi	1990
9 <sup>th</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Peshawar	1992
10 <sup>th</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Lahore	1994
11 <sup>th</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Karachi	1996
12 <sup>th</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Quetta	1998
13 <sup>th</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Rawalpindi	2001
14 <sup>th</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Peshawar	2003
15 <sup>th</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Karachi	2005
16 <sup>th</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Lahore	2006
17 <sup>th</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Quetta	2008
18 <sup>th</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Lahore	2010
19 <sup>th</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Abbottabad (Islamabad)	2012
20 <sup>th</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Karachi	2014
21 <sup>st</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Quetta	2016
22 <sup>nd</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Lahore	2018
23 <sup>rd</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Peshawar	2022
24 <sup>th</sup> International Psychiatry Conference	Islamabad	2024



### National Psychiatric Conferences

PPS has also been organising national conferences, especially between its international conferences. The information available is limited as we could not get additional details about dates of early meetings.

PPS NATONAL CONFERENCE	VENUE/CITY	DATE
1 <sup>st</sup> National Psychiatry Conference		
2 <sup>nd</sup> National Psychiatry Conference		
3 <sup>rd</sup> National Psychiatry Conference		
4 <sup>th</sup> National Psychiatry Conference		
5 <sup>th</sup> National Psychiatry Conference		
6 <sup>th</sup> National Psychiatry Conference		
7 <sup>th</sup> National Psychiatry Conference		
8 <sup>th</sup> National Psychiatry Conference	Hyderabad	1984
9 <sup>th</sup> National Psychiatry Conference		
10 <sup>th</sup> National Psychiatry Conference		
11 <sup>th</sup> National Psychiatry Conference	Larkana	1995
12 <sup>th</sup> National Psychiatry Conference		
13 <sup>th</sup> National Psychiatry Conference	Abbottabad	1999
14 <sup>th</sup> National Psychiatry Conference	Bahawalpur	2002
15 <sup>th</sup> National Psychiatry Conference	Islamabad	2004
16 <sup>th</sup> National Psychiatry Conference	Faisalabad	2005
17 <sup>th</sup> National Psychiatry Conference		
18 <sup>th</sup> National Psychiatry Conference	Bhurban	2009
19 <sup>th</sup> National Psychiatry Conference	Muzaffarabad	2010
20 <sup>th</sup> National Psychiatry Conference	Faisalabad	2014
21 <sup>st</sup> National Psychiatry Conference		
22 <sup>nd</sup> National Psychiatry Conference	Jamshoro	2017
23 <sup>rd</sup> National Psychiatry Conference	Swat	2019
24 <sup>th</sup> National Psychiatry Conference	Faisalabad (Lahore)	2021
25 <sup>th</sup> National Psychiatric Conference	Sukkur	2023

Pakistan Psychiatric Society also supported many other international conferences, events and meeting in collaboration with international organisations.

Royal College of Psychiatrists (UK) Regional meeting	1984	Islamabad
World Psychiatric Association Regional meetings	1996, 2004	Lahore
World Psychiatric Association Thematic meetings	2022, 2023	Lahore & Karachi
World Islamic Association for Mental Health	1991	Lahore
SAARC Psychiatric Federation's inaugural meeting	2004	Lahore
Asian Federation of Psychiatric Association's launch	2005	Lahore

### Acknowledgements

We are grateful to various members and previous office bearers of PPS for their help and support for the preparation of this report. Special thanks to Prof. S. Haroon Ahmad for his personal communication and sharing material about the history. His reflections were also published in Conference books in 2014 & in the Pakistan Journal of Psychiatric Society in 2023.

### Further Readings:

Amin A. Muhammad Gadit (2007). Psychiatry in Pakistan: 1947-2006: A new balance sheet.

J Pak Med Assoc. 57:9:453-463

Javed A, Khan MN, Nasar A, Rasheed A. (2020)Mental healthcare in Pakistan. Taiwan J Psychiatry 2020; 34:6-14

Mubashar MH & Saeed K (2001). Development of mental health services in Pakistan. Eastern Mediterranean Health. 7: 3: 392-396

Mubashar MH. (2003) Development of mental health services in Pakistan. Int Psychiatry. 2003 1;1(1):11-13. PMID: 31507653; PMCID: PMC6735234.

Shafique M. (1995) Psychiatric Bulletin 19: 567-70

Afridi MI. (2008) Mental Health: Priorities in Pakistan” Editorial in J Pak Med Assoc Vol: 58.No.5: 225-226.  
[http://jpma.org.pk/full\\_article\\_text.php?article\\_id=1386](http://jpma.org.pk/full_article_text.php?article_id=1386)

Psychiatry in Pakistan (1988)(ed) S. Haroon Ahmed, Qazi Irshad Ahmad & Inam ur Rehman Khan.  
Published at 7th International Conference of Pakistan Psychiatric Society. Karachi

Current State of Psychiatry in Pakistan (1994)(ed) I. A. K. Tareen, M Sharif Chaudhry & Afzal Javed  
Published at 10th International Conference of Pakistan Psychiatric Society. Lahore

History of Pakistan Psychiatry Society (2014) Pakistan Psychiatry Society: a reflection of early years  
Dr. S. Haroon Ahmed & Dr. Raza Rehman. Published at 20th International Conference of Pakistan  
Psychiatric Society. Karachi

Dr. S. Haroon Ahmed Pakistan Psychiatric Society: A reflection of early years. J Pak Psychiatr Soc. 20: 04:38-41