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Pakistani Professors Join MIT's J-PAL Network

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Two professors from Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) have achieved a historic milestone by becoming the first academics from Pakistan to join the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Their appointment underscores Pakistan's growing presence in international research and policymaking.

Leading Pakistani Scholars Recognized

Dr. Ali Cheema, Vice Chancellor of LUMS, is a renowned professor of economics and

politics. He co-founded the Mahbub ul Haq Research Center and has conducted extensive work in the fields of political economy, governance, and development. Dr. Farah Said, an associate professor of economics at LUMS, has specialized in gender, labor markets, and poverty alleviation. Her research includes multiple randomized controlled trials that assess empowerment and development programs.

Their selection to J-PAL places them among a global network of distinguished scholars shaping policy through evidence-based research. J-PAL was founded by Nobel laureates Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo and has become a leading voice in strategies to fight poverty. The institution's network of affiliated professors includes world-class economists, including several Nobel Prize winners.

Global Recognition for Pakistani Research

The work of both Dr. Cheema and Dr. Said has been widely published in highly regarded academic journals such as the *Journal of Political Economy*, *American Political Science Review*, *Science*, *Economic Journal*, and *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*. Their recognition by MIT reflects years of commitment to addressing complex social and economic issues, particularly those affecting developing countries.

In statements following the announcement, the professors expressed gratitude to their colleagues, co-authors, and students for their support. They emphasized that this recognition is not only a personal achievement but also a moment of pride for Pakistan's higher education and research community.

A Rising Academic Generation in Pakistan

Both scholars highlighted that more Pakistani-origin academics are entering international platforms and contributing significantly to global debates on development and governance. They pointed to a new generation of researchers in Pakistan who are raising important questions about why systems often fail to meet public needs.

Their appointment, they noted, is a reminder that Pakistani scholars are increasingly shaping discussions on policy solutions for some of the world's most pressing challenges. It also signals the strengthening of Pakistan's role in global research networks.

This recognition of LUMS professors by MIT is seen as an important step for Pakistan's academic institutions, reflecting the country's potential to contribute knowledge and solutions to the global stage.

