**Extensions**

**Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.**

[Saleem Qamar Butt](https://www.nation.com.pk/columnist/saleem-qamar-butt)

May 08, 2024

The common irritant that always acts as an eyesore, potential fire hazard, and indicator of bad discipline is the electrical extension cables used by my kids with their laptops, computers, cell phones, and other electronics; despite the availability of electric sockets in every nook and corner of the house that we live in. The extension cables spread all over the floors are indicative of a propensity to either work sitting on the bed, lying over living room sofas, or sitting around the dining table instead of the study table or a defined workstation in the house; all in the name of extra luxury relaxed homely environment and carefree attitude…parents are expected to keep the things tidy, neat and in place as fairly grown up kids continue to demonstrate their sense of freedom at home with undue extra luxury at the cost of clutter.

The often repeated grant of extension to some civil/ military bureaucrats and now even the similar attempts for the superior judiciary in my view have a similar connotation. It clutters the system of promotion, and smooth functioning of a department, kills progressiveness and fresh talent and minds, acts as a clog, and proves ultimately self-serving and ill motives of the extension givers and takers. Nevertheless, making a mockery of the Constitution by using it as a nose of wax and mocking the laws and norms of a civilised society.

[Lesco collects over Rs3.81m from 92 defaulters in 24 hours](https://www.nation.com.pk/13-May-2024/lesco-collects-over-rs3-81m-from-92-defaulters-in-24-hours)

It is a well-established natural phenomenon that all crops and fruit-bearing trees after reaching their full bloom are put to harvest and preparation starts afresh for the next season. Every new human generation is expected to be more agile, and better equipped with knowledge and expertise to make fresh strides in leaps and bounds for further progress in new fields of science, technology, literature, arts and crafts, and all other walks of life. Had that not been the case, man would not have landed on the Moon and now going farther than Mars and deeper into outer space. For the younger generation, an easy-to-understand example is the everyday revolution in cell phones, computers, and now Artificial Intelligence products baffling everyone. Could there have been such rapid progress in the medical sciences and other technological fields had it been choked by extensions and killing the new talented generations gasping for opportunities and jobs?

The system of governance in Pakistan inherited from colonial masters had changed only a little; therefore, the administrative services, lame duck economy, slowest and mostly wanting judicial system, bad policing, pitiable education system, depleting irrigation and primitive agriculture system, poor law and order and wanting intelligence agencies’ accomplishments…all point towards one prime weakness. And that is not giving ways to fresh, honest, and competent minds to replace the colonial bunged systems. There is nothing and no one indispensable in this world and all graveyards are full of those who in their prime time claimed and behaved as irreplaceable. It goes without saying that everyone’s job is important, but no one is indispensable. The indispensable first step to getting the things you want out of life is this: decide what you want. According to Carl Von Clausewitz, “Two qualities are indispensable: first, an intellect that, even in the darkest hour, retains some glimmerings of the inner light which leads to truth; and second, the courage to follow this faint light wherever it may lead.”

[Four involved in murder of cops killed in encounter](https://www.nation.com.pk/13-May-2024/four-involved-in-murder-of-cops-killed-in-encounter)

It is said that public confidence in the integrity of the Government is indispensable to faith in democracy; and when we lose faith in the system, we have lost faith in everything we fight and spend for. Adlai Stevenson said, “The hardest thing about any political campaign is how to win without proving that you are unworthy of winning.” Winston Churchill stated, “No part of the education of a politician is more indispensable than the fighting of elections.” These quotes aptly describe Pakistani political mosaics. Or perhaps, Martin Luther King Jr said it best about what is valid for our rulers, “Cowardice asks the question, is it safe? Expediency asks the question, is it politic? Vanity asks the question, is it popular? But conscience asks the question, is it right? And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but one must take it because it is right.” It is time that the ruling elite in Pakistan takes a position that is right for the people and the country and not what is politically expedient. The missing national unity and cohesion due to political polarisation and consequent instability has remained Pakistan’s lingering challenge in the last more than seven decades, which tragically resulted in loss of East Pakistan.

[CPWB chairperson pays tribute to mothers](https://www.nation.com.pk/13-May-2024/cpwb-chairperson-pays-tribute-to-mothers)

Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything. Honest disagreement is often a good sign of progress. Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success. Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family. Let’s not create stagnant ponds for easy fishing and let the brooks flow. Let’s not mistreat our constitution and be the law abiding citizens instead of bending the law by narcissistic bloopers like extensions. Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.

**Saleem Qamar Butt**

The writer is a retired senior army officer with experience in international relations, military diplomacy and analysis of geo-political and strategic security issues.