**An Abnormal State**

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The mixed feelings of patriotism and love for the motherland vis-à-vis the consistent bad governance leading to confrontation by a heap of some explicable and more inexplicable complexities and challenges by Pakistan for the last seven decades makes it look like an Abnormal State. “Someone or something that is abnormal is unusual, especially in a way that is worrying”. To facilitate understanding of the moot point, let me take help by referring to my favourite country where I had spent some time in learning the language, culture and the most modern yet moderate Japan. The term ‘abnormal’ has frequently been used to describe post-war Japan. Together with the idea that the country will, or should have to, ‘normalise’ its foreign and security policy, it has been reproduced in both academia and Japanese society. Why is Japan branded as ‘abnormal’, and from where does the desire to ‘normalise’ it come? According to Linus Hagström(Swedish Institute of International Affairs), “Drawing on a relational concept of identity, and the distinction between norm and exception, the ‘abnormality– normalisation nexus’ can be understood in terms of three identityproducing processes: (1) the process whereby the Japanese Self is socialised in US/‘Western’ norms, ultimately constructing it as an Other in the international system; (2) the process whereby the Japanese Self imagines itself as ‘legitimately exceptional’ (what is called ‘exceptionalisation’), but also ‘illegitimately abnormal’ — both of which are epitomised by Japan’s ‘pacifism’; and (3) the process whereby both the Self’s ‘negative abnormality’ and China/ Asia are securitised in attempts to realise a more ‘normal’ (or supernormal) Japanese Self.

[District & sessions judge visits Kot Dhigano forest](https://www.nation.com.pk/20-Nov-2023/district-sessions-judge-visits-kot-dhigano-forest)

Wendy Davidson’s expression of hope notwithstanding, the label ‘abnormal’ continues to be invoked quite unwittingly in many different contexts. States and policies, for instance, are sometimes referred to as ‘abnormal’, and in International Relations (IR) research, the label has been used most persistently to describe post-war Japan and its foreign and security policy. The similarities as well as divergences between Japan and Pakistan’s abnormalities are worth undertaking a deeper look by academia in Pakistan; of course beyond the purview of a column.

Two countries which were reduced to a rubble at the end of WWII i.e. Germany and Japan, despite so many restrictions imposed on both, sprang back and amazed the world by the rapid technological, economic and a comprehensive self defence security potential, which should serve as a good model to identify Pakistan’s similar challenges and solutions. Both Japan and Germany, despite differences in DNA, national histories, culture, and martial aspirations under ultra-nationalism, offer good pointers to a country like Pakistan, and offer a lot to learn and emulate. The same has been discussed at length in my earlier published pieces, “Dwindling Institutions of Mothers and Teachers”, “Decay of Morality”, and “Politics sans National Interests”.

[‘Lady gang’ involved in stealing on metro bus service busted](https://www.nation.com.pk/20-Nov-2023/lady-gang-involved-in-stealing-on-metro-bus-service-busted)

The tumultuous history of politics and the successes as well as failures of the civil, military and hybrid governments in Pakistan in the last seven decades need to be evaluated keeping in view the features and fundamentals of the state governance especially with regards to the achievement of vital and non-vital national interest. For Pakistani politicians and rulers, keeping the people deprived and dependent, always gasping for basic essentials of life and keeping them embroiled in Thana(police station), Katchehry(lower courts) and patwari(land record office) is the tactic to stay in power. When occupying both houses of the parliament, the elite sticks to passing bills and ordinances to get clean slate on all the crimes committed and further strengthen the unholy rule as a strategy, which has been followed throughout in Pakistani political history. We don’t have to go far to find examples i.e. the bills and ordinances passed by the just packed up PDM Government in the last year and half says all about it and the past is equally unpleasant, especially with respect to the NROs( national reconciliation ordinances) given as a reprieve to the corrupt people. However, for the majority of Pakistani people, it has remained a game of power politics sans national interests. Hardly any government, political, military ruler or any state institution would score passing marks when tested on the touchstone of above stated factors related to the subjects of politics, state governance and achievement of national interests, A comparative graph showing progress on the same elements and in the same period by Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, China, Japan, Germany and Israel may prove very instructive and might as well act as a mirror to the ever boisterous and conceited ruling elite of Pakistan. Every man on the street as well as on the social/ electronic media has a dozen solutions for every problem the state of Pakistan is facing; however, only the highly paid wizards have a dozen problems for every possible solution written on the walls. Is it a problem of competence or character that keeps Pakistan always struggling in a vortex? Worthy readers may like to revisit my pieces published in February 2019 titled “Leadership: Is Competence or Character More Important? ; And “A Challenged State”, published in April 2021.

[KP govt decides to make universities self-sufficient](https://www.nation.com.pk/20-Nov-2023/kp-govt-decides-to-make-universities-self-sufficient)

A couple of days ago, I had an opportunity to meet a number of people from different walks of life in a social gathering. The majority of people looked apprehensive about the politico- economic stability and security of Pakistan including badly traumatised wellbeing of the people without any ray of hope in sight. However, the elite in the gathering was seen unsurprisingly busy in exclusive whispering mode, patting each other’s back and assuring ‘Sab Accha’/ ‘all ok’. Nevertheless, the missing writ of the law and prevalent oppression by the state was a commonly agreed top trending concern there and perhaps so is the case everywhere in Pakistan. The earlier this public disquiet is addressed, the sooner Pakistan shall take a first few steps towards becoming a normal state. “You told me once that we shall be judged by our intentions, not by our accomplishments. But we must intend to accomplish— not sit intending on a chair.”

[Textile units underperform as workers lack training](https://www.nation.com.pk/20-Nov-2023/textile-units-underperform-as-workers-lack-training)

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