**The Pressure Cooker Society**

**The feelings of being pressed, stressed and pushed are now a commonplace.**

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The first steam-powered pressure cooker was invented in 1679 by a French physicist named Denis Papin. The device called the digester, used steam pressure to cook food quickly and efficiently. The early digester was a large and cum­bersome machine, requiring manual operation and careful attention to avoid explosions. The term pressure cooker can also be used as an allegory to de­scribe any situation, environment, job, assignment, obligation or a rela­tionship, in which a person is faced with urgent responsibilities or demands by other people, constant deadlines, or a hectic work schedule. The feelings of being pressed, stressed and pushed are now a commonplace i.e. in our careers, relationship, parenting etc.

As envisaged by the nation’s found­ing father, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Pak­istan is a nation-state, constitutionally a democratic parliamentary republic. The national cabinet, led by the Prime Minister of Pakistan has executive power and the president is the head of state elected by the Electoral Col­lege. After Pakistan’s first ever gener­al elections, the 1973 Constitution was created by an elected Parliament. The Constitution declared Pakistan an Is­lamic Republic and Islam as the state religion. However, during its chequered history of the last 76 years, The Demo­cratic Republic of Pakistan (Islami Jam­hooria Pakistan) has demonstrated that it has neither been fully democrat­ic nor wholly Islamic but just in name; and that is where the pressure in Paki­stani society starts building up.

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The absence of real democracy has more often than not resulted in sup­pression, oppression and tyranny that mostly created chaos, frustration, anxi­ety and anger, causing rebellion, revolt, extremism and terrorism; which the state of Pakistan has ceaselessly been confronted with. The frequent dis­missal of elected governments and the elected prime ministers under charg­es of corruption and inefficiency who in turn always complained about be­ing not wholly independent and fully empowered is too well known to be ex­plained. The consequent political and economic instability has kept the coun­try struggling on all the internal and ex­ternal fronts with ever multiplying and insuperable challenges. In such crip­pling national environment, the peo­ple of Pakistan are constantly faced with poverty, unemployment, poor ed­ucation standards, pitiable health care, highly disturbed security environment, missing justice, slaying inflation, and unaffordable energy prices has driven the public crazy and suffering from a swarm of socio-psycho pressure which are akin to the high temperature gas pressure in a pressure cooker.

[AIOU’s Academic Council approves new diploma, certificate programs](https://www.nation.com.pk/14-Feb-2024/aiou-s-academic-council-approves-new-diploma-certificate-programs)

In an evolving and a budding soci­ety like ours with a wide gulf between the haves and have-nots, the Oppres­sion has many faces and comes in dif­ferent scales. Oppression of women at home, oppression of employees by a tyrant leader, and oppression of a na­tion by a tyrant ruler are examples of oppression we still face today. Blind­ness of the tyrant father or leader leads them to consider short-term effects only. They see their power controlling others and temporary submission as signs of victory. Long-term effects are different. Explosion of the oppressed gets closer and closer. Designers of pressure cookers use release valves to avoid excessive buildup of pressure inside the cooker. They know that if a pressure cooker explodes they shall be subject to trial. Explosions come with­out advance notice. Imagine what hap­pens when a pressure cooker explodes spraying randomly hot food and metal splinters in all directions. Same is the case with oppressed nations they may explode suddenly and then spray their hot lava of anger sporadically burning people and damaging property.

[Muhammad Tanvir Ashraf appointed acting MD WASA](https://www.nation.com.pk/14-Feb-2024/muhammad-tanvir-ashraf-appointed-acting-md-wasa)

In a true democratic society having a real elected and fully empowered government, the freedom of speech, free print, electronic and social me­dia, art and craft, availability of high standards of education and other civ­ic amenities with equal human rights and justice act as a pressure ‘release valve’; and the absence of the same make the society burst like a pressure cooker with devastating consequenc­es. Oppression does the same. It leads to the rapid heating of the oppressed people beyond their capacity to bear the building pressure inside. This re­sults in violence and acts like riot­ing and burning whatever people can burn. Chaos spreads like fire. Worse if the buildup of pressure is not distrib­uted evenly. Hot spots result and these spots become excessively danger­ous when the explosion happens. Op­pression may do the same with peo­ple feeling the oppression at different levels. Hot spots result and these be­come a source of violent explosions. Sometimes the faulty pressure cooker sends a steam-releasing sound. If this happens, the cooker is faulty, and re­pairing the faulty part becomes nec­essary. The tyrants may listen to the unusual complaining sounds but their pride makes them deaf to hear them and do the necessary “repairing”. An explosion happens and burns them. This becomes dangerously threaten­ing if the explosion leads to the forma­tion of a pressure wave following the initial explosion. Pressure waves trav­el very fast and reach remote areas burning them. The damage magnifies. Those nations become uncontrollable and no tyrant can do anything about a bursting nation.

[2265 kites confiscated, 13 kite sellers held](https://www.nation.com.pk/14-Feb-2024/2265-kites-confiscated-13-kite-sellers-held)

Nevertheless, the ever ruling elite in Pakistan tend to believe, “When Life Is a Pressure Cooker, Remember the Frog”. If you drop a frog into a shallow pot of boiling water, he’ll jump out im­mediately. But if you place him in wa­ter at room temperature, then gradu­ally bring the liquid to a boil, the frog doesn’t notice until it’s too late. The people of Pakistan have been treated like frog; but now the boiling point is either going to kill the frog or make it jump out for survival. Hopping against the hope that a simile can give us due wisdom on how to respect people and their right to live in sovereignty. Re­member, “A functioning, robust de­mocracy requires a healthy, educated, participatory followership, and an ed­ucated, morally grounded leadership.”

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