

Detailed SUMMARY of “Unlearnt Lessons,” Maleeha Lodhi, Dawn, October 9th, 2023

Pakistan’s tumultuous political history holds numerous lessons that must be learned to break free from its troubled past. While some lessons have been absorbed, several crucial ones remain unlearned, leaving the country deeply divided and in a state of persistent political instability and economic fragility. There are at least five unlearned lessons that have significantly impacted the nation’s destiny.

The first lesson revolves around intensely antagonistic politics characterized by bitter feuds and relentless confrontations among political leaders and parties. The zero-sum mentality in politics treated opponents as enemies to be eliminated, rather than competitors, leading to a lack of tolerance for democratic norms. Such behavior has distracted from governance and public welfare, ultimately creating conditions for military interventions.

The second unlearned lesson pertains to military interventions. Pakistan has experienced prolonged periods of direct military rule and hybrid democracy with military influence. These interventions, despite military professionalism, lacked public legitimacy and failed to deliver promised political stability and economic progress. A hybrid system further complicates governance, creates confusion about authority, and distracts the military from its primary responsibilities.

The third lesson highlights the urgent need for comprehensive economic reforms to address long-standing structural issues, including fiscal deficits, balance-of-payments problems, high inflation, and macroeconomic instability. Overreliance on external bailouts from “friendly” countries and the IMF proved to be short-term fixes. The country must reform its tax regime, expand its export base,



resolve energy sector debt, restructure public-sector enterprises, reduce regulatory burdens, and encourage savings and investment.

The fourth lesson emphasizes the importance of investing in human capital to improve social indicators and human development rankings. Inadequate investment has left Pakistan with high illiteracy rates, millions of out-of-school children, rising poverty levels, and grim health indicators. Economic growth and progress depend on investing in the population.

The fifth lesson pertains to dealing with religious extremism and militancy. Policies in the 1980s divided society along religious and sectarian lines, leading to the rise of militancy in the 1990s. Tolerance and leniency toward extremist groups further exacerbated the security threat. Despite successful campaigns against militancy, Pakistan needs a consistent and holistic strategy beyond kinetic actions. Governments must resist appeasing extremists and maintain a firm stance against religious zealots.

These lessons should guide Pakistan toward a more stable and prosperous future if acted upon effectively.

Easy/Short SUMMARY:

Pakistan's history holds important lessons that need to be learned to escape its troubled past. Unlearned lessons have left the country politically divided and economically weak. Five key lessons stand out.

1. *Antagonistic Politics:* Pakistan's politics has been marked by bitter feuds and confrontations, treating opponents as enemies. This has distracted from governance and opened the door for military interventions.
2. *Military Interventions:* Despite military professionalism, periods of direct military rule and hybrid democracy have failed to bring political stability and economic progress.
3. *Economic Reforms:* The country must undertake structural economic reforms to address fiscal deficits, balance-of-payments issues, high inflation, and

macroeconomic instability. Relying on external bailouts is unsustainable.

4. *Investing in Human Capital*: Neglecting investment in education and healthcare has resulted in high illiteracy rates, out-of-school children, rising poverty, and poor health indicators.
5. *Dealing with Extremism*: Policies in the 1980s fueled religious and sectarian divisions, leading to militancy. A consistent and holistic strategy is needed to combat extremism, avoiding appeasement of religious zealots.

These lessons, if heeded, offer Pakistan a path to a more stable and prosperous future.

SOLUTIONS of The Problem:

1. Promote Political Dialogue and Consensus:

- Encourage political leaders and parties to engage in constructive dialogue and seek consensus on key issues.
- Establish a culture of tolerance and respect for democratic norms to reduce antagonistic politics.

2. Strengthen Civilian Supremacy:

- Emphasize the importance of civilian supremacy in governance.
- Avoid hybrid models that blur the lines between civil and military authority, which can lead to confusion and instability.

3. Comprehensive Economic Reforms:

- Undertake wide-ranging economic reforms to address structural issues.
- Focus on tax reform, expanding exports, resolving energy sector challenges, and privatizing or restructuring public-sector enterprises.

4. Invest in Education and Healthcare:

- Prioritize investments in education and healthcare to improve social indicators.
- Implement policies to reduce illiteracy rates, increase school enrollment, and address poverty and malnutrition.

5. Counter Religious Extremism Strategically:

- Develop a comprehensive strategy to counter religious extremism and militancy.
- Maintain a firm stance against extremist groups and avoid appeasement, ensuring national security.

These solutions can help Pakistan break free from its troubled past and pave the way for a more stable and prosperous future.

IMPORTANT Facts and Figures Given in the article:

- Pakistan's political history is characterized by antagonistic politics, power struggles, and military interventions.
- The military acknowledges that military rule is not a viable solution.
- A hybrid democracy involving military influence is unable to provide effective governance and political stability.
- Chronic fiscal deficits, balance-of-payments problems, high inflation, and macroeconomic instability persist due to inadequate economic reforms.
- Pakistan's neglect of human capital investment has resulted in poor social indicators and human development rankings.

IMPORTANT Facts and Figures out of the article:

- Pakistan has experienced prolonged periods of military rule and hybrid democracy.
- Structural economic issues, including fiscal deficits and balance-of-payments problems, have been persistent challenges.
- Inadequate investment in education and healthcare has led to high illiteracy

rates and poor health indicators.

MCQs from the Article:

1. *What is the first unlearned lesson mentioned in the article regarding Pakistan's political history?*

- A. The importance of civilian supremacy
- B. The need for military interventions
- C. The value of economic stability
- D. Antagonistic politics and power struggles

Answer: D. Antagonistic politics and power struggles

2. *Which aspect of a hybrid democracy is highlighted as problematic in the article?*

- A. Strong civilian leadership
- B. Clear lines of authority
- C. Effectiveness in governance
- D. Distraction of the military from its professional role

Answer: D. Distraction of the military from its professional role

3. *What is the key factor contributing to Pakistan's chronic fiscal deficits and economic instability, as stated in the article?*

- A. Insufficient foreign aid
- B. Lack of access to international markets
- C. Structural economic problems and inadequate domestic resource mobilization
- D. High levels of foreign direct investment

Answer: C. Structural economic problems and inadequate domestic resource mobilization

4. *What is one of the consequences of Pakistan's neglect of human capital investment, as mentioned in the article?*

- A. High levels of literacy
- B. Improved social indicators
- C. Rising poverty rates

D. Economic prosperity

Answer: C. Rising poverty rates

5. How does the article describe Pakistan's approach to religious extremism and militancy over the years?

A. A consistent and effective strategy

B. A willingness to confront extremists head-on

C. Succumbing to pressure and appeasing extremists

D. A policy of non-interference in religious matters

Answer: C. Succumbing to pressure and appeasing extremists

VOCABULARY:

1. *Antagonistic* (adjective) (□□□□ □□ □□□□□□): Characterized by strong hostility or opposition.
2. *Zero-sum* (adjective) (□□□ □□□ □□□): Involving a situation in which one person's gain or loss is exactly balanced by the loss or gain of another person.
3. *Zero-sum mentality* (noun) (□□□ □□□ □□□ □□□): A mindset that views situations as competitions where one party's success must come at the expense of another.
4. *Hybrid* (adjective) (□□□□□□): Comprising elements from different sources, combining two or more different things.
5. *Coherent* (adjective) (□□□□□□): Logical and consistent, forming a unified whole.
6. *Deleterious* (adjective) (□□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□ □□□ □□□): Harmful or damaging.



7. *Sustainable* (adjective) (قابل دوام): Capable of being maintained or continued over the long term.
8. *Regime* (noun) (حکومت): A government, especially an authoritarian one.
9. *Kinetic* (adjective) (متحرک): Relating to or resulting from motion or the action of forces.
10. *Appeasement* (noun) (تسلیم): The action of satisfying demands to prevent conflict, often at the expense of principles or values.
11. *Zealots* (noun) (مخلصان): Fanatical and uncompromising supporters of a particular cause.
12. *Holistic* (adjective) (کلی): Characterized by the belief that the parts of something are interconnected and explicable only by reference to the whole.
13. *Transgressions* (noun) (تجاوزات): Violations of a law, command, or duty.
14. *Legitimacy* (noun) (مقبولیت): Conformity to the law or to rules.
15. *Resist* (verb) (مقاومت): Withstand the action or effect of something.
16. *Comprehensive* (adjective) (کامل): Including all or nearly all elements or aspects of something.

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