

“The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty.”

—Winston Churchill

The silent emergency

Numbers can sometimes look dry on paper. But some numbers carry urgency. The revelation that more than 1000 doctor posts are vacant across Jammu and Kashmir is one such number. Behind every vacant post is a waiting patient. Behind every delay is a family anxious in a hospital corridor. According to official figures, the Union Territory has over a thousand vacancies. These include senior consultants, consultants, medical officers and dental surgeons. While Kashmir has around 800 vacancies, Jammu division too faces significant shortages. This is not a minor administrative lag. It is a structural concern. Healthcare systems do not collapse overnight. They weaken slowly. The greatest pressure is felt at peripheral hospitals such as Sub-District Hospitals, Primary Health Centres and remote health institutions. These are the first line of defence. When specialist posts remain vacant, patients are referred upward. And when referrals rise, the burden inevitably shifts to tertiary institutions like Government Medical College Jammu and Government Medical College Srinagar. Those hospitals are already stretched. While the government has stated that districts are not facing an “acute shortage,” the scale of vacancies tells a different story. Even if emergency cases alone are referred, the absence of specialists at the district level forces routine cases to travel further than they should. For a pregnant woman in a far-flung village or a cardiac patient in a remote block, distance can mean danger. Yes, 480 posts of medical officers have been referred to the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission. Yes, contractual hiring and telemedicine services like e-Sanjeevani are being used. Yes, seven new government medical colleges have been established, reducing some referral load. These are welcome steps. But they are not enough. Recruitment processes must move faster. Files cannot move at a bureaucratic pace when patients' lives depend on them. Selection, appointment and posting must be treated as urgent public health priorities, not routine paperwork. We must also address the deeper issue of retention. Doctors posted to remote areas often face inadequate infrastructure, limited housing, poor schooling facilities for their children and lack of professional growth. If we want specialists in peripheral hospitals, we must make those postings viable and dignified. Healthcare is not merely about buildings and machines. It is about human resources. Without doctors, even the most modern hospital block becomes an empty shell. The establishment of new medical colleges across Jammu and Kashmir is a positive sign. But producing graduates is only half the task. Ensuring they serve where they are needed most is the real challenge. For a region that has endured conflict, difficult terrain and economic constraints, healthcare must remain a pillar of stability. A strong health system builds trust. It reassures citizens that the state stands with them in their most vulnerable moments. If we fail to plug these vacancies, the consequences will not be immediate headlines. They will be silent suffering, delayed diagnoses and preventable complications. This is not about statistics. It is about preparedness. Because when healthcare weakens, everything else follows.

BUREAU OF CONNIVANCE

POONAM I KAUSHISH

With the world in a tailspin thanks to US-Israel war against Iran with Middle East caught in the crossfire, in India BJP-AAP are trading charges over a CBI special court judgment acquitting all 23 accused, including Delhi Chief Minister Kejriwal for his role in irregularities and kickbacks in the now scrapped 2021 Delhi excise policy case. Big deal if it led to incarceration of virtually the Party's frontline leadership. Exemplifying a lexicon: When truth becomes a casualty, you end up with only babble.

The judge punched so many holes in CBI's findings that it ended up looking like a sieve. From being described by Supreme Court as a “caged parrot” 2013 to CBI Court's scathing verdict 2026 of “investigations being pre-meditated and choreographed exercise with no material at all, conjecture” where facts were arranged to support a predetermined conclusion.

Adding, it was “conscious abuse of official position” designed to keep prosecution's narrative fluid and protect the investigator rather than uncover the truth in the excise policy case. Most disquietingly, the Court found the agency misrepresented facts by claiming they had not received a copy of the approver's statement when the IO had, in fact, signed for it on the day it was recorded.

The Court also slammed the IO for “suppression by obscurity”. Vital legal opinions from former Chief Justices were buried inside what the judge called an “email dump” of more than 14,000 communications. It observed that material described as “vital” was presented in a manner where it was “liable to remain unnoticed”, comparing the search for it to finding a “needle in a haystack”. More embarrassing, court recommended departmental inquiry against case investigators. The verdict has now called a halt to this saga. For Kejriwal and Co this is a moment of vindication. For CBI and Government it's essential reading and a censuring moment sending an unequivocal message: Not without due process. Rebuking the agency, “criminal trials must be about what the defendant did, not who defendant is.”

Obviously, CBI disagrees and will appeal but we may not have a final verdict for years given the 2009 2G scam case is still at high court stage. But that's not the point. No society is above conspiracies, corruption and crime. Look at US's Epstein storm. Herein, the case cast a lengthening shadow on Kejriwal's AAP, weighed down its Government, led to the spectacle of a sitting Chief Minister being sent to jail and was the centerpiece of last year's Delhi Assembly elections which BJP won. This explains why our politicians always hoot for CBI investigation. Those in Government use it as its handmaiden to dance to its tune. A toothless tiger to help friends and settle political scores with opponents with hit-ins, clean chits, political cover-ups and fool proof surety for law enforcers to become law breakers legitimizing crime and corruption. Allegations abound how the agency has and is being used to in-

timidate and cow down political opponents. Be it during Congress era or Modi Sarkar. From political partisanship, raids on susceptible opponents, often with a little help of ‘partners’ Enforcement Directorate and Income Tax Department, filing of FIRs, hours of questioning to a charge-sheet, favouring some, cracking down on others, going slow on key cases, messing up investigations, left half-way or not done at all.

Its inconsequential that in the end the CBI might not find any malfeasance but the calibration of response is what the game is all about. If you fall in line, pressure is eased. If you don't, pressure is gassed up. A case in point: Whenever Government wanted to put pressure on BSP's Mayawati CBI was used to

enough to be appointed in CBI.

Questionably, is CBI more sinned against than sinning? Is the pot calling the kettle black? The truth is mid-way. Both work in tandem in furthering their own interest wherein the agency has adopted a brazenly opportunistic policy of playing safe with Governments of the day.

There are as many as 3211 cases pending against MPs and MLAs in various courts in 19 States. These include cases being on-off investigated by CBI. Thereby, not only sully the agency's reputation, replete with its “failure” to back up charges with required evidence but also raising serious doubts about its honesty and integrity of purpose to weed out the corrupt.

On the contrary, accountability is essential. But the agency must be even-handed, transparent and have legally sustainable proof. It should take care to neither act, nor be seen as acting at the behest of its political mai-baaps as such a perception weakens public faith in the rule of law and emboldens the corrupt. Hopefully Kejriwal's order should have a restraining effect when it next seeks to unleash vindictive politics.

Over the years various Governments talk tall on giving CBI autonomy and improving its functioning from LP Singh Committee 1978, Parliament Estimates Committee 1991-92 even Supreme Court has made attempts to provide CBI insulation it requires, but unfortunately all failed. When push came

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pursue cases of disproportionate assets against her. When she came around, cases were but in a thanda baksa. Notwithstanding, scathing criticism from Supreme Court.

Consequently, cases tumble. Hardly one in five rape accused ends up behind bars, murder average is two of five. Why? Because of weak evidence. Example: December a drug runner was acquitted in Jharkhand because cops couldn't produce evidence as rats had “consumed” 200kg of marijuana!

Sadly, the system has become self-perpetuating whereby a threatened political elite give more and more powers to CBI to get their way and have their say. Your merit and investigative skills don't really matter. What matters is whether the Central Government, especially your political masters (PMO), think you are loyal and trustworthy

A reminder of the fundamental salience of due process ---- much needed when central agencies are weaponised by the ruling establishment on a witch-hunt against political opponents. When the agency invokes stringent provisions like PMLA with onerous bail conditions, the expectation is that evidence is robust and case watertight. But when these cases collapse even before trial it raises questions of political motives.

Time now, for CBI to set high standards of investigation and have a corrective influence. It needs to remember it derives authority not merely from statute but also from public trust. Inept or motivated prosecutions damage institutional credibility. Certainly, this does not imply that corruption should go uninvestigated or that our leaders deserve special immunity.

to shove recommendations remain on paper.

Bringing things to such a pass that instead of becoming more accountable, CBI has been purposely protected from scrutiny. See how it was expressly taken out of the RTI Act's ambit on grounds of national security.

Prime Minister Modi has oft spoken about ushering in transparency in governance. Time he walked his talk and made CBI independent whereby it stops being His Masters Voice and prevents abuse of power.

Remember, nothing can be more harmful to democracy. Specially against the backdrop when checks and balances on power are weakening, the Court message is clear: Justice may be delayed, but not denied. The ball is now in Government's court. Will CBI be guided by law only or by Government? Kiski laathi aur kiski bhains? ---- INFA.

Reimagining the Father-Son Relationship in Modern India

LALIT GARG

National Son's Day, observed every year on 4 March, is not merely a celebration that keeps the father-son tradition alive; it is an occasion that touches the very soul of the Indian family system. This day reminds us that a son is not only the bearer of family lineage, but also the living representative of values, responsibilities, and cultural consciousness. In modern times, when joint families are disintegrating, intergenerational dialogue is diminishing, and particularly when emotional distance between fathers and sons is increasing, this day becomes an opportunity for deep introspection. In Indian thought, the meaning of a son is not limited to birth alone. The scriptures state, “Pun-nāmo narakād yah trāyate sah putrah,” meaning, one who saves the lineage and culture from decline is the true son. In this definition, a son is seen as a responsible individual who safeguards the dignity and values of the family through his conduct.

Our history and epics offer numerous examples that established filial duty as the highest ideal. The life of Lord Rama is the finest example. When King Dasharatha, due to circumstances, exiled him to the forest for fourteen years, Rama accepted his father's command without protest or resentment, regarding it as his sacred duty. This was not mere obedience, but a message that family honor and the sanctity of one's word stand above personal comfort. Rama demonstrated that duties precede rights, and family prestige outweighs individual happiness. Today's era speaks much of rights but seldom recalls duties. This imbalance

often creates a communication gap between fathers and sons. Fathers are preoccupied with responsibilities, while sons are entangled in competition and expectations. The emotional bridge between them is gradually weakening. National Son's Day offers an opportunity to reduce this distance. A son does not need only financially resources or material comforts; he needs time, affection, and understanding. When a father sits with his son and openly discusses his dreams, fears, failures, and aspirations, trust is nurtured. This trust becomes the foundation of a strong future.

In the modern context, sons face new challenges—career uncertainties, the influence of social media, mental stress, and value confusion often leave them in inner conflict. Society expects boys to be tough, to suppress their emotions, and to appear strong in every circumstance. As a result, many feel lonely and pressured within. National Son's Day also touches upon the issue of mental health. It inspires parents to ask their sons, “How are you really feeling?” This is not a simple question; it is the beginning of sensitivity. When a son feels heard and understood, his self-confidence grows. In Indian culture, a father is not merely a symbol of discipline but a source of ideals. A son learns what he observes in his father's conduct. If the father is truthful, the son develops respect for truth. If the father is patient and self-restrained, the son imbibes the same virtues. Thus, a father's role is not only to instruct, but to exemplify. Rama did not merely obey Dasharatha; he upheld the Raghu tradition in which honor and commitment were supreme. This tradition is not just a tale of the past; it is a necessity of the present.

In Indian folk memory, Shraavan Kumar is

considered the supreme symbol of filial devotion. Carrying his blind parents on his shoulders to take them on pilgrimage, he proved that service is not merely duty, but the pinnacle of love. Though circumstances have changed, life has accelerated, and career challenges have become more complex, Shraavan's ideal has not lost relevance; rather, it has become even more necessary. Today's son must remain emotionally connected to his parents, maintain dialogue, and understand their needs. Service no longer means only physical labor; it means giving time, listening to them, understanding their loneliness, and protecting their dignity. In the blind pursuit of material ambition, if parents are neglected, success becomes hollow. Sacrifice does not mean abandoning one's career; it means giving family its rightful place among priorities—ensuring regular communication despite a busy schedule, caring for their health, offering necessary support, and involving them in decisions. A modern son can balance professional challenges and familial responsibilities if he remembers that his parents are the roots of his existence. When career and duty are harmonized, Shraavan's spirit of service comes alive in contemporary life, and filial duty transforms from legend into lived reality.

The role of a son is equally significant. Modern freedom does not mean detachment from family. True freedom lies in remaining connected to one's roots and honoring one's values. If a son achieves professional success but distances himself from his family, his success remains incomplete. The strength of a family lies not merely in economic prosperity but in emotional unity. When a son understands the sacrifices and struggles of his parents, respects them, and becomes their sup-

port in old age, he truly fulfills his filial duty. A son is not only the hope of a family but also the potential of a nation. History bears witness that whenever youth recognized their responsibilities, societal transformation followed. Today, there is a need to link son culture with nation-building. A value-oriented son becomes an ideal citizen. If truth, service, and self-discipline are nurtured within the family, these values will radiate into society. Thus, the upbringing of a son is not merely a private matter but a social responsibility.

In an age influenced by globalization and materialism, balance between tradition and modernity is essential. A son should possess modern knowledge, technological skill, and a global outlook, yet his roots must remain deeply Indian. If he advances in science but disconnects from culture, development remains incomplete. If he remains confined to tradition and rejects innovation, progress stalls. Balance is the solution. This balance can give a new dimension to son culture. Let National Son's Day become a day of dialogue and resolve. When a father's experience meets a son's enthusiasm, the family grows stronger. Strong families are the foundation of a strong society and a strong nation. Let us shape our sons not only to be successful but meaningful. Give them not only height, but depth; not only freedom, but responsibility; not only resources, but values. If we weave together Rama's dignity, Shraavan's spirit of service, and the scientific outlook of the modern age, we can nurture sons who are both guardians of tradition and architects of the future. This is the renaissance of son culture, the strength of the Indian family system, and the true message of National Son's Day.

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