

HATE MULTIPLIES

Islamabad attack on Shia mosque in which 30 people were killed is not an aberration; it's a norm in a society where the hate of others is getting multiplied. The country was formed on the basis of intolerance and exclusivity; its founder M A Jinnah, who lived all his life as a secular-minded person, suddenly taking the bait from the Muslim League and favouring a separate country for Muslims. Irony is that there was no reciprocal offer from the 'Hindu India' choose to remain home to all religions, faiths and cultures. In due course these traits flourished making India the most diverse nation bound by values of humanity and democracy. India ended up being home to more Muslims than Pakistan had. The idea of Pakistan based on the hate of others thus was a flawed one from the beginning. As was feared, Jinnah's inaugural message that in Pakistan, Hindus were free to go to their temples, Sikhs to gurdwaras and Muslims to mosques was buried in the initial days of the new country's formation. Nobody other than Jinnah believed in Pakistan as a secular state. Gradually, the country slipped into more hate of others. Once the Hindu and Sikhs were out of being the target of their intolerance and hate, they began picking people to hate and discriminate against from among Muslims. It began with Ahmaddiyas, then to Shias, Hazaras and who not. The hate was so strong that Pakistan's first Nobel Laureate Physicist Prof Abdus Salam was not even fully acknowledged by the country, leave alone taking pride in him. His grave was vandalised. Today, there are home grown terror groups who target Pakistan's Shias. It seems after the recent attack on the mosque three Shias were buried in Sunni graveyard in Pakistan. One day after, Sunnis protested, exhumed the bodies and sent them back to their region.

Sukanta Majumdar

Achieving high marks remains the primary ambition for most students. In classrooms and households across the country, examinations are often seen as decisive moments that determine a child's future. In keeping with the vision of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who — through Pariksha Pe Charcha — has championed a student-friendly and stress-free education system, it is important to remind ourselves that examinations are not meant to be sources of fear, but opportunities for learning, reflection, and self-discovery. The Prime Minister's consistent message has been clear: marks should never define a child's worth.

The challenge of current perceptions

Unfortunately, society often interprets lower grades as signs of failure or personal inadequacy. This habit of judging a student's value solely through academic performance has distorted our understanding of what grades truly represent. Too often, a single score is mistaken for the total measure of a student's diverse abilities and potential. The emotional toll of this mindset is visible in disappointment, embarrassment, fear, and helplessness. Persistent academic struggle can even lead to what psychologists describe as "learned helplessness", where students begin to believe that effort no longer matters. At this stage, curiosity — the very heart of learning — slowly fades.

The evolution of Pariksha Pe



Charcha

The spirit of Pariksha Pe Charcha seeks to correct this misunderstanding by placing the student's mental well-being at the centre of the examination process. It urges students, parents, and teachers to see examinations not as judgments on personal worth, but as milestones in a longer journey of growth. Since its first edition on February 16, 2018, Pariksha Pe Charcha has grown steadily in scope and participation. What began as a town hall-style interaction at Talkatora Stadium in New Delhi has evolved into a nationwide platform reaching millions of students through in-person, virtual, and hybrid formats. Participation has expanded from a few tens of thousands in the early editions to over 3.5 crore registrations in 2025. The initiative has rightfully earned a Guinness World Record for its widespread engagement, reflecting a national commitment to making education more humane and supportive.

Understanding the meaning of

grades

Grades are intended to measure a learner's current level of understanding, skill, and progress in a particular subject at a specific moment in time. They reflect performance, not permanent ability. While they may indicate classroom attention, reading habits, and preparation, they are never absolute measures. A wide range of factors — such as anxiety, health, personal circumstances, learning styles, teaching methods, and assessment formats — shape these outcomes.

Therefore, when a student performs poorly, there is always room for improvement. The right perspective is crucial. Grades are temporary indicators that highlight areas for growth. When treated as final judgments of ability, they damage self-esteem and weaken motivation. When understood properly as feedback, they become powerful tools for learning and development. In this sense, poor grades are not the end of the road, but signposts guiding students towards better strategies

and deeper understanding.

Learning from failure: The role of teachers and parents

Poor performance provides valuable feedback about what went wrong and why. Failure allows reflection in a way that easy success often does not. By analysing mistakes, students can identify patterns in their errors and gaps in understanding. This process strengthens learning and long-term retention. Lower grades remind students to reflect on their habits, time management, learning strategies, and priorities. A student may realise that distractions, ineffective revision, or last-minute cramming are limiting progress. Through reflection and experimentation, learners can develop study techniques suited to their own abilities and needs.

The influence of educators and families

Teachers play a decisive role in shaping how students interpret success and failure. When educators compare students with others or make negative remarks, they may unintentionally damage self-confidence. In contrast, when they explain mistakes clearly and offer guidance, they help students improve. By encouraging collaboration and valuing every learner beyond numerical scores, teachers can transform classrooms into spaces of growth rather than fear.

In many families, academic performance is closely tied to expectations and social status. When children underperform, parents may react with anger or comparisons, creating fear and

pressure. Supportive responses, however, build resilience. By asking constructive questions and encouraging problem-solving, parents help children rebuild confidence and motivation.

Peers also influence how students cope with failure. By being understanding and offering help, students can support those who are struggling. Helping one another builds friendships and prepares students for real-life challenges. Mindset ultimately determines whether poor grades become obstacles or opportunities. A growth mindset views challenges as chances to improve. We must adopt a mindset in which bad grades are seen as informative rather than discouraging. They point to areas for development, not the limits of potential.

In the end, what matters is not the grade itself but how it is understood and used. When seen as proof of failure, bad grades damage self-worth. When viewed as feedback, they become tools for improvement.

In this larger vision, Pariksha Pe Charcha stands as a transformative national platform that humanises examinations and restores confidence in young minds. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi has consistently reminded the nation that education is not a race for marks, but a journey of character, curiosity, and courage. When grades are understood in this spirit, they do not weaken our children — they prepare them to face life with strength and wisdom.

WHEN POLITICS DROWNS DEMOCRACY

Kalyani Shankar

Communication between the Modi government and the Opposition has broken down, as evidenced by the turbulent proceedings in Parliament last week. There have been no back-channel negotiations to resolve the paralysis.

The protests intensified on Monday when Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla announced that the Leader of the Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, could not read from a magazine containing an excerpt from a book by retired General Naravane, citing parliamentary rules.

This breakdown in dialogue culminated in the Lok Sabha being adjourned for the day last Wednesday, preventing the Prime Minister from delivering his usual reply to the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address. This was unprecedented in Parliament's history: the Prime Minister was unable to speak in the Lower House on the President's Address, underscoring the seriousness of the disruptions.

Opposition Members of Parliament from both Houses protested, especially in the Lok Sabha. These protests led to repeated adjournments of the Lower House, often just minutes after it reconvened. During the protests, members chanted slogans, entered the Well of the House, and held banners and placards in front of the Speaker. They also staged a demonstration outside Parliament. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was unable to enter the House because

cause Opposition women MPs had positioned themselves near his seat in the Lok Sabha.

Speaker Om Birla clarified the following day that he had advised the Prime Minister to avoid the House due to concerns about potential disruptions near his seat. He stated: "When the Prime Minister was scheduled to respond to the President's Address, I had received indications that some Congress members might attempt to create a disturbance close to the Prime Minister's chair. Such actions could undermine our democratic traditions. To prevent this, I felt it was necessary to advise the Prime Minister not to attend the House. As the presiding officer, it is my duty to safeguard these traditions."

Women Members of Parliament obstructed the aisle near the Prime Minister's seat just before his arrival, highlighting the active role of Opposition women MPs in the disruptions.

In a related development, Rahul Gandhi commented on a memoir by a retired Army chief that has yet to be released. The memoir, written by General Naravane in March 2023, is slated for publication in December. General Naravane has been widely recognised for his integrity. Overall, Parliament faced significant disruption due to repeated adjournments. This turmoil highlights the challenges of maintaining parliamentary decorum and the importance of respectful debate for effective governance. In earlier years, there were several high-

quality debates.

The following day, the Prime Minister spoke extensively in the Rajya Sabha about his government's achievements and various initiatives it had launched. He addressed India's position in global affairs and its increasing influence on the world stage. The Prime Minister praised his 11 years in office while strongly criticising the Nehru-Gandhi family for their failure to develop the country effectively. The speech resembled an election rally, filled with punchlines.

Members of Parliament often create disturbances to protest and gain media attention. Their actions include rushing to the Well of the House, shouting slogans, holding up signs, and at times even tearing up Bills. This behaviour reflects deep political divisions and a shift towards confrontational politics.

There has been a noticeable increase in time lost to disruptions, as well as in the costs of running Parliament. It costs approximately `2.5 lakh per minute, `1.5 crore per hour, and `9 crore per day of taxpayers' money, highlighting the financial impact of these disruptions on public resources.

According to NDTV, losses continue to mount even when the Houses are adjourned, with expenses including the operational costs of the high-tech Parliament building, staff salaries, and expenditure on security, among others. Disruptions in Parliament not only hinder government accountability

and limit meaningful discussion but also delay the passage of crucial legislation, affecting public welfare and policy implementation. This underscores the urgent need for reform.

Many committees have recommended reforms for Parliament and have emphasised the need for positive change and support for necessary improvements. In a parliamentary democracy, frequent disruptions not only hinder legislative progress but also erode public trust and weaken democratic legitimacy. To address this, electoral reforms are needed to improve the quality of elected representatives. Greater understanding among political parties should also be encouraged, using both formal and informal mechanisms. By increasing public awareness of Parliament's role and how disruptions harm the public interest, these disturbances can be reduced.

Parliamentary standing committees, such as those in the UK and Canada, have successfully mediated conflicts and improved decorum through structured dialogue and conflict resolution. Such examples can inspire support for similar reforms and demonstrate their effectiveness in strengthening parliamentary functioning. These reforms should be implemented sooner rather than later, with political cooperation playing a crucial role in restoring faith and ensuring the smooth functioning of Parliament. Above all, strong political will is required.

When politics drowns democracy

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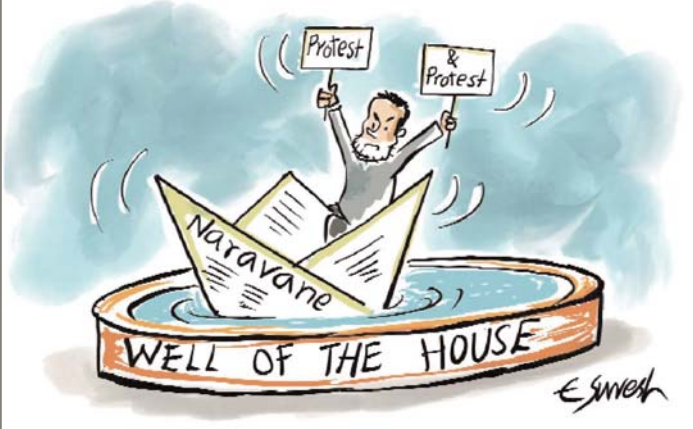
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