

EDITORIAL

Challenge decisions, not personal dignity

When constitutional offices, present leaders and even political legacies become targets of abusive rhetoric, Jammu and Kashmir risks losing something more valuable than political civility—the culture of democratic trust. Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed enough political turbulence, uncertainty and institutional disruption over the decades. At such a juncture, the quality of political discourse matters enormously. The people of the Union Territory deserve a politics that debates their future, not one that spends its energy exchanging personal insults. The growing tendency among political parties and leaders to use derogatory names for opponents—and to extend that language to present and past political leaders—should concern every citizen. The issue is not whether a leader belongs to the ruling party or the Opposition. The issue is whether political disagreement can remain democratic without becoming personal. The political environment in J&K is already deeply polarised around questions of statehood, Article 370, governance, development, employment, security and the future political structure of the Union Territory. Recent exchanges between the Omar Abdullah government and the BJP over Article 370 and other issues demonstrate how sharply divided the political discourse remains. These are legitimate subjects for political debate. People have every right to hold different opinions. But when disagreement moves from policy to personality, democracy loses its substance. A Chief Minister, Prime Minister, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Union Minister or Opposition leader can—and should—be questioned. Their decisions should be examined. Their promises should be measured against performance. Their failures should be exposed. But there is a fundamental difference between saying “this policy has failed” and attacking the dignity of the person occupying constitutional office. The individual occupying a constitutional office may change. The institution remains. This distinction is particularly important in J&K, where institutions have repeatedly been at the centre of political debate. If public discourse continuously demeans people holding high constitutional positions, citizens can gradually lose respect not only for individuals but also for the institutions they represent. Criticism is a democratic right. Institutional disrespect is a different matter. Political parties should therefore exercise greater restraint when speaking about constitutional authorities. The Opposition has a duty to question the government; the ruling establishment has a duty to answer criticism. Neither responsibility requires abusive language. Perhaps the most damaging argument in contemporary politics is: They abused us first. One party gives a leader an insulting name. The rival party responds with another. Supporters amplify it on social media. Leaders then repeat it at public meetings. Eventually, political language becomes a competition over who can deliver the sharper insult. For Jammu and Kashmir, this is particularly unfortunate because people have far more urgent concerns: employment, education, healthcare, infrastructure, tourism, agriculture, investment, youth opportunities, security and restoration of political confidence. Citizens should not have to choose between parties merely on the basis of who can insult the other more effectively. There is also an unhealthy tendency to bring the names and reputations of historical leaders into today's political battles. But history should be discussed with evidence, not converted into political abuse. A mature society does not need to destroy the reputation of one generation in order to glorify another. It can acknowledge achievements, examine mistakes and still maintain respect for history.

DISCLAIMER

"Jammu Bulletin" does not take responsibility for the contents of the advertisements (Display/ Classified) carried in this newspaper. The paper does not endorse the same. Readers are requested to verify the contents on their own before acting there upon.

Edited, Printed, Published and owned by
Ankush Mahajan

Published at Plot No. 4A, 1st Floor, Sector-3,
Surya Chowk, Channi Himmat Jammu (J&K)
Printed at JK Printing and Publications,
Sunjwan, Jammu (Tawi).

E-mail: jammubulletin@gmail.com

All disputes are subjected to the exclusive
jurisdiction of competent courts and forums
in Jammu only.

Jharkhand students demand justice

BY
KALYANI
SHANKAR

Jharkhand's prolonged student agitation is no longer merely a protest over examination irregularities. What began with anger over alleged leaks and discrepancies in recruitment examinations has evolved into a broader expression of frustration over jobs, education, transparency and political representation

In recent years, Jharkhand has seen a rise in student activism driven by a growing awareness of social issues and the need for better representation. The student protests, which followed the rise of the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) at the all-India level, marked a turning point in Jharkhand's socio-political narrative. Students recently organised protests after the unexpected rise of the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP). These protests targeted issues in the education system, including the leak of question papers in NEET and other exams. The current political situation has encouraged young people to speak out about their frustrations and demands regarding the state's social and economic problems.

The student protests

followed the rise of the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) and mark a significant moment in Jharkhand's social and political landscape. This student group is not just asking for better education and job opportunities; they want to be heard in the political conversation. They are fighting for a future where their voices matter, and their rights are respected.

Since July 25, protesters have gathered at a stadium in Ranchi, Jharkhand. Many have been sleeping outside, and some have begun hunger strikes. Many have been sleeping outside, and some have initiated hunger strikes. Protesters are committed to continuing until all their demands are met. Their anger stems from a preliminary civil service exam held by the Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) in April. After the results were announced in July, candidates said leaked answer sheets on social media showed that some successful applicants answered fewer questions than expected. The CJP ended its five-week protest on July 25 with the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

The CJP's achievements energised students, giving them a chance to voice their concerns about education, jobs, and social justice in Jharkhand—issues that the CJP highlighted. By pushing for transparency, accountability, and local involvement, the CJP resonated with students eager for

change.

During the protests, students expressed their frustration with the declining quality of education in Jharkhand's institutions. Many protested against overcrowded classrooms, a lack of resources, and insufficient faculty, demanding immediate reforms to create a better educational environment. Amid economic uncertainty, students pointed out the high unemployment rate, especially among graduates. They urged the government to create job opportunities and asked the CJP to prioritise youth employment.

The protests attracted a diverse group of students from various colleges and universities across Jharkhand. They used social media to organise rallies, marches, and awareness campaigns. Students have actively participated in demonstrations for more than two weeks, advocating for comprehensive reforms to the government examination system in Jharkhand. This newly energised student body is not only demanding better educational and job opportunities but is also asserting its place in the state's political discourse. They are advocating for a future where their voices are heard, and their rights are respected.

The immediate cause of their anger is a preliminary civil service exam held by the Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) in April. After the results

were announced in July, candidates alleged that leaked answer sheets shared on social media indicated that some successful applicants had answered significantly fewer questions than expected.

The success of the CJP catalysed student mobilisation in Jharkhand also, allowing them to express their concerns over critical issues of education, employment, and social justice in Jharkhand—issues that the CJP had notably addressed. By advocating for transparency, accountability, and grassroots participation, the CJP resonated with students and young people eager for change.

During the protests, students voiced their dissatisfaction with the declining quality of education in institutions across Jharkhand. Many protested against overcrowded classrooms, a lack of resources, and insufficient faculty, demanding immediate reforms to ensure a better educational environment.

Amid economic uncertainty, students highlighted the alarming rate of unemployment, particularly among graduates. They called for government intervention to create job opportunities and urged the CJP to prioritise youth employment in its agenda.

Students demanded greater representation and involvement in the political process, expressing that the voices of the youth were often marginalised in decision-making. They advocated for platforms

that encourage youth participation and ensure their concerns are addressed.

The protests attracted a diverse group of students from various colleges and universities across Jharkhand. Utilising social media as an effective tool for organisation, they coordinated rallies, marches, and awareness campaigns. This visibility was crucial in amplifying their demands and bringing their issues to the forefront of public discourse.

As Jharkhand student agitation enters Day 20, job aspirants demand a CBI probe and the total cancellation of JPSC and JSSC recruitment exams. Protesting students, including Devendra Mahto and Manoj Yadav, have threatened to demonstrate before the Chief Minister's residence after August 15th. An FIR has been registered against 100 named individuals and 500 unidentified protesters.

Meanwhile, ABVP, the student wing, has said it would stage demonstrations at over 1,200 universities and in every district across the country. Expanding the scope of the protests. The ABVP will resort to a phase-wise agitation across the country if a CBI probe into the job exam irregularities is not held. While the CJP movement is called Gen Z protest, the Jharkhand movement has a significant presence of an older generation of aspirants—millennials and others. It is not only youthful impatience. It is accumulated frustration. At Jantar Mantar, students were

protesting against a BJP-led government at the Centre. The movement became increasingly confrontational and the police response became an important part of the story.

In Jharkhand, the political equation is different and a non-BJP government is facing the students. A new twist is (CJP) has joined the ongoing student agitation in Jharkhand, with a party delegation reaching the protest site in Ranchi.

They declared “complete solidarity” with Jharkhand students. With the government holding talks but protesters refusing to call off their demonstrations, the coming days are likely to determine whether negotiations can break the deadlock.

For now, the students continue to demand accountability and corrective action over the recruitment examination process, while the state government says it will consider the issues raised by the protesting groups.

The immediate cause of their anger is a preliminary civil service exam held by the Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) in April. After the results were announced in July, candidates alleged that leaked answer sheets shared on social media indicated that some successful applicants had answered significantly fewer questions than expected.

The writer is a popular columnist; Views presented are personal.

Mental health in the age of Algorithm

BY
AKSHITA PANDEY,
DR MOITRAYEE
DAS

While companies highlight AI's advantages: greater efficiency, fewer errors and data-driven precision, there is a vital and usually overlooked expense: the effect of AI implementation on workers' mental well-being.

An increasingly large body of scholarship is starting to uncover the layers of life and work under algorithmic rule. Among the strongest additions to this discussion is a 2024 paper by Byung-Jik Kim and Julak Lee, in Humanities and Social Sciences Communications. Based on a survey of 418 South Korean professionals, one of the country's most technologically advanced populations, the research examines the impact of AI adoption in the workplace on worker stress, burnout, and psychological well-being.

Invisible Weight of Algorithms

The study reveals a psychological domino effect: AI adoption does not necessarily lead to burnout, but it drastically increases job stress, which becomes a significant predictor of burnout. It's a subtle move with far-reaching implications. Workers are not

necessarily angry about the existence of AI itself. Instead, it's the pressure AI imposes upon them—the rate of change, the ongoing requirement to learn, the threat of obsolescence—that stokes this growing worry.

AI fosters an environment of technostress—a catch-all term for several stressors that include:

- * Techno-overload: being overwhelmed by the compulsion to deal with new digital tasks and devices

- * Techno-insecurity: the fear that automation will take one's job

- * Techno-complexity: having difficulty learning and adapting to AI systems promptly

- * Techno-uncertainty: uncertain expectations regarding performance under AI systems.

This pressure comes at a high psychological cost. Tasks that once relied on human judgment and creativity are now often shaped by algorithms, leaving employees feeling less autonomous and more like extensions of the systems they work within. This shift has contributed to rising feelings of emotional exhaustion, disengagement, and helplessness, a pattern reflected across industries ranging from finance and education to healthcare.

Psychological Theories

Kim and Lee base their conclusions on three dominant psychological paradigms:

- * The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model: Proposes that burnout occurs when job demands (such as

AI upskilling) exceed available resources (eg, training, assistance, or affective resilience).

- * The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory: People attempt to preserve their physical, emotional, and psychological resources. As AI compromises these resources, eg, by making employees feel irrelevant or incompetent, people suffer from stress and burnout.

- * The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (TMSC): If AI is seen as a threat instead of an opportunity, and if coping skills are poor or lack support, then the outcome is psychological strain.

Simply put, it isn't AI alone that hurts employees; it's how AI is deployed, governed, and understood as part of an organisational environment.

Digital Self-Efficacy

Another influential finding is AI learning self-efficacy, or in simple terms, an individual's confidence in their ability to master and utilise AI. Such employees feel less stressed and more resilient when encountering technological change. Low self-efficacy results in helplessness, anxiety, and burnout.

In this context, self-efficacy represents a new form of workplace armour. It does not merely enable employees to excel; it equips them to cope emotionally in AI-powered work environments.

New Face of Burnout Historically, burnout has been linked to long working hours, poor

management, unrealistic expectations, and emotionally demanding jobs. However, in the algorithmic era, burnout is taking on a new and more invisible form, one rooted not only in overwork, but also in disconnection, disempowerment, and constant digital overload.

Today, algorithms shape how we work, communicate, consume information, and even rest. Notifications blur the boundaries between personal and professional life, while productivity-driven digital cultures create pressure to always be available, responsive, and efficient. At the same time, algorithmic systems reduce autonomy by monitoring performance, predicting behaviour, and dictating routines in ways that can make individuals feel replaceable and emotionally detached from their work. The result is a form of burnout that is less about physical exhaustion alone and more about cognitive fatigue, emotional numbness, and the persistent feeling of never truly being “offline.”

In the algorithmic era, burnout is taking on a new and more invisible form, one rooted not only in overwork, but also in disconnection, disempowerment, and constant digital overload.

Employees increasingly report feeling sidelined by AI systems that make decisions with little to no human input. Others describe a growing sense of being constantly “watched”

through performance metrics, productivity trackers, and algorithmic evaluations that monitor everything from response times to efficiency levels.

This culture of continuous surveillance often leads employees to engage in chronic self-monitoring, creating heightened pressure to appear productive at all times. Over time, this can contribute to anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and a weakening sense of personal agency within the workplace. This type of burnout is less obtrusive, less visible, but no less harmful. It may undermine self-esteem, drive up absenteeism, and, in extreme instances, result in depression or leaving the workforce altogether.

What Can Be Done

Normalise psychological support in AI transitions: Organisations need to realise that implementing AI is not merely a technical change but a psychological one. That requires providing mental health support, check-ins, and safe spaces for employees to vent anxiety or confusion. Foster digital self-efficacy across the board: Continuous training, mentoring, and peer support initiatives to develop digital confidence are a must. The objective is not technical competence alone but emotional resilience.

Redesign AI with empathy in mind: AI systems must be constructed with user agency at their centre. Workers need to know how algorithms work,

what data is being drawn upon, and where human input is placed in the decision-making pipeline. Transparency and inclusion lower fear and resistance.

Reframe measures of success: Human feedback, teamwork, and imagination need to be preserved in performance measurement.

Create ethical principles around mental health and AI: Mental health needs to be an integral part of ethical AI, no less than privacy, bias, or transparency.

Re-Centering the Human

One of the most significant contributions of Kim and Lee's research is that the real cost of AI isn't simply in terms of job loss or data risk, but in the emotional lives of actual human beings. AI isn't neutral. AI alters how people feel about their work, their worth, and their future. If we forget the mental health consequences of AI adoption, we risk creating an efficient but inhuman workplace, optimised but emotionally unsustainable. The algorithm age is upon us. The question is whether we will greet it with empathy, foresight, and care, or whether we will trade human well-being at the altar of automation. The future of work doesn't just rely on smarter machines. It relies on more humane systems.

(Akshita Pandey is undergraduate student, and Dr Moitrayee Das is Assistant Professor of Psychology at FLAME University)