

Beyond Crisis Management: A Different Response

The present student protests in Delhi should not be seen merely as a law-and-order challenge or a political confrontation. They point to a deeper malaise in our society. If the aspirations of millions depend upon a handful of high-stakes examinations, every examination becomes a potential social crisis. The long-term solution therefore lies not only in better administration, but in a fundamental rethinking of education itself.

Our educational system should gradually move away from an excessive dependence on competitive examinations and towards continuous learning, practical competence, character formation and social responsibility. At the same time, a healthy democracy must recognise peaceful civil disobedience as a legitimate expression of public conscience rather than treating every protest as a threat to the State.

Equally important is a reorientation of the values that education seeks to cultivate. If success is measured almost exclusively in terms of wealth, status and career advancement, corruption will remain an enduring temptation. Education should instead foster trust, integrity, self-restraint, cooperation, service and social harmony. A society built on these foundations is likely to generate less corruption, less alienation and fewer confrontations, while strengthening both democracy and national well-being.

Such a transformation will not be achieved overnight. Yet unless we address these deeper cultural and educational questions, we shall continue to confront the same crises in different forms. The restoration of public trust begins not merely with better governance, but with the cultivation of wiser citizens.

(Drafted by Gita Dharampal, on behalf of the TRIVENI initiative, 23 July 2026)