

## A Heavy Price Paid For Abject Failure Of Governance

Written by Administrator  
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**By Sidharth Mishra**



In the midst of the Covid 19 surge one managed to get the second dose of the vaccine after fully following the six-weeks gap between the first and second jab. There was a marked difference which one could see which has dawned on the venue of vaccination during this period of six weeks.

The first jab had come in the environment of hope, with a lot of laughter and posing for the camera. Six-weeks later the setting had turned tense to use a very mild word. No selfie-points this time and no chatrooms for those patients resting following the jab. We were seated in a row facing a huge statue of Sai Baba, and one could read prayers on everyone's lips. To them it did not matter whether Sai Baba was a Hindu or a Muslim saint. To the helpless what matters is the succour and not from where or from whom its coming.

Our religious and electoral commitments have indeed reduced governance in the country to the level of mental penury. There isn't anybody in any government, whatever the political hue, which is saying that there is a crisis of worst possible degree.

The government is going gaga that the pharmacy majors have reduced price of remdesivir to meet the demand. What it's not saying is that the medicine is not available even in the pharmacies of the major government hospitals in the national Capital, be it the centre-administered AIIMS or Ram Manohar Lohia or Safdarjung Hospital, the state-administered LNJP or Rajiv Gandhi Super-Speciality Hospital or the corporation-administered Hindu Rao Hospital.

This is the state of the premier hospitals in the national Capital, and Delhi being the chromosome of India, one could well imagine the degree of crisis in the states and smaller towns. An acquaintance secured four vials of the medicine for a whopping Rs 10000 per vial,

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ten times the cost it should be sold at.

Wait a minute! It's not just the money which could get you the vial, one must possess access to a very secure network, almost mafia like, to reach the supplier. The supply chains are similar to one operated by the drug cartels. The doctors in the government hospitals know well that what they are administering is 'illegally' procured and there was no guarantee of its efficacy or being genuine but with prayers on their lips they go through the drill.

How else does one define failure of governance? One doesn't want to narrate the more pathetic stories of people dying, and the human 'carcasses' waiting for salvation. A political leadership, and one insists of any hue, committed to the game of electoral one-upmanship would not get moved by tragedy of people as they are motivated only by electoral harvests.

Makers of our Constitution, had probably foreseen such situations, and had provided for apolitical governance bodies largely consisting of functionaries from the civil services. But they too have failed us. A Narcotics Control Bureau can scratch the bottom of a barrel to get some grams of marijuana from a celebrity, a volunteer in uniform may pounce on somebody without a mask with a hefty fine but they both would turn a blind eye to life-saving drug remdesivir being smuggled/black-marketed under its very nose.

The first of wave pandemic had the governments complaining that the disease and the virus took everybody by surprise. The current wave has surprised the virus at such lackadaisical attitude of the government towards the threat posed by it. We now can be assured of some histrionics and atmospherics in the times to come, but we should not forget the price one has been made to pay for misgovernance.

(The writer is Author and President, Centre for Reforms, Development & Justice)