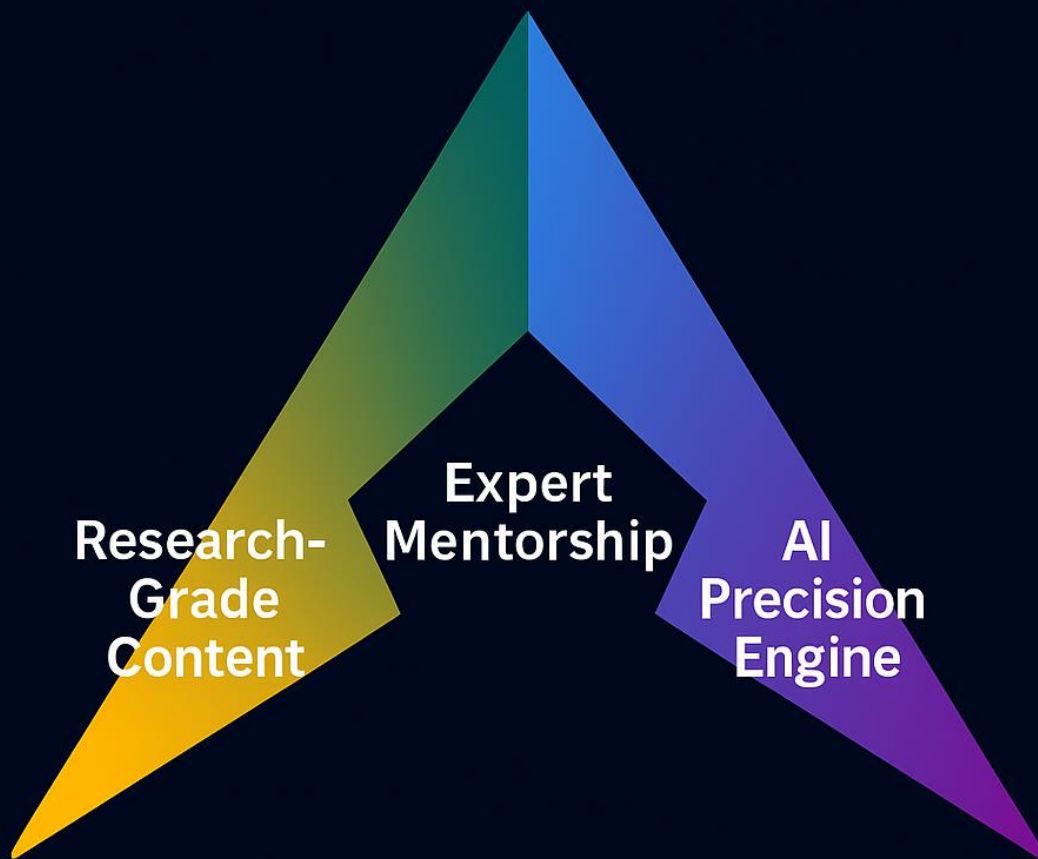


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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS DATED 06.11.2025

GS Paper II: Polity

1. The Malleable Model Code of Conduct – Ensuring Ethical and Fair Elections

a. Introduction

The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is a cornerstone of India's electoral ethics, designed by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to ensure free, fair, and transparent elections. It embodies the moral foundation of democratic competition, reminding political actors that governance and integrity must take precedence over partisan advantage.

However, in recent years, the MCC has become increasingly malleable—interpreted and bent to suit ruling parties' interests. This erosion of ethical restraint raises serious questions about political morality, electoral justice, and the sanctity of democratic institutions.

b. Nature and Scope of the MCC

- i. Nature: A voluntary, non-statutory code mutually accepted by political parties.
- ii. Objective: To ensure a level playing field and prevent the misuse of state power during elections.
- iii. Period of Applicability: From the announcement of elections until the declaration of results.
- iv. Enforcement Authority: Election Commission of India (ECI).
- v. Legal Status: Not enforceable as law, but violations can invite action under the *Representation of the People Act, 1951* or the *Indian Penal Code*.



c. Key Provisions of the MCC

- i. General Conduct
 1. Avoid personal attacks, hate speeches, or appeals to caste and religion.
 2. Refrain from bribery, inducements, or distributing gifts to influence voters.
- ii. Party in Power
 1. No announcement of new projects, grants, or policy decisions once MCC is in force.
 2. Ministers must not combine official duties with political campaigning.
- iii. Election Campaigns

Ban on use of government vehicles, premises, or personnel for political work.
- iv. Media Use

State-controlled media must remain neutral and ensure balanced coverage.

d. The Problem of Violations

Despite its moral force, MCC violations are widespread. For instance, during the Bihar Assembly Elections (2025), the government continued disbursing benefits under the *Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana* after the MCC took effect, claiming it was an *ongoing scheme*.

Such acts expose a grey area—can welfare disbursements timed before elections truly be considered ethical governance?

e. Why Violations Continue

- i. Absence of Legal Force: The MCC relies on voluntary adherence, not enforceable penalties.
- ii. Loophole of “Ongoing Schemes”: Governments rebrand or expand existing schemes during elections.
- iii. Limited Powers of ECI: The Commission can warn or censure but lacks punitive authority.
- iv. Frequent Elections: Repeated enforcement blurs lines between governance and campaigning.

f. Significance of the MCC

The Model Code of Conduct remains the moral backbone of Indian elections:

- i. Ensures Fairness – Prevents ruling parties from exploiting government machinery.
- ii. Encourages Ethical Politics – Upholds political integrity and restraint.
- iii. Builds Public Trust – Strengthens citizens’ confidence in electoral neutrality.
- iv. Acts as a Moral Compass – Reinforces ethical responsibility over partisan ambition.

g. Issues and Criticisms

- i. Moral, not Legal: Its non-statutory status weakens compliance.
- ii. Weak Enforcement: ECI’s power is restricted to advisory or temporary action.
- iii. Political Manipulation: Parties exploit loopholes to continue populist schemes.
- iv. Ethical Decline: Electoral ambition increasingly outweighs fairness and prudence.

h. Way Forward

Reinforcing the MCC requires a blend of legal reform and moral revival:

- i. Statutory Backing – Amend the *Representation of the People Act* to give partial legal status to key provisions.
- ii. Clarity on Welfare Schemes – Define “ongoing” or “new” schemes precisely to prevent misuse.
- iii. Enhanced ECI Powers – Empower the Commission to suspend or review state welfare disbursements during elections.
- iv. Caretaker Government Norms – Adopt global best practices, as in the UK and Australia, where governments avoid major policy actions during elections.
- v. Ethical Reinforcement – Encourage political parties to adopt internal codes of conduct and value-based leadership.
- vi. Simultaneous Elections – Reduce the frequency of MCC imposition, balancing governance continuity with electoral integrity.

Conclusion

The Model Code of Conduct symbolizes India’s democratic integrity, yet its effectiveness depends on the ethical will of political actors.

Treating it as flexible or optional undermines its purpose. India must now focus on:

- Restoring its moral authority through ethical leadership.
- Closing interpretive loopholes that allow misuse.
- Empowering the Election Commission to act decisively.

Ultimately, democracy thrives not on written codes alone but on the character, restraint, and virtue of those entrusted to uphold them.

GS Paper II: Current Affairs

2. Irregularities in the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana – Challenges in Ensuring Accountability in Skill Development

a. Introduction

The Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) is India's flagship skill development programme, launched to empower youth with job-ready skills and promote inclusive growth. However, recent investigations have revealed widespread irregularities—including fake beneficiaries, ghost training centres, and inflated bills—that have undermined the credibility of the scheme.

These lapses point to a deeper problem: the weak accountability and ethical oversight in public welfare programmes meant for social empowerment.

b. About the Scheme

- Launch Year: 2015
- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)
- Implementing Agency: National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)
- Objective: To train youth in industry-relevant skills and connect them with jobs.
- Target Group: Unemployed youth and school/college dropouts.
- Main Components: Short-term training, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), placement support, and digital skilling.
- Current Phase: PMKVY 4.0 (2022–2025) – Focuses on AI, robotics, and green jobs.
- Budget (2024–25): ₹1,538 crore
- Beneficiaries (till 2025): Around 1.64 crore individuals trained.



PMKVY is thus the backbone of the Skill India Mission, linking skill training with national productivity and youth employment.

c. Nature of Irregularities

The government's review exposed various unethical and fraudulent practices across training partners and states:

- Fake Enrolments: Names of trainees recorded though no training was conducted.
- Ghost Centres: Training centres existed only on paper.

- iii. Fabricated Records: Fake Aadhaar data, forged attendance sheets, and fake certificates.
- iv. Inflated Billing: Artificially increasing trainee counts to claim more funds.
- v. Weak Monitoring: Poor field inspections and lack of real-time verification.

Such irregularities caused financial losses, distorted skill data, and damaged the reputation of the entire programme.

d. Scale of the Problem

- 178 training partners across 18 states have been blacklisted.
- States such as Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, and Madhya Pradesh reported the highest violations.
- The government has filed FIRs and initiated recovery actions against defaulters.

This large-scale misuse exposes how over-dependence on private partners and poor oversight can make welfare schemes vulnerable to fraud.

e. Why Such Irregularities Occur

- i. Over-reliance on Private Partners – Many training agencies lacked proper credentials or monitoring.
- ii. Focus on Numbers, Not Outcomes – Success was measured by how many were “trained,” not how many got jobs.
- iii. Weak Digital Audits – Lack of real-time data verification allowed manipulation.
- iv. Blurred Accountability – Overlapping roles among NSDC, state governments, and local centres.
- v. Erosion of Ethical Standards – Misuse of funds meant for poor and unemployed youth.

f. Significance and Implications

Positive Aspect	Associated Risk
Reveals the government’s intent to curb corruption and improve efficiency.	Highlights systemic weaknesses in monitoring and accountability.
Encourages transparent reforms in welfare delivery.	Erodes public trust in the “Skill India” brand.
Promotes future-ready training ecosystems.	Shows misuse of taxpayer money meant for vulnerable citizens.

Thus, while identifying irregularities is a step toward improvement, it also serves as a wake-up call to strengthen governance and ethics in implementation.

g. Reforms and Way Forward

To rebuild credibility and ensure genuine skill development, India must focus on transparency, technology, and accountability:

- i. Outcome-based Funding: Release funds only after independent verification of training and job placements.
- ii. Tech-enabled Monitoring: Use biometric attendance, GPS-tagged photos, and AI-based audits to prevent fraud.
- iii. Independent Evaluation: Conduct yearly third-party and social audits to verify outcomes.
- iv. Clear Accountability: Impose strict penalties for fraudulent partners and negligent officials.

- v. Capacity Building: Train administrators in ethical conduct, monitoring tools, and data management.
- vi. Public Transparency: Publish data on centres, beneficiaries, and funds for public review.

These measures can shift the focus from quantity of trainees to quality of employment outcomes.

Conclusion

The irregularities in PMKVY reveal a critical lesson: no scheme succeeds without ethical and administrative discipline. Skill development cannot be about numbers on paper—it must translate into real opportunities for the youth.

By enforcing transparency, strengthening institutional capacity, and upholding integrity, India can ensure that “Skill India” becomes a true mission of empowerment, not exploitation.

GS Paper III: Economics

3. Reforming India’s Special Economic Zones – Towards Flexible and Competitive Export Hubs

a. Introduction

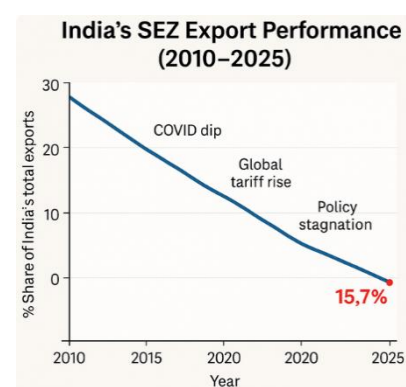
Special Economic Zones (SEZs) were created to promote exports, attract investment, and generate employment by offering globally competitive conditions for business.

Over time, however, their performance has weakened due to rigid policies, global trade shifts, and falling competitiveness.

To restore their vitality, the government is framing new SEZ reforms—most notably allowing “reverse job work” and better domestic market access. These measures signal a shift from *export-only enclaves* to integrated production and innovation hubs, aligning with India’s modern industrial vision.

b. Understanding SEZs

- i. Definition: Designated areas treated as foreign territories for trade and duties, allowing duty-free imports and tax exemptions.
- ii. Legal Basis: *Special Economic Zones Act, 2005* and *SEZ Rules, 2006*.
- iii. Objectives: To promote exports, attract foreign investment, and create employment through efficient industrial infrastructure.
- iv. Incentives: Duty-free imports, tax concessions, single-window clearance, and simplified customs procedures.



SEZs have long been a key pillar of India’s industrialisation strategy under the Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat initiatives.

c. Why Reforms Are Needed

SEZs once contributed over 30% of India’s exports, but their share has now dropped to about 15.7%. Multiple structural and policy-related factors explain this decline.

- i. Falling Exports: Global slowdown and loss of competitiveness in traditional sectors like textiles and gems.
- ii. Tariff Pressures: Higher duties by major partners (e.g., the US) reducing demand.
- iii. Idle Capacity: Underutilised infrastructure during off-peak export cycles.
- iv. Low Investment: Decline in fresh FDI due to policy uncertainty and lack of branding.
- v. Limited Innovation: Weak focus on R&D and skill development within SEZs.
- vi. Negative Trade Balance: Some SEZs import more than they export, reducing overall value addition.

These issues highlight the urgent need for flexible policy reform and stronger linkages with the domestic economy.

d. The Key Reform – “Reverse Job Work”

- i. Reverse Job Work: Allows SEZ units to undertake manufacturing or processing for domestic firms, known as Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) units.
- ii. Purpose: Utilises idle production capacity during low export seasons.
- iii. Example: A jewellery SEZ unit can process gold for an Indian company when export demand falls.
- iv. Challenge: Ensuring tax parity, as SEZ units enjoy duty-free status unlike DTA firms.

This approach seeks to integrate SEZs with the domestic economy, promoting flexibility and employment continuity.

e. Case Study – Gems and Jewellery Sector

The gems and jewellery industry illustrates the need for policy flexibility:

- Contributes nearly 65% of India’s studded jewellery exports, much of it through SEZs.
- Facing falling orders due to global recession and US tariffs.
- Many units have been shut or de-notified due to financial stress.

The sector has demanded reforms such as:

- Permission for reverse job work,
- Relief on working capital,
- Extended export deadlines, and
- Interest waivers during demand downturns.

These measures are essential for protecting livelihoods and preserving traditional craftsmanship.

f. Broader Challenges Facing SEZs

- i. Foreign Investment: Limited FDI inflow compared to competitors like Vietnam or China.
- ii. Skill and R&D Gaps: Inadequate focus on innovation and workforce development.
- iii. Perception Barriers: Weak global branding and insufficient integration with value chains.

These structural gaps underscore the need for a modern, innovation-led SEZ framework.

g. Expected Benefits of the New Framework

- i. Better Capacity Utilisation: Keeps factories and workers active year-round.
- ii. Job Security: Reduces seasonal unemployment during export lulls.
- iii. Domestic-Export Synergy: Enhances cooperation between SEZs and domestic industries.
- iv. Global Competitiveness: Moves India closer to models like Shenzhen (China) and Hai Phong (Vietnam).
- v. Innovation Push: Encourages investment in technology and R&D.

Collectively, these outcomes can rejuvenate SEZs into innovation-driven industrial ecosystems.

h. Concerns and Policy Risks

- i. Revenue Loss: Domestic market access for SEZs could reduce tax income.
- ii. Fair Competition: DTA manufacturers may demand equal tax treatment.
- iii. Administrative Complexity: Coordination issues between ministries and customs authorities.
- iv. Legal Transition: Replacement of *SEZ Act (2005)* with the proposed *Development of Enterprise and Services Hubs (DESH) Act*.

These factors must be managed carefully to maintain fiscal prudence and a level playing field.

i. Way Forward

- i. Integrate with Domestic Economy: Allow dual-use production for both export and local demand.
- ii. Simplify Tax Structure: Harmonise duties between SEZ and DTA units.
- iii. Promote Skill and Innovation: Establish dedicated R&D, design, and skilling centres within SEZs.
- iv. Ease of Doing Business: Streamline approvals, customs, and compliance procedures.
- v. Global Benchmarking: Learn from the SEZ frameworks of Vietnam, China, and UAE.
- vi. Adopt the DESH Policy: Transition toward a flexible, multi-sectoral model combining enterprise, services, and digital trade.

Conclusion

India's SEZs, once engines of export growth, have slowed due to outdated frameworks and policy rigidity.

Reforms such as reverse job work, domestic integration, and the proposed DESH policy aim to revitalise them into adaptive, globally competitive hubs.

The next phase of SEZ evolution must emphasise innovation, inclusion, and flexibility, transforming them from isolated export zones into dynamic ecosystems that produce for both India and the world—realising the vision of “*Make in India for the World*.”

GS Paper III: Science and Technology

4. India's New AI Governance Framework: Adaptive Regulation over a New Law

a. Introduction

India has introduced its AI Governance Guidelines (2025) to manage the rapid expansion of Artificial Intelligence across governance, education, healthcare, and finance. Rather than enacting a separate AI law, the government has opted to revise and adapt existing frameworks — chiefly the Information Technology Act, 2000, and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP Act).

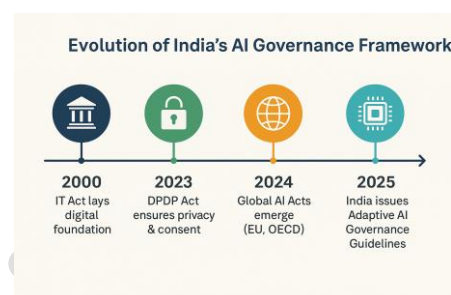
This reflects a deliberate attempt to strike a balance between innovation and ethical accountability. The goal is to ensure that India's AI ecosystem evolves responsibly within a framework that promotes trust, transparency, and inclusion.

b. Background

Artificial Intelligence now underpins critical decision-making in public and private domains — from credit scoring and welfare targeting to recruitment and policing. However, it also introduces risks of data misuse, algorithmic bias, and unclear accountability.

The IT Act, 2000 governs intermediaries and online platforms, while the DPDP Act, 2023 regulates personal data processing through consent and purpose limitation. Yet, both were conceived before the rise of autonomous and self-learning systems.

To bridge this gap, the government has proposed an adaptive governance model — a regulatory system that evolves with technological progress, maintaining flexibility while protecting citizens' rights.



c. Key Provisions of the Framework

The guidelines, issued by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), are advisory yet influential in shaping both public policy and industry practice.

i. Adaptive Regulation

The framework promotes a dynamic legal environment instead of a rigid statute, enabling periodic updates as AI evolves.

ii. Legal Review Mechanism

Existing digital laws will undergo continuous review to identify AI-specific gaps, particularly in accountability and misuse.

iii. Data Protection Focus

The framework underscores challenges of consent, ownership, and privacy in datasets used for AI training.

iv. Institutional Structure

Establishment of an AI Governance Group—a multidisciplinary advisory panel under MeitY to guide policy adaptation.

v. Global Positioning

India adopts a “middle path” approach—more flexible than the EU’s stringent, risk-based AI Act (2024), yet more structured than the US’s market-driven model.

d. Analytical Perspective

The framework’s strength lies in flexibility. It promotes innovation, supports startups, and avoids premature overregulation. This adaptability ensures India can recalibrate its laws in line with global developments while nurturing its own AI ecosystem aligned with the “AI for All” vision.

However, challenges remain:

- i. The absence of statutory backing creates gaps in accountability when AI decisions cause harm.

- ii. Broad exemptions for “research and legitimate use” could enable misuse.
- iii. Without a risk-based classification, potentially harmful AI systems may evade oversight.
- iv. Coordination across regulatory agencies—like the DPDP Board, Competition Commission, and sectoral regulators—poses governance challenges.

e. Way Forward

India’s AI governance path must rest on continuous legal evolution and ethical standard-setting. The following actions are essential:

- i. Periodic Legal Reviews – Regularly update the IT and DPDP Acts to address emerging AI risks.
- ii. Accountability Mechanisms – Define legal responsibility for damages or discrimination by AI systems.
- iii. AI Ethics Code – Institutionalize norms of transparency, fairness, and explainability.
- iv. Regulatory Sandboxes – Enable controlled experimentation for startups before full deployment.
- v. Collaborative Governance – Involve states, private sector, and academia in policy formation.
- vi. Global Coordination – Align with OECD AI Principles, UNESCO’s Ethics Framework, and SDGs 9 & 16 for sustainable innovation.

Conclusion

India’s AI governance framework signifies a strategic shift towards adaptive regulation—a flexible, forward-looking model that blends innovation with responsibility.

It aims to position India as a global leader in ethical AI, ensuring technological growth remains inclusive, transparent, and accountable.

By embedding adaptability into its legal structure, India equips itself to harness the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence—with both caution and confidence.

GS Paper III: Science and Technology

5. India’s Artificial Intelligence Governance Guidelines – Balancing Innovation with Trust

a. Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most transformative technologies of the 21st century. It influences sectors such as healthcare, education, finance, and governance, reshaping decision-making and service delivery. Yet, as AI advances rapidly, nations worldwide face the dual challenge of encouraging innovation while ensuring ethics, accountability, and public safety.

In 2025, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) unveiled the AI Governance Guidelines—a framework designed not as rigid regulation but as a flexible, trust-based guide for responsible AI development. The emphasis lies on inclusiveness, responsibility, and transparency, rather than punitive legal control.

b. Background

The guidelines were drafted by a committee chaired by Professor Balaraman Ravindran (IIT Madras) under the direction of the Principal Scientific Adviser, Professor Ajay Kumar Sood, and supported by MeitY and the Technology and Policy Expert Committee.

Globally, India’s model stands between two extremes:

- The European Union’s AI Act follows a highly regulatory, risk-based model emphasizing strict compliance.

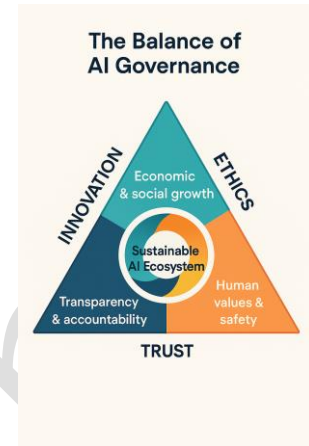
- The United States relies mainly on market-driven innovation with limited government intervention.

India's approach carves a middle path, fostering innovation while embedding ethical safeguards and public trust at its core.

c. Core Principles of India's AI Framework

The Indian AI Governance Guidelines rest upon seven guiding principles that define ethical AI development and deployment:

- Trust – AI systems must be reliable, transparent, and aligned with human values.
- Responsible Innovation – Development should prioritize ethics, safety, and social well-being.
- Equity – AI must avoid bias and ensure fair treatment across all user groups.
- Accountability – Stakeholders, from developers to end users, must be answerable for AI-driven outcomes.
- Understandability – AI processes, especially in large language models, should be explainable and open to review.
- Safety and Resilience – Systems must minimize harm and remain robust against misuse or errors.
- Sustainability and People-centricity – AI should serve human welfare, environmental balance, and inclusive growth.



Together, these principles anchor India's AI vision in human-centric ethics and social responsibility.

d. Major Recommendations

To operationalize its ethical foundations, the framework proposes several strategic measures:

- Building Infrastructure – Strengthen computing and AI infrastructure through *Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)* to democratize AI access.
- Skill Development – Expand AI-related education and training to prepare the workforce for emerging opportunities.
- Flexible Regulation – Adopt *adaptive, sector-specific guidelines* that evolve with technological progress.
- Addressing Risks – Counter misinformation, deepfakes, and algorithmic bias through early detection and corrective mechanisms.
- Ensuring Transparency – Promote open and fair practices throughout the AI ecosystem.
- Long-term Legal View – Consider separate AI legislation later, once technologies and risks mature sufficiently.

e. Significance of the Guidelines

The AI Governance Guidelines serve multiple objectives:

- They encourage innovation by avoiding premature restrictions and fostering experimentation.
- They reinforce trust and accountability, ensuring responsible technology deployment.
- They advance India's vision of "AI for All", making AI accessible across social and regional divides.
- They strengthen India's global leadership in inclusive and ethical AI governance.

Thus, the framework embodies the idea that technological growth and ethical responsibility must progress hand in hand.

f. Concerns and Challenges

- i. A light regulatory approach may delay robust accountability frameworks.
- ii. The absence of clear liability norms makes it difficult to assign responsibility for AI-caused harm.
- iii. Important elements from earlier initiatives (e.g., NITI Aayog’s AI Strategy, OECD principles) require deeper integration.
- iv. Emerging issues like job displacement, bias, and deepfake threats need ongoing institutional attention.

These challenges underscore the need for continuous policy refinement and ethical vigilance as AI evolves.

g. Comparison with Global Models

Model	Approach	Key Features
European Union	Strict, risk-based regulation	High compliance standards, penalties for violations
United States	Market-led innovation	Limited federal control, high private sector autonomy
India	Balanced, adaptive governance	Innovation-friendly yet ethically grounded approach

India’s model reflects contextual pragmatism—a governance style tailored to its socio-economic diversity and developmental needs.

h. Institutional Structure

The framework will be implemented through the following institutional ecosystem:

- i. Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) – Nodal ministry for AI governance and policy.
- ii. AI Governance Group – Proposed multidisciplinary advisory body to monitor and update the guidelines.
- iii. Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser – Ensures policy coherence and scientific integrity across sectors.

i. Way Forward

For India’s AI governance to remain resilient and inclusive, the following steps are recommended:

- i. Formulate a National AI Strategy 2.0 integrating ethics with innovation.
- ii. Establish AI Regulatory Sandboxes for controlled experimentation and compliance testing.
- iii. Adopt Graded Regulation with stricter norms for high-risk domains e.g., healthcare, security.
- iv. Align with DPDP Act (2023) to ensure privacy and data security.
- v. Enhance International Collaboration through platforms like G20, OECD, and UNESCO.
- vi. Maintain Human-centric Development, aligned with SDG 9 (Innovation) and SDG 16 (Institutions).

Conclusion

India’s AI Governance Guidelines (2025) mark a significant milestone in its digital evolution. They embody innovation with ethics, growth with responsibility, and technology with trust.

By choosing a flexible, adaptive, and people-centric pathway, India positions itself as a global model for democratic AI governance—where technology empowers citizens, strengthens institutions, and safeguards values.

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While every effort has been made to balance depth with brevity, please keep the following in mind:

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However, the PrepAlpine team is simultaneously developing a dedicated Prelims-focused Current Affairs Series, designed for:

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The formatting combines:

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- visual cues

—all optimised for retention.

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