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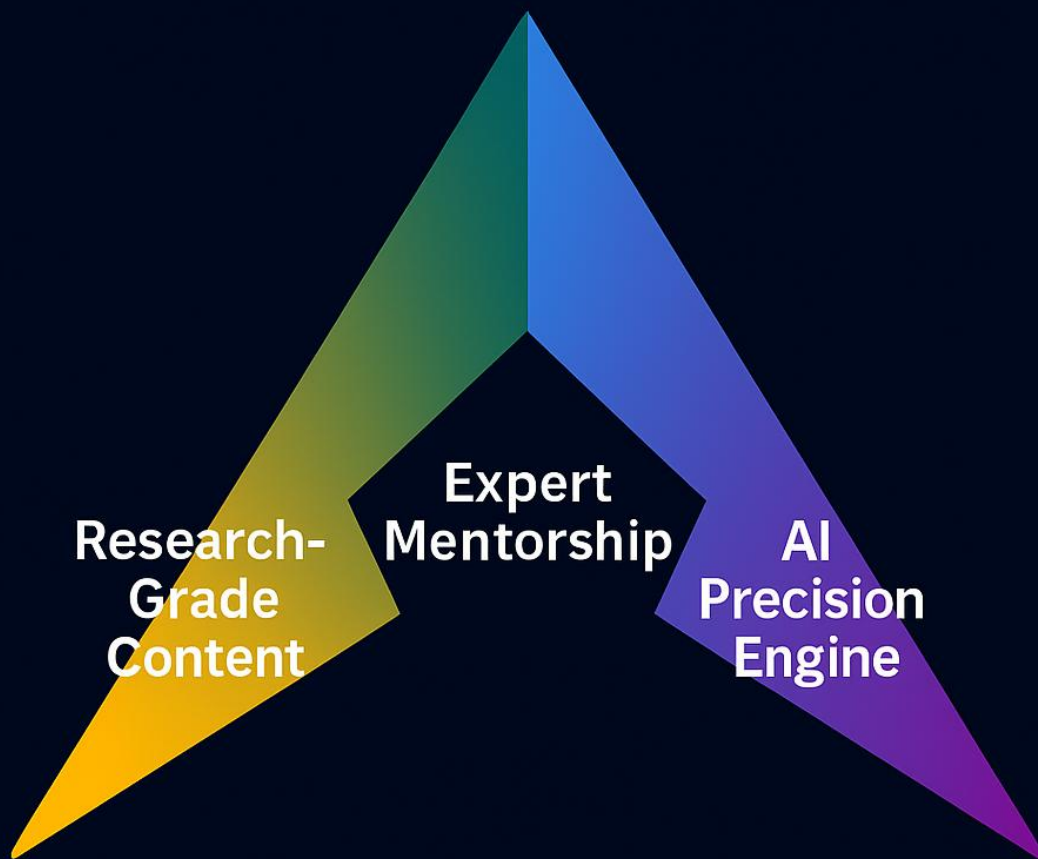
Preparation Meets Precision

A Next-Generation Learning Institution

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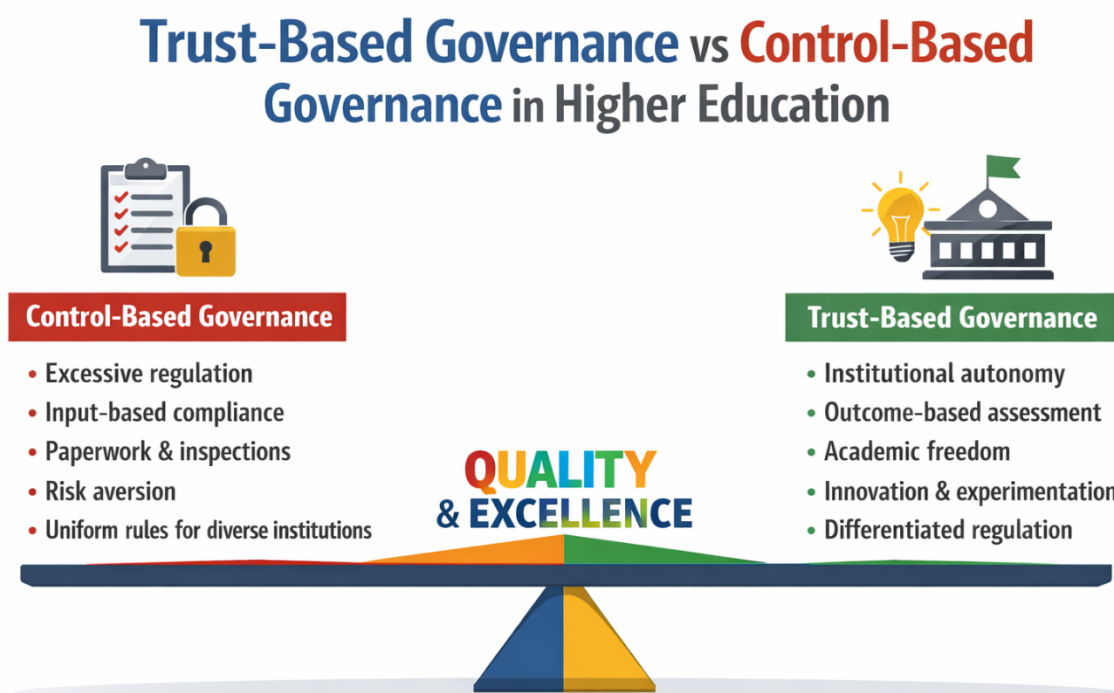
DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS DATED 10.01.2026

GS Paper II: Current Affairs

1. Trust-Based Governance in Higher Education: The Key to Quality and Excellence

a. Introduction

Globally, high-quality higher education systems are not produced by regulation alone. They are built on a foundation of mutual trust between the State and educational institutions. While regulation is necessary to ensure minimum standards, equity, and public accountability, excessive control often weakens academic creativity, institutional responsiveness, and long-term ambition.

In India, the National Education Policy (NEP) marks a decisive shift away from rigid control towards flexibility, interdisciplinarity, research orientation, and global engagement. However, the success of these reforms ultimately depends on whether institutions are trusted with meaningful autonomy, supported by clear rules and sustained public investment. Quality in higher education emerges when the State acts as an enabler of excellence rather than a controller of processes.

Trust-Based Governance vs Control-Based Governance in Higher Education

Control-Based Governance
- Excessive regulation
- Input-based compliance
- Paperwork & inspections
- Risk aversion
- Uniform rules for diverse institutions

QUALITY & EXCELLENCE

Trust-Based Governance
- Institutional autonomy
- Outcome-based assessment
- Academic freedom
- Innovation & experimentation
- Differentiated regulation

b. Why Trust Is Central to Higher Education Governance

India is entering an era of mass higher education, with a target of achieving a Gross Enrolment Ratio of 50 per cent by 2035. Governing such scale through micromanagement is neither feasible nor desirable.

i. Limits of overregulation

- Excessive compliance turns universities into paperwork-driven institutions.
- Risk aversion replaces innovation and experimentation.

ii. Benefits of institutional autonomy

- Freedom to design relevant curricula.
- Ability to innovate in pedagogy and assessment.
- Capacity to respond to local, national, and global knowledge needs.

iii. Meaning of trust-based governance

- Trust is not absence of oversight.
- It is confidence that institutions will act responsibly within transparent and predictable rules.

c. Structural Transformation of Indian Higher Education

Indian higher education is undergoing a significant systemic transition:

i. Academic flexibility

- Three-year and four-year degree pathways with research options.
- Multiple entry and exit mechanisms.

ii. Multidisciplinary orientation

- Shift from narrow, siloed institutions to broad-based universities.
- Integration of arts, sciences, humanities, and professional education.

iii. Changing institutional landscape

- Private institutions now educate nearly two-thirds of students.
- Wide diversity in institutional capacity and learner needs.

Such diversity cannot be governed through uniform control. It requires outcome-based regulation and trust in institutional judgement rather than input-based micromanagement.

d. Building Trust Through a Strong Research Ecosystem

A central pillar of trust-based governance is strengthening university research capacity.

i. Institutional support for research

- Anusandhan National Research Foundation promotes long-term, curiosity-driven research.
- Encourages collaboration between academia, industry, and society.

ii. Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) framework

- Mobilises private sector participation.
- Supports translation of research into innovation and applications.

iii. Systemic impact

- Universities shift from teaching-centric to knowledge-creating institutions.
- Contributes to economic growth, technological self-reliance, and global knowledge networks.

e. Regulatory Clarity as a Foundation for Trust

Trust-based governance does not imply regulatory vacuum. It requires clarity and predictability.

i. Existing regulatory challenges

- Fragmented regulators.
- Overlapping mandates.
- Excessive compliance requirements.

ii. Consequences of regulatory confusion

- Institutional uncertainty.
- Weak accountability and long-term planning.

iii. Reform direction

- Consolidation into a single apex regulatory structure.
- Clear separation of functions:
    - Regulation
    - Standard-setting
    - Accreditation

Clear and stable rules reduce arbitrariness, signal quality transparently, and allow institutions to plan for excellence. Where rules are clear, trust can flourish.

f. Reimagining Science and Knowledge Education

Trust-based governance is especially critical in science and technology education.

i. Structural weaknesses

- Overemphasis on theory.
- Limited exposure to laboratories, industry, and applied research.

ii. Need for institutional freedom

- Redesign curricula around experiential learning.
- Promote applied research and innovation ecosystems.

iii. Strategic importance

- High-quality science education supports employability.
- Essential for deep-technology innovation and strategic autonomy.

Institutions must be trusted to build industry linkages, establish laboratories and makerspaces, and pursue interdisciplinary research without excessive procedural constraints.

g. Technology and Artificial Intelligence as Enablers

Digital technologies and artificial intelligence can significantly strengthen higher education when governed responsibly.

i. Academic benefits

- Personalised learning pathways.
- Adaptive assessment systems.
- Efficient administration.

ii. Indian advantage

- Diversity of learners and institutions enables context-sensitive solutions.

iii. Emerging initiatives

- Centres of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence across key sectors.

iv. Governance requirement

- Technology must support pedagogy, not replace academic judgement.
- Avoid reducing education to standardised metrics.

Trust-based governance ensures technology enhances human learning rather than undermining academic values.

h. Globalisation and the Need for Credible Autonomy

Higher education is increasingly global:

i. Student mobility

- Large number of Indian students studying abroad.

ii. Institutional expansion

- Entry of foreign universities into India.
- Overseas campuses of Indian institutions.

iii. Global credibility requirements

- Transparent standards.
- Academic freedom.
- Institutional autonomy.

Rigid control weakens global trust, while autonomy combined with accountability strengthens India's integration into global knowledge networks.

i. Role of the State in a Trust-Based Model

The State retains a crucial role in trust-based governance:

i. Enabling functions

- Clear policy direction.
- Transparent accreditation and quality assurance.

ii. Investment responsibilities

- Sustained funding for research and faculty development.
- Long-term investment in scientific infrastructure.

iii. Governance role

- Predictable and stable regulatory environment.

The State's role is not to manage universities, but to create conditions in which universities can govern themselves responsibly.

j. Way Forward

- Shift decisively from control to trust-based regulation
- Link autonomy with accountability through outcome-based assessment
- Sustain public investment in research, faculty, and infrastructure
- Promote interdisciplinary learning and responsible use of technology
- Ensure long-term policy stability

Higher education must be treated as strategic national infrastructure, not short-term expenditure.

Conclusion

India's higher education system stands at a pivotal moment. Policy intent is clear, institutional capacity is expanding, and global opportunities are widening. The decisive factor will be whether a

genuine relationship of trust can be built between the State and educational institutions. When autonomy is matched with accountability, higher education can deliver high-quality human capital, world-class research, and inclusive growth—forming a strong foundation for a knowledge-driven India.

GS Paper II: Current Affairs

2. Victim's Dignity in Sexual Offence Cases: Law, Ethics and Justice

a. Introduction

In cases of sexual offences, justice cannot be reduced merely to the conviction of the accused. An equally fundamental concern is the protection of the victim's dignity throughout the criminal justice process. From reporting the offence to investigation, trial, and even media discourse, victims often face suspicion, humiliation, and moral judgement that deepen their trauma.

Indian criminal law has progressively recognised that such treatment violates constitutional values and undermines faith in justice. Yet, despite strong legal safeguards, many victims continue to experience secondary victimisation due to insensitive institutions, irresponsible media conduct, and entrenched social attitudes. Understanding this gap between law and lived reality is essential for building a humane and ethical justice system.

b. Understanding Secondary Victimisation

Secondary victimisation refers to the additional harm inflicted on victims after the crime, not by the offender, but by institutions and society.

i. Institutional sources

- Intrusive questioning by police.
- Insensitive investigation and cross-examination.
- Treating the victim as a suspect rather than a survivor.

ii. Social and media sources

- Public scrutiny of character, lifestyle, or past relationships.
- Disclosure of personal and intimate details.
- Sensationalised reporting and media trials.

iii. Consequences

- Deepened psychological trauma.
- Social stigma and isolation.
- Deterrence from reporting sexual offences.

Because it compounds the original harm, secondary victimisation is often described as a second injustice inflicted by the system itself.

c. Evolution of a Victim-Centric Legal Framework

Indian criminal law has gradually shifted towards recognising victims as rights-bearing individuals rather than passive witnesses.

i. Post-2013 reforms

- Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 marked a decisive shift.
- Sexual offences recognised as violations of bodily autonomy and dignity, not morality.

ii. Judicial evolution

- Courts increasingly emphasise survivor-centric interpretation.
- Focus on consent, autonomy, and constitutional values.

This evolution reflects a broader movement towards victim-centric justice in India.

d. Legal Safeguards for Protecting Victim Dignity

i. Prohibition on Character and Sexual History Evidence

Legal position

- Past sexual conduct, lifestyle, or relationships are legally irrelevant.
- Cannot be used to infer consent or reduce culpability.

Underlying principle

- Consent is situation-specific.
- Every individual has an absolute right to refuse consent, regardless of past conduct.

ii. Restrictions on Cross-Examination

Judicial control

- Courts may disallow humiliating or irrelevant questions.
- Cross-examination must focus on facts, not morality.

Purpose

- Prevent intimidation and character assassination.
- Preserve dignity during trial.

iii. Protection of Victim Identity

Statutory protection

- Disclosure of name, photograph, or identifying details is prohibited.
- Applies even after the victim's death, except where law permits.

Rationale

- Prevents social stigma and public shaming.
- Protects long-term psychological well-being.

e. Judicial Reinforcement of Victim Dignity

The Supreme Court has played a central role in strengthening these protections.

i. Irrelevance of past conduct

- A woman's sexual history has no bearing on consent.
- Moral judgement has no place in criminal adjudication.

ii. Condemnation of victim-blaming

- Courts have described such practices as adding insult to injury.
- Excessive scrutiny violates constitutional morality.

iii. Media restraint

- Judicial warnings against media trials.
- Recognition of irreversible harm caused by public commentary.

Judicial interpretation has thus embedded dignity as a constitutional value in sexual offence trials.

f. Why the Gap Between Law and Practice Persists

Despite strong laws, secondary victimisation remains common.

i. Patriarchal social attitudes

- Stereotyping and moral judgement of victims.

ii. Institutional weaknesses

- Lack of gender-sensitivity training.
- Procedural insensitivity during investigation and trial.

iii. Media irresponsibility

- Sensationalism and speculative reporting.
- Violation of confidentiality norms.

These factors show that legal reform alone is insufficient without institutional and social change.

g. Ethical Dimensions of Victim Dignity

From an ethical standpoint, victim dignity engages core values:

i. Human dignity

- Victims must be treated as ends in themselves, not as means to conviction.

ii. Compassion and empathy

- Justice requires understanding trauma, not amplifying it.

iii. Responsibility of authority

- Moral duty of institutions to prevent further harm.

Ethical governance demands that procedural fairness be matched with humane conduct.

h. Making Victim-Centric Justice a Reality

To bridge the gap between law and practice:

i. Institutional capacity-building

- Mandatory gender-sensitivity training for police, prosecutors, and judges.

ii. Procedural safeguards

- Trauma-informed investigation practices.
- Audio-visual recording of statements.

- Dedicated women's desks in police stations.

iii. Accountability mechanisms

- Strict penalties for identity disclosure.
- Oversight of investigation and trial conduct.

iv. Victim support systems

- Access to legal aid and psychological counselling.

Such measures convert legal intent into lived protection.

Conclusion

Protecting the dignity of victims is not a peripheral concern; it is the moral foundation of justice. Indian law clearly rejects character assassination and identity disclosure in sexual offence cases, yet secondary victimisation persists due to weak implementation and entrenched social attitudes. True justice will be realised only when law, institutions, and society act together to uphold dignity, empathy, and constitutional morality.

Reader's Note — About This Current Affairs Compilation

Dear Aspirant,

This document is part of the PrepAlpine Current Affairs Series — designed to bring clarity, structure, and precision to your daily UPSC learning.

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

1. Orientation & Purpose

This compilation is curated primarily from the UPSC Mains perspective — with emphasis on conceptual clarity, analytical depth, and interlinkages across GS papers.

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

- factual coverage

- data recall

- Prelims-style MCQs

- objective pattern analysis

This Prelims Edition will be released separately as a standalone publication.

2. Content Length

Some sections may feel shorter or longer depending on topic relevance and news density.
To fit your personal preference, you may freely resize or summarize sections using any LLM tool (ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.) at your convenience.

3. Format Flexibility

The formatting combines:

- paragraphs

- lists

- tables

- visual cues

—all optimised for retention.

If you prefer a specific style (lists → paras, paras → tables, etc.), feel free to convert using any free LLM.

4. Monthly Current Affairs Release

The complete Monthly Current Affairs Module will be released soon, optimized to a compact 100–150 pages — comprehensive yet concise, exam-ready, and revision-efficient.

5. Join the PrepAlpine Discord Community

Be part of India's Smartest UPSC Peer Ecosystem → https://discord.gg/hqTQDSHb

What You'll Experience

- **Peer-to-Peer Discussions**
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- **Focused Study Circles**
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- **Insight Threads**
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- **Community Sessions**
  Weekly "Open Mic" sharing sessions where learners discuss strategies, mistakes, breakthroughs, and lessons from their UPSC journey.

- **An Evolving Learning Culture**
  A serious, supportive, and intelligent peer environment — no noise, no clutter.
  Learning grows here through interaction, reflection, and structured peer collaboration.

"From Isolation to Interaction — Learn the UPSC Way, the Smart Way."

6. Suggest Topics for Coverage

If you feel any important theme is missing or under-covered, simply post it in the "Suggestions" channel on our Discord server.

Our content team regularly reviews inputs and includes relevant suggestions in upcoming Monthly Current Affairs Modules.

Beyond daily updates, the PrepAlpine Discord functions as a complete UPSC learning ecosystem — offering free peer mentorship, structured discussions, practice threads, AI-powered micro-learning tools, and a community of serious aspirants working together.

Together, these resources embody the PrepAlpine vision:

Better Content. Smarter Mentorship. Intelligent Preparation.