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**EDITORIAL ANALYSIS**

# Keeping Humanity at the Centre of the AI Revolution

THE HINDU

26 June 2026

SCIENCE &amp; TECH

SOCIAL ISSUES

GS3

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# Keeping Humanity at the Centre of the AI Revolution

 **The Hindu**

26 June 2026

**GS3**
**GS4**

 Source: [ujyari.com](http://ujyari.com) — researched, fact-checked & UPSC-mapped

**INTERVIEW ANGLE**

*"If an AI system causes harm, who should bear moral and legal responsibility: the developer, the deployer, the user, or the state?"*

 Source: [Original editorial](#)
[The Hindu](#)
 **Every fact web-verified against primary sources** (<https://ujyari.com/how-we-verify/>)

## WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

As generative and decision-making AI moves from labs into hospitals, classrooms, courtrooms and welfare delivery, the gap between its capabilities and our safeguards has widened. Former Union Law Minister Ashwani Kumar's op-ed reframes the debate: the question is no longer whether AI is powerful, but whether human dignity, privacy and accountability can survive an environment of voluntary, self-policed ethics. For an aspirant, this sits at the live intersection of technology, ethics and constitutional values, and it maps directly onto GS3 (science and technology) and GS4 (ethics and accountability).

## THE CRUX IN 60 WORDS

AI offers real public good in medicine, education and disaster management, but voluntary ethics codes cannot restrain its harms to privacy, equality and dignity. The author calls for a moral compass made enforceable through binding domestic law and a coordinated global regulatory regime, keeping a human in the loop so that technological power stays subordinate to human ends.

## THE ISSUE, DECODED

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CONCEPT	WHAT IT MEANS	WHY IT MATTERS
Human-centred AI	Designing and governing AI so human dignity, autonomy and welfare remain the primary objective	Prevents a drift toward systems optimised for profit or efficiency at the cost of rights
Enforceable guardrails	Legally binding rules with audit, penalty and liability, not voluntary pledges	Self-policing charters are routinely overridden by commercial incentives
Algorithmic accountability	A clear chain of responsibility for automated decisions	Without it, harms from biased or opaque models go unredressed
Human-in-the-loop	A requirement that humans review high-stakes automated decisions	Protects due process in justice, welfare, credit and healthcare
Global regulatory regime	Coordinated cross-border standards for AI	Data and models cross borders, so national rules alone are porous

## THE ANALYSIS

- 1 The promise is not in dispute.** AI already improves early diagnosis, personalises learning, and strengthens flood, cyclone and earthquake response. The argument is for responsible adoption, not rejection, which protects the writer from a Luddite framing.
- 2 Voluntary ethics is structurally weak.** Industry codes are self-written and self-judged. When ethical restraint collides with the race for market dominance, commercial incentive usually wins. Ethics without enforcement is aspiration, not protection.
- 3 The constitutional anchor exists.** The Supreme Court's Puttaswamy verdict (2017) made privacy a fundamental right, and dignity under Article 21 is treated as **inviolable** (<https://ujiyari.com/vocab/inviolable/>). AI governance is therefore not a new value debate; it is the application of settled constitutional values to a new technology.
- 4 Opacity** (<https://ujiyari.com/vocab/opacity/>) **is the core risk.** Black-box models make consequential decisions, on credit, policing, welfare and hiring, that affected persons cannot see or contest. This corrodes equality before law and due process.
- 5 Data extraction is the fuel.** Mass harvesting of personal data trains these systems, making privacy protection and AI governance two sides of one coin rather than separate problems.

- ⑥ **The problem is global by design.** Because models and datasets move across jurisdictions, a purely national rulebook leaves gaps. A coordinated global regime is needed, and India, speaking for much of the Global South, has standing to help shape it.

## DATA AND INSTITUTIONS VAULT

### CARRY THESE INTO THE EXAM HALL.

Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017): nine-judge bench, privacy a fundamental right under Article 21.

Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (<https://ujiyari.com/legislation/dpdp-act-2023/>): India's data protection statute, consent and purpose-limitation based.

NITI Aayog National Strategy for AI (#AIForAll, 2018) and the Principles for Responsible AI (2021).

Global anchors: EU AI Act (risk-tiered, binding), OECD AI Principles, UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI (2021), Bletchley Declaration (2023), Global Partnership on AI (GPAI).

Core concepts: algorithmic bias, explainability (XAI), human-in-the-loop, accountability gap, surveillance capitalism, dual-use technology.

Constitutional values in play: dignity (Art. 21), equality (Art. 14), free speech and its limits (Art. 19).

## THE DEBATE

**Argument for enforceable regulation:** Voluntary codes have repeatedly failed to prevent surveillance, manipulation and bias. Only binding law, with audits, liability and a human-in-the-loop mandate (<https://ujiyari.com/vocab/mandate/>), can protect dignity, privacy and equality where the stakes are high.

**Argument against early hard regulation:** Rigid rules drafted before the technology stabilises can freeze a moving target, raise compliance costs, push innovators offshore, and hand a strategic lead to less scrupulous competitors. A developing economy can ill afford to fall behind.

**Balanced verdict:** The choice is not regulation versus innovation but smart, risk-tiered regulation that scales obligations to harm. Low-risk uses stay light-touch; high-stakes uses in justice, health, credit and welfare carry binding transparency and accountability duties. This preserves both the promise and the principle.

## HOW TO THINK ABOUT THIS (TRANSFERABLE SKILL)

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*For any disruptive technology question (AI, gene editing, drones, social media), do not pick a side. First concede the genuine benefit, then map the specific harms to rights and institutions, then anchor your judgement in a settled value (here, constitutional dignity). This three-step structure signals balance and earns marks in both GS3 and GS4, and it transfers to any “double-edged technology” prompt.*

## DIAGRAM-IN-WORDS

AI capability surge -> voluntary ethics codes -> commercial incentive overrides restraint -> harms to privacy, equality, dignity -> enforceable domestic law + global regime + human-in-the-loop -> technology stays subordinate to human ends

## THE WAY FORWARD

- ① **Legislate, do not exhort.** Move from voluntary charters to a binding, risk-tiered AI law with audit, penalty and clear liability.
- ② **Mandate transparency and explainability** for high-stakes automated decisions, with a right to human review.
- ③ **Fuse AI and data governance**, treating privacy protection under the DPDP Act and AI accountability as a single regime.
- ④ **Build domestic capacity**, an empowered regulator with technical talent, sandboxes for safe testing, and algorithmic auditing.
- ⑤ **Lead globally**, shaping interoperable standards through GPAI, the UN and plurilateral forums so the Global South is rule-maker, not rule-taker.
- ⑥ **Embed ethics by design**, making dignity, fairness and accountability default settings rather than afterthoughts.

## THE TAKEAWAY BOX

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*Use this to argue that technology governance is ultimately a values question; AI policy is constitutional dignity applied to code.*

*“AI must remain a tool that serves humanity, not a force that quietly redefines it; ethics without enforcement is aspiration, not protection.”*

*Puttaswamy (2017), DPDP Act 2023, NITI Aayog #AIForAll, EU AI Act risk tiers, UNESCO AI Ethics Recommendation 2021, GPAI, Bletchley Declaration.*

*Where automated decisions cause harm, the accountability gap is a classic ethical dilemma; debate the distribution of responsibility among developer, deployer, user and state.*

*Connects to GS3 questions on the impact of AI and emerging technologies, and GS4 questions on the ethical concerns in the use of technology.*

*Data protection regime, surveillance and privacy, digital divide, regulation versus innovation debate, India’s tech diplomacy.*

**Sources:** *The Hindu* (<https://www.thehindu.com>), *The Hindu Opinion* (<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion>), *PIB* (<https://pib.gov.in>)

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**KEY ARGUMENTS AT A GLANCE**

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**The AI revolution must be governed by enforceable ethical guardrails anchored in human dignity, privacy and accountability rather than left to voluntary industry codes.**

 **SUPPORTING**

- AI delivers genuine public good in medicine, education and disaster management, so the goal is responsible adoption, not rejection.
- Voluntary, self-policing ethics charters lack teeth and are routinely overridden by commercial incentives and the race for market dominance.
- Opaque algorithms, mass data extraction and automated decision-making threaten privacy, equality and the constitutional idea of human dignity.

 **COUNTER**

Premature or heavy-handed regulation could stifle innovation, push talent and investment abroad, and leave a developing economy behind in a strategic technology race.

 **WAY FORWARD**

Build a layered framework of binding domestic law plus a coordinated global regulatory regime that keeps a human in the loop, mandates transparency and fixes accountability.


**MAINS ANSWER FRAMEWORK**

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**QUESTION**

*Artificial Intelligence promises transformative gains but raises profound ethical concerns. Discuss why voluntary self-regulation is inadequate and what an enforceable, human-centred AI governance framework should contain. (250 words)*

**INTRODUCTION**

Artificial Intelligence is reshaping medicine, education and governance, yet its diffusion has outpaced ethical and legal safeguards. Former Law Minister Ashwani Kumar's intervention asks a foundational question: can a technology of this power be left to voluntary self-restraint?

**BODY**

AI's promise is real. Diagnostic models flag disease earlier, adaptive tutoring widens access to learning, and predictive systems sharpen disaster response.

But the same capabilities enable surveillance, algorithmic bias, manipulation of opinion and unaccountable automated decisions that affect liberty and livelihood. The core deficit is enforceability.

Industry ethics charters are voluntary, self-policed and easily subordinated to the commercial race for dominance, so they cannot reliably protect privacy, equality or due process. India's own jurisprudence supplies the anchor: Puttaswamy (2017) made privacy a fundamental right, and the Constitution treats human dignity as inviolable.

A credible response therefore needs binding statute, a transparency and audit mandate, a human-in-the-loop requirement for high-stakes decisions, and a clear liability chain. Because data and models cross borders, purely national rules are insufficient, which is why a coordinated global regulatory regime, with India shaping it from the Global South, becomes essential.

The aim is not to halt innovation but to ensure technological power remains subordinate to human ends.

**CONCLUSION**

AI must remain a tool that serves humanity, not a force that redefines it. The task before policymakers is to convert ethical aspiration into enforceable law, domestically and globally, so that dignity, privacy and accountability are protected by design.


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