



**PRESIDENCY
UNIVERSITY**



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Presidencian

*A Newsletter by the School of Media Studies,
Presidency University, Bengaluru*

INVINCIA 2026 DRAWS 30,000 STUDENTS TO PRESIDENCY UNIVERSITY IN GRAND CULTURAL SHOWCASE



Presidency University hosted its flagship cultural fest, *Invincia 2026*, on April 10 and 11, attracting an overwhelming crowd of over 30,000 students and more than 4,000 participants from colleges across Bengaluru and various parts of Karnataka. The two-day event transformed the university campus into a vibrant hub of creativity, competition, and entertainment, marking one of the largest student gatherings of the season.

The fest featured a diverse lineup of competitions and performances spanning music, dance, media, and cultural events, providing a platform for students to showcase their talent and engage in intercollegiate exchange. Participants competed across multiple categories, contributing to a dynamic and energetic atmosphere throughout the event.

Adding to the excitement, renowned playback singer Javed Ali and hip-hop artiste Rebel delivered electrifying performances, drawing massive crowd and energising the audience. Popular actress Sreeleela graced the occasion as the chief guest, interacting with students and officially unveiling the Presidency Group's 50 years commemorative logo, marking a significant milestone for the institution.



The event also highlighted the university's emphasis on holistic education by encouraging student participation beyond academics. Through large-scale coordination and student involvement, Invincia 2026 successfully fostered creativity, collaboration, and cultural expression among youth.

With its impressive scale, celebrity presence, and enthusiastic participation, the fest reinforced Presidency University's reputation as a vibrant academic and cultural space, bringing together students from diverse backgrounds to celebrate talent, innovation, and community spirit.



EDITORIAL:

MEDIA IN THE AGE OF ALGORITHMS

The third edition of *Presidencian* arrives at a time when the media landscape is undergoing one of its most profound transformations. Artificial Intelligence is no longer a futuristic concept; it is an active force shaping how news is gathered, produced, distributed, and consumed. From automated news writing and data-driven investigations to content recommendation algorithms and generative tools, AI is redefining the very foundations of journalism and communication.

For students and practitioners of media, this shift presents both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, AI enables faster data analysis, enhances storytelling through visualisation, and supports innovative formats such as immersive and interactive media. It allows journalists to uncover patterns, verify information, and reach audiences with greater efficiency. On the other hand, it raises critical concerns about misinformation, deepfakes, algorithmic bias, and the erosion of editorial judgment. The line between human creativity and machine-generated content is increasingly blurred, making media literacy more important than ever.

In this evolving ecosystem, the role of a media professional is not diminished but redefined. Journalists must now be not only storytellers but also critical interpreters of technology. Ethical responsibility, accuracy, and accountability remain central, even as tools and platforms evolve. The challenge lies in using AI as an aid, not a replacement, ensuring that technology enhances human values rather than undermines them.

As a School of Media Studies, it becomes imperative to prepare students for this dynamic future. Integrating AI awareness into media education, encouraging experimentation with digital tools, and fostering critical thinking are essential steps toward building responsible communicators. The goal is not merely to adapt to change but to shape it with informed perspectives and ethical clarity.

As we move forward, one thing remains certain: while technologies will continue to evolve, the core purpose of media to inform, engage, and serve society must remain constant. In the age of AI, it is this balance between innovation and responsibility that will define the future of journalism.

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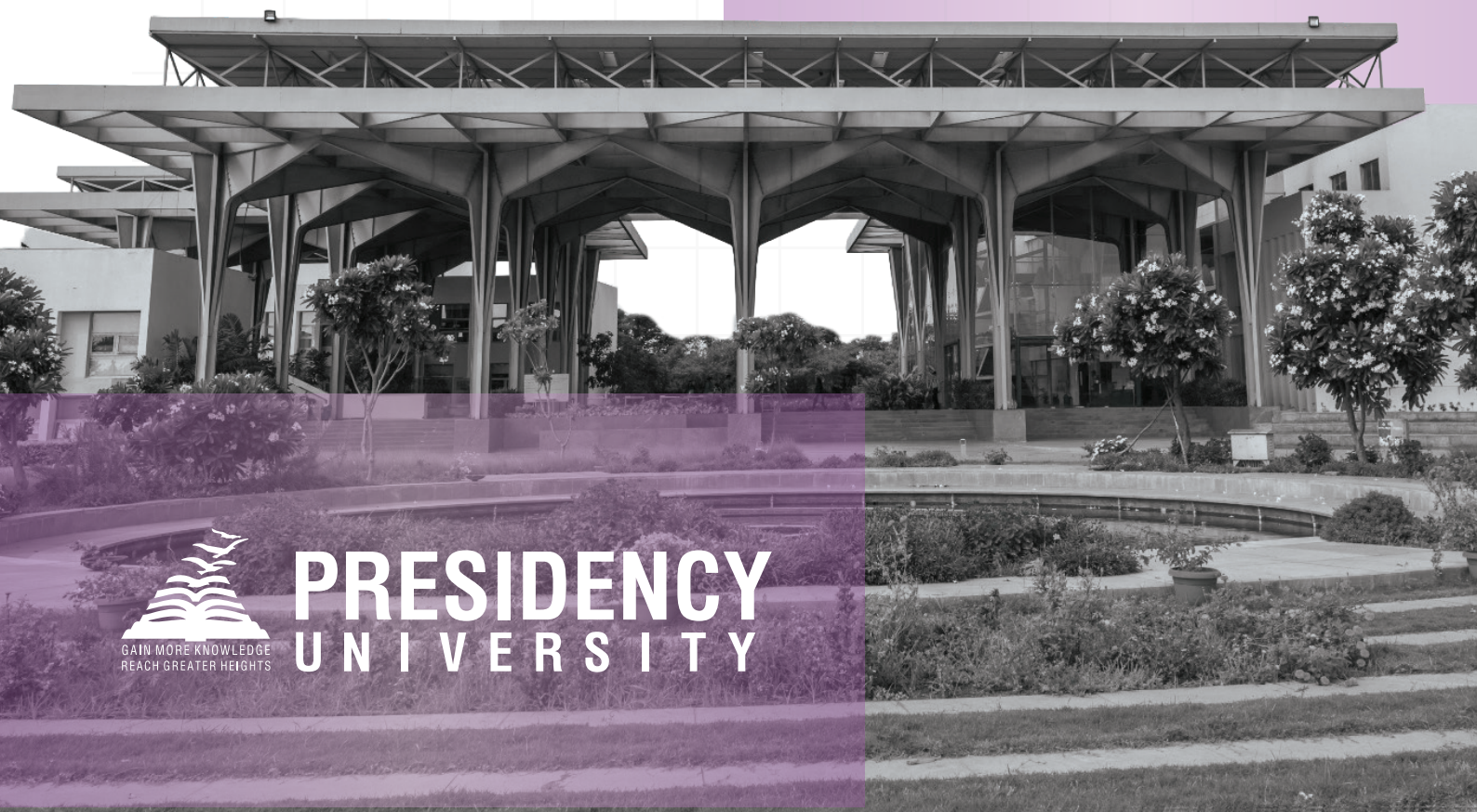
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HOW MEDIA EDUCATORS CAN MAKE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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Artificial Intelligence is transforming how media is created and delivered, reshaping press, newsrooms, film production, and digital content. With automated news writing, AI-driven editing, and deepfake detection, technology is now central to modern media. New journalists and creators increasingly rely on chatbots for research, headlines, and storyboarding. As a result, automated digital tools have become essential in newsrooms.

This rise of AI leads to an important debate: Does the human role of media educators remain necessary when technology can teach and even make editorial decisions? This question sits at the heart of India's evolving media education, where institutions adapt with AI-driven curricula. Yet, while digital storytelling and prompt engineering workshops reflect this shift, the core question is whether technology can truly replace the uniquely human editorial judgment that is crucial to depth, integrity, and ethical reporting.



The promise of AI in media education

The integration of AI into media education is especially significant in countries like India, where institutions are updating curricula to include digital storytelling, prompt engineering, and data-driven content creation. AI-based tools allow students to analyse audience data in real time, tailor content to diverse demographics, and automate tasks such as fact-checking and interview transcription. This frees students to focus on investigative journalism and creative storytelling – skills that remain at the heart of impactful media.

For educators, automated monitoring of student news feeds, grading of basic assignments, and analysis of engagement metrics save time, enabling teachers to prioritise lessons in ethics, critical thinking, and human-centred storytelling. In regions with limited access to costly media equipment, AI democratises production by enabling students to generate high-quality visuals and audio with minimal resources. This inclusion is vital for aspiring creators who might otherwise be excluded by financial barriers.

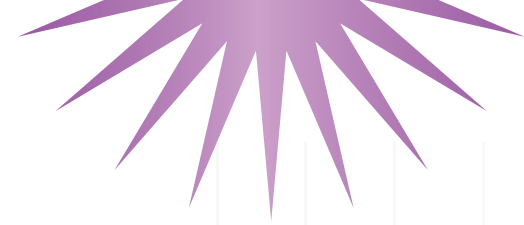
Despite these advancements, the question persists: Can technology truly replace the uniquely human role of media educators? While AI handles technical tasks efficiently, it cannot replicate ethical judgment, cultural understanding, or the mentorship that shapes responsible journalists. Algorithms lack the empathy to navigate sensitive interviews, the intuition to grasp social impact, and the courage to pursue challenging investigations. In India's diverse society, where media spans multiple languages and complex realities, the human touch remains indispensable. Teachers not only transmit knowledge but also nurture the values of trust, empathy, and social responsibility that define meaningful journalism.

Teaching together: the media professional and the machine

AI should be seen as a collaborator, not a rival, to journalists. It handles routine tasks such as data scraping and formatting, so students can focus on narrative, investigation, and ethics. Human-machine collaboration increases the media's effectiveness.

For this partnership to work, media curricula must adapt. Both learners and faculty should master technology but stay aware of its limits, such as inaccuracies and bias. The goal is not replacement but capability enhancement.

Policy and ethics are equally critical. Educators should lead discussions on the ethical implementation of AI in media, securing transparency and treating technology as a means to maintain truth rather than facilitate misinformation.



Ultimately, the heart of media education remains the human connection. The mentorship provided by educators inspires and holds students accountable—milestones like publishing a first article or documentary are achievements rooted in guidance and support, not algorithms. While AI can accelerate content production and boost efficiency, it cannot impart meaning or purpose. Media education must continue to cultivate storytellers who possess character, curiosity, and compassion—qualities that are developed through hands-on experience and human mentorship.

A media educator acts as instructor, mentor, gatekeeper of truth, and moral guide. Algorithms cannot fully grasp the ethical consequences of sensitive interviews, understand the social impact of breaking news, or recognise the courage required to pursue challenging stories. Journalism and storytelling remain fundamentally human endeavours, rooted in trust, empathy, and social responsibility. In India's diverse media sphere, shaped by multiple languages and complex social realities, human bonds remain essential. While teachers grasp cultural details that algorithms may overlook. This ensures that future journalists have a meaningful impact, rather than merely producing content. No matter how sophisticated, machines cannot replicate the intuitive judgment of experienced editors.



MASTERCLASS ON INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM HIGHLIGHTS ETHICS, RISKS, AND LEGAL BOUNDARIES

The Presidency School of Media Studies (PSOMS) organised an engaging masterclass on “Investigative Journalism: Undercover, Ethics, Risks, and Legal Boundaries,” led by noted journalist and lawyer Poonam Agarwal on 6th March, 2026. The session brought together around 70 students from the School of Media Studies and the School of Law, fostering an interdisciplinary learning environment focused on the realities of investigative reporting.

Delivering the session, Ms. Agarwal shared her extensive professional experiences, offering students a comprehensive understanding of the challenges involved in investigative journalism. She highlighted the ethical responsibilities journalists must uphold, the legal constraints they must navigate, and the personal risks often associated with uncovering sensitive information. Emphasising accountability, she explained how investigative work plays a crucial role in strengthening democratic systems by bringing critical issues into the public domain.



The session also focused on the importance of responsible reporting in the digital age. Ms. Agarwal urged students to verify information rigorously, maintain ethical standards, and remain aware of the far-reaching impact of social media in shaping public opinion. Her discussion encouraged students to approach journalism with a sense of responsibility, integrity, and critical awareness.

An interactive segment allowed participants to engage with the speaker, ask questions, and clarify their understanding of investigative practices. Students responded enthusiastically, reflecting keen interest in the subject and a deeper appreciation of the profession.

The masterclass proved to be a valuable academic experience, equipping students with practical insights into investigative journalism while inspiring them to pursue the field with courage, ethical commitment, and professionalism in an increasingly complex media landscape.



NEXT MOVE – PODCAST CONVERSATION SERIES BY SCHOOL OF MEDIA STUDIES

Next Move is a dynamic podcast and conversation series designed to bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world developments. By bringing together experts from diverse disciplines, the series creates a platform for insightful discussions on emerging trends, industry practices, and future opportunities. Each session is curated to help students understand how developments within different fields directly impact their academic journeys and career pathways, equipping them with practical knowledge, interdisciplinary perspectives, and informed decision-making skills.

Conversation Series

School of Law (SOL) – AI in Law: The Future of Legal Practice, a session featured Ms. Gargi Singh and Ms. Soyonika Gogoi, who explored the transformative role of artificial intelligence in the legal domain. The discussion highlighted how AI is streamlining legal research, contract analysis, and case prediction, while also raising ethical and regulatory concerns. The speakers emphasised the need for law students to develop technological literacy alongside legal expertise, enabling them to adapt to evolving professional demands and enhance efficiency in legal practice.

School of Commerce (SOC) – The Startup Ecosystem, featuring Mr. Baktha Sabari Rajan V and Ms Ankita Chaudhary, and students, this session provided valuable insights into the dynamics of the start-up ecosystem. The discussion focused on innovation, funding mechanisms, and entrepreneurial challenges in today's market. Students were encouraged to think beyond traditional career paths and explore entrepreneurship as a viable option, with emphasis on adaptability, risk-taking, and understanding market trends.

Professional Courses & Career Pathways, featuring Dr. Ankita Mulasi and Dr Amit Saha guided students through various professional courses and emerging career pathways. The session addressed the relevance of interdisciplinary skills, certifications, and continuous learning in a competitive job market. It offered practical advice on aligning academic choices with career goals, helping students make informed decisions about their future trajectories.



AI in Finance (on 25th March, 2026), featuring Dr. Prachi Beriwal and Dr. Gitanjali discussed the growing integration of artificial intelligence in the financial sector. The session covered applications such as algorithmic trading, fraud detection, and financial forecasting. Students gained an understanding of how AI is reshaping finance roles and the importance of acquiring analytical and technical skills to stay relevant in an increasingly data-driven industry.

Economic Slump: Impact & Insights, featuring Dr. Nandita Malini Barua and Ms Nischitha Srinivas examined the causes and consequences of economic slowdowns. The discussion provided insights into global and national economic trends, their impact on industries, and implications for employment. Students were encouraged to develop critical thinking and awareness of economic indicators, enabling them to better navigate uncertainties in their professional journeys.



STORY LAB WITH MUSHEERA

Is a podcast initiative conceptualised to explore the art and impact of storytelling in contemporary media. The idea behind the series is to create an engaging space where practitioners share their journeys, creative processes, and the evolving dynamics of narrative across platforms. By bringing in voices from journalism and content creation, the podcast aims to offer students and aspiring storytellers practical insights into crafting compelling, ethical, and impactful stories.

The series has completed two episodes.

The first episode featured Jamshed Siddiqui, Assistant Editor, Aaj Tak who shared his experiences in podcasting. The nuances of the art of storytelling, authenticity, and audience connection in storytelling.

The second episode with Poonam Aggarwal focused on investigative journalism, shedding light on in-depth reporting techniques, challenges in uncovering truths, and the responsibility of media in maintaining credibility.

Together, these episodes set the tone for Story Lab as a thoughtful and informative platform for learning the nuances of storytelling.



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DEMOCRACY IN CRISIS: BETWEEN PUBLIC WILL AND ELITE POWER

Democracy is often hailed as the most legitimate form of governance, rooted in the concept of popular sovereignty. Its beginnings in Athens introduced the notion that citizens should have a direct role in political decision-making. However, democracy has been subject to significant criticism since its inception. Philosophers like Plato and Aristotle cautioned that governance by the masses might result in instability, manipulation, and ultimately tyranny. To them, democracy was not an ideal system but a fragile one. The modern resurgence of democracy owes much to Niccolò Machiavelli, who redefined republican elected governance as both stable and capable of becoming imperial power. Over time, European nations – particularly the United Kingdom – formalised democracy through elections and parliamentary systems. These advancements coincided with industrialization, reinforcing the belief that democratic freedoms – such as open debate, expression, and participation – drive innovation, economic growth, and human creativity.

Yet, beneath this achievement lies a core contradiction. While democracy purports to embody the "will of the people," the processes that convey this will – especially elections – are not fully under public control. Conducting elections demands resources such as money, organisation, and media access, which are predominantly held by elites. Consequently, democracy often shifts from being about direct public governance to a contest among elites vying for popular approval. This observation is crucial to elite theory. Scholars like Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca contended that a minority governs all societies. Joseph Schumpeter later elaborated on this perspective, portraying democracy not as governance by the populace, but as a framework where elites compete for electoral support. In this context, elections do not dismantle elite dominance – they validate it.

The persistence of elite influence is sustained through three principal forms of power. Economic power exerts its influence on politics via campaign financing, corporate support, and lobbying activities. Informational power is exercised through the control of media and public narratives, thereby shaping citizens' perceptions of political options. Institutional power is embedded within bureaucracies, military establishments, and state structures that operate with a degree of autonomy from electoral politics. Collectively, these forces delineate the boundaries within which democratic decision-making takes place.

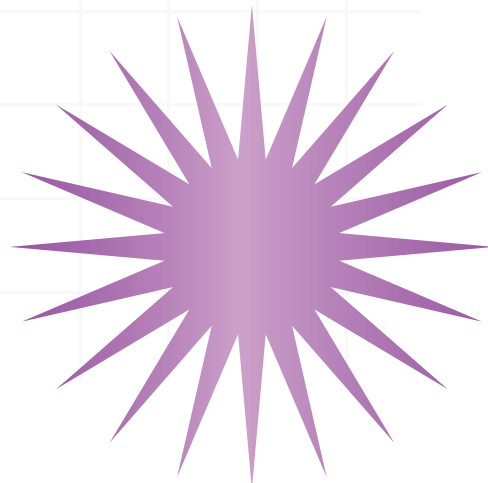
The tension is most evident in the foreign policy of the United States, where public opinion has increasingly shown skepticism toward military interventions, while the political establishment continues to view the use of force as a viable instrument of policy. Public resistance to wars has not always prevented their initiation; rather, it has often contributed to electoral shifts, bringing opposition parties to power. However, both major parties have, at different times, supported or engaged in military interventions, suggesting a continuity in strategic outlook that extends beyond electoral change.

As noted by C. Wright Mills, a "power elite" — consisting of political leaders, military personnel, and economic influencers — often makes decisions that go against public opinion. Even leaders who are elected on platforms opposing the establishment or war, like Donald Trump, often find themselves limited by these deeply rooted systems.

Nevertheless, it is not accurate to regard democracy as merely a facade. Elections hold significance. They lead to changes in governments, shifts in policies, and can be swayed by public opinion. Yet, the options presented to citizens are frequently shaped by those in power. While voters can choose between different leaders, they seldom possess the ability to alter the fundamental distribution of power.

This leads us to a crucial distinction within democratic frameworks: the contrast between biparty and multiparty systems. In biparty systems, political rivalry is concentrated, which simplifies the task for lobby groups to sway decisions by focusing on a few key players. Conversely, multiparty systems distribute power among multiple parties, offering wider representation and a greater variety of political options for voters.

From the standpoint of public authority, multiparty systems present a notable benefit. They enable a wider range of perspectives and decrease the chances of a single elite faction controlling the entire political framework. While lobbying persists, it becomes less centralised and more competitive. Interest groups, rather than focusing on one or two dominant parties, must maneuver through a complex array of participants and alliances.



Multiparty systems, while offering a more diverse political landscape, are not exempt from the influence of elites. Instead of eradicating lobbying, these systems modify its nature. Influence becomes more fragmented, strategic, and frequently driven by coalitions. Smaller parties, which can play a crucial role in government formation, become appealing targets for lobbying activities. Consequently, although multiparty systems mitigate the risk of complete elite domination, they introduce a more dispersed and negotiated form of influence. In this context, democracy should be conceptualised as a hybrid system, integrating genuine public participation with structured elite competition. The populace provides legitimacy, yet elites delineate the parameters of political choice. Real power resides not within any single institution but in the interplay among public opinion, political actors, and economic and institutional forces.

Democracy persists as the most viable form of governance, not due to its flawless reflection of the populace's will, but because it facilitates accountability, contestation, and incremental reform. Its strength resides in its capacity to adapt and accommodate dissent. However, fulfilling this potential necessitates a critical awareness of its limitations. Acknowledging the role of elites is not a repudiation of democracy; rather, it is an essential step toward enhancing its transparency, inclusivity, and genuine responsiveness to the citizenry it purports to serve.

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FAKE NEWS AND LEGAL ACCOUNTABILITY: RECENT COURT DIRECTIONS ON MISINFORMATION CONTROL

The rapid expansion of digital media and social networking platforms has transformed the way information is created, shared, and consumed. While this transformation has democratised access to information, it has also led to the proliferation of “fake news” misleading or false information disseminated with the potential to influence public opinion, disrupt social harmony, and undermine democratic processes. In recent years, Indian courts have increasingly addressed the issue of misinformation, emphasising the need for legal accountability and regulatory oversight.

The Indian judiciary has recognised fake news as a serious threat to public order and national security. Courts have highlighted that unchecked dissemination of false information can lead to panic, communal tension, and even violence. In several instances, the Supreme Court and various High Courts have issued directions to both the government and digital intermediaries to take proactive steps in curbing misinformation. These include identifying the source of fake news, strengthening fact-checking mechanisms, and ensuring prompt removal of harmful content.

One of the significant legal developments in this area is the evolving interpretation of intermediary liability under the Information Technology framework. Courts have clarified that while intermediaries such as social media platforms are not publishers in the traditional sense, they cannot remain passive when notified about unlawful or misleading content. The principle of “due diligence” has been reinforced, requiring platforms to act swiftly upon receiving complaints and to establish grievance redressal mechanisms.

Additionally, the judiciary has stressed the importance of balancing misinformation control with the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. Courts have cautioned against excessive regulation that may lead to censorship or suppression of legitimate dissent. Thus, the legal approach has been to ensure that restrictions on speech are reasonable, proportionate, and in line with constitutional safeguards.



Another notable trend is the judicial push for greater governmental accountability. Courts have directed authorities to avoid arbitrary actions and to adopt transparent procedures when dealing with fake news. This includes issuing clear guidelines, avoiding overbroad restrictions, and ensuring that regulatory measures are not misused to stifle media independence.

The rise of technologies such as deepfakes has further complicated the issue, making it increasingly difficult to distinguish between authentic and manipulated content. Courts have acknowledged these challenges and have called for stronger technological and legal frameworks to address emerging threats. This includes collaboration between regulatory bodies, technology companies, and civil society.

In conclusion, the judiciary's recent directions reflect a nuanced approach towards combating fake news. By reinforcing legal accountability while safeguarding constitutional freedoms, courts are attempting to strike a balance between regulation and liberty. As misinformation continues to evolve, the role of law will remain crucial in ensuring that the digital information ecosystem remains credible, responsible, and aligned with democratic values.

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AI IN LAW AND APPLICATION IN LEGAL SYSTEM

Information technology and artificial intelligence are key sources for the proper utilisation of information derived from algorithm-based techniques. The integration of GenAI in legal practice is expected to continue evolving, with AI tools becoming more sophisticated and capable of handling increasingly complex legal tasks. Future advancements may include AI systems that can provide real-time legal advice, assist in courtroom strategies, and offer predictive analytics for case outcomes. Algorithmic transparency, cybersecurity vulnerabilities, unfairness, bias, and discrimination, lack of contestability, legal personhood issues, intellectual property issues, adverse effects on workers, privacy and data protection issues, liability for damage, and lack of accountability.

The liability framework for the 'vulnerability' of to consolidate the understanding of critical areas of concern and guide risk and impact mitigation efforts to protect human well-being. GenAI refers to a category of artificial intelligence that is capable of creating new content, such as text, images, and audio, based on training data and large language models (LLMs). These models are trained on vast amounts of textual data, allowing them to predict and produce coherent, contextually relevant sentences based on user prompts. The professional use of predictive sources can help to understand the far consequences of the subject and align the problem to strengthen the real issues and weaknesses of their cases. Legal professionals must actively engage with these ethical considerations to harness the potential of GenAI effectively. Lawyers must exercise caution and implement best practices to mitigate the ethical risks associated with GenAI and client satisfaction. The legal sector, given its profound impact on justice and societal norms, must carefully navigate these challenges to harness GenAI's benefits while upholding professional standards and public trust in litigation and judicial analysis.

The recommendations on Ethical Guidelines for the application of GenAI in legal practice, the following recommendations are proposed to resolve the key issues:

Implement robust data protection measures: Law firms should adopt stringent data protection protocols to safeguard client information when using GenAI tools.



Enhance AI Transparency: Legal AI developers should focus on creating more transparent models, allowing users to understand how decisions are made.

These challenges underscore the need for careful consideration and proactive management of the ethical implications of AI-in-law. The predictive assertion of AI is based on a particular condition for the regulation of the rights-based approach. Human-centric errors and advanced technology-based data are considerations in the decision-making process.

Establish clear accountability mechanisms: Regulatory bodies should develop guidelines that clarify accountability for AI-generated errors and ensure that responsibility is appropriately allocated. The adoption of GenAI challenges ethical norms, raising questions about the accuracy of GenAI outputs, potential biases in decision-making, and data privacy concerns.

The ethical challenges associated with GenAI in legal practice are multifaceted. These include issues of bias and fairness, risks to confidentiality and data privacy, and concerns over transparency and accountability. The adoption of best practices, adhering to regulatory guidelines, and participating in the development of ethical standards can enhance their operational efficiency while maintaining client trust and upholding the highest standards of legal integrity.

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RIGHT TO DIE WITH DIGNITY: RETHINKING LIFE, LAW AND COMPASSION IN INDIA

In the present times, the modern medicine has achieved extraordinary feats, including replacement of organs, revival of failing hearts and sustaining bodily functions through sophisticated technologies. Yet, these advancements have also created difficult moral and legal questions. When can medical science prolong biological life indefinitely? Should the law compel it to do so even when condition of patient is beyond recovery?

A recent ruling of top court in *Harish Rana v. Union of India* (2026) has once again brought the sensitive issue of passive euthanasia including the right to die with dignity into the public spotlight. The case involved a young man who had remained in a continuous vegetative state for more than a decade as a result of a brain injury. A committee constituted of medical experts concluded, without any contradiction, that patient's brain damage was irreversible. His biological existence is possible due to artificial feeding and hydration leaving no scope of recovery. Resultantly, the apex court was called upon to decide whether the continuation of such life-sustaining treatment was in accordance with right to life under article 21 of the Constitution of India. Considering the transformative nature of the constitution, the court opined that right to life is no longer understood as merely the right to breathe. It is the right to life with dignity – and in some circumstances – the right to die with dignity.

The Constitutional Foundation

Article 21 of the Constitution states that, “no person shall be deprived of life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.” Over the decades, the Supreme Court has liberally interpreted this article transformed it into one of the most powerful safeguards of human rights in India. In *Gian Kaur v. State of Punjab* (1996), the Supreme Court declared that right to life does not include right to die. Recognising passive euthanasia, the top court in *Common Cause v. Union of India* (2018) held that the right to live with dignity includes the right to die with dignity. The court also validated the concept of advance medical directives or living wills. It allowed the individual to specify his wishes regarding medical treatment in case he becomes incapable of expressing consent. The *Harish Rana Case* (2026) represented the practical application of these principles for the first time.

Understanding Passive Euthanasia

The debate surrounding euthanasia is often results in confusion between active and passive forms. Active euthanasia connotes a deliberate act to cause death. It is illegal in India. Passive euthanasia involves the withdrawal of medical treatment that prolongs patient's life and there is no prospect of recovery. In the present case the court opined that in case a patient's life is sustained with the help of nutrition and hydration administered through a feeding tube constituted medical treatment for more than a decade then withdrawing such medical support under appropriate safeguards would fall within the scope of passive euthanasia as the same has been recognised in the Common Cause Judgment (2018).

The Role of Human Dignity

Here, apex court's reasoning lies upon the concept of dignity. The Constitution recognises dignity as the very essence of human life and not as mere biological existence. Here, an important ethical question may arise that is; whether forcing a person to remain in an irreversible vegetative state without meaningful interaction with the world truly protect the dignity that the Constitution is committed to uphold? The Court opined that the sanctity of life is the basic principle of constitutional law. The court, however, further clarified that recognising dignity requires respect for autonomy and compassion for suffering. In case a medical treatment does prolong biological existence without any prospect of recovery, it may no longer serve the purpose of preserving dignity.

The Best Interest of the Patient

Another important principle underscored by the Court is the **Best Interest Of The Patient**. If a patient is not able to communicate his wishes due to medical issues, decision must be taken by considering various factors such as medical prognosis, the expected quality of life, the ethical responsibilities of doctors and the views of close family members who act as caregivers. In the present case, medical board, after carefully examining all relevant factors, opined that the patient had suffered irreversible brain damage leaving no hope of recovery. The family members, who had cared for him for over a decade, also expressed that continuing with such treatment will serve no meaningful purpose and only prolong suffering.



Understanding Passive Euthanasia

Since euthanasia raises serious ethical concerns, the court has insisted on a carefully regulated process before life-sustaining treatment can be withdrawn. The guidelines issued in Common Cause Case (2018) must be complied including the requirement of medical boards to evaluate the patient's condition and confirm the prognosis. All the decisions must be taken with transparency and medical expertise. These safeguards are essential in a society where social and economic pressures might otherwise influence decisions involving life and death.

The Need for Legislative Action

Despite the fact that the judiciary has been proactive and committed to safeguard what is in the best interest of a patient, India lacks a comprehensive statute governing euthanasia and end-of-life care. The top court itself has, on numerous occasions, acknowledged that Parliament must enact a law aimed at addressing issues such as living wills, medical decision-making, palliative care and safeguards against misuse. A proper legislation would certainly bring clarity for patients, families and doctors while ensuring that constitutional values are respected.

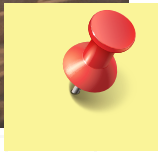
A Question for Compassion

Ultimately, the debate over euthanasia is a profoundly human one. It forces us to cope up with difficult questions about suffering, dignity and the limits of medical intervention. It also asks whether compassion sometimes requires allowing nature to take its own course rather than prolonging life through artificial means. The Supreme Court's evolving jurisprudence in India suggests that the Constitution does not demand blind adherence to biological survival of human being at any cost. Instead, it gives a call for a humane balance between the sanctity of life and the dignity of an individual. As a result of more advancement of medical technology in times to come, such questions will only become more pressing. It is high time India move toward a more robust legal and ethical framework that respects human dignity while protecting vulnerable individuals. In the end, the right to die with dignity is not about choosing death over life. It is about ensuring that when life reaches its inevitable end, the law allows that final journey to occur with compassion, respect and humanity.

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CLOTHES, COMMUNITY AND CHANGE: A VOLUNTEER'S STORY FROM BENGALURU

An interview with Shivangi of Goonj

Banashree Pal, B.A. (JMC) 2024-2026 Batch

In a country where millions still struggle to meet basic necessities, organisations like Goonj are redefining the idea of charity by focusing on dignity and community-driven change. Through its initiatives, Goonj connects urban surplus with rural needs, addressing not only material shortages but also deeper social issues related to human rights and equity.

In an exclusive conversation with RightNow, Shivangi, a volunteer with over three years of experience at Goonj's Bengaluru chapter, shares her journey, the challenges she encountered in rural communities, and the lessons she learned while working at the grassroots level.

What inspired you to start working with an NGO? Was there a particular moment that influenced your decision?

Shivangi: *My inspiration comes from my mother's story. She grew up in a village where her family struggled financially, and there were times when they did not even have enough food. The Missionaries of Charity near their home would provide meals and clothes. Those donated clothes were what she wore during festivals and Christmas. Hearing that story while growing up stayed with me. It made me realise how something as simple as clothing or food can have a deep impact on people's lives.*

When I learned about Goonj's work, I felt it was a meaningful way to give back to society.

What does your work at Goonj involve?

Shivangi: *At Goonj, my work primarily involves collecting and distributing clothes and other essential items. However, the organisation's mission goes beyond charity. It is not just about giving things away – it is about restoring dignity.*

We believe in connecting urban surplus with rural needs in a way that respects people's self-worth. Instead of treating donations as handouts, the goal is to encourage communities to participate in development activities and create change from within.

When you began working in rural areas, how different was the reality compared to what you had imagined?

Shivangi: *The reality on the ground was far more complex than I had expected. I initially thought people would readily accept whatever help we offered. But in many rural communities across states like Karnataka and West Bengal, we encountered a different situation.*

For example, some women refused items such as undergarments or even sanitary pads. At first, it was surprising and confusing. But over time I realised that these responses were shaped by social conditioning and cultural norms that had been followed for generations.

What does this tell us about the larger human rights situation in rural communities?

Shivangi: *It highlights how many rural voices remain invisible in mainstream conversations. In urban areas, we often talk about equality, rights, and empowerment. But many people living in villages are not part of these discussions.*

These women are not different from us. However, their circumstances and social environment limit their choices. Many grow up believing that certain restrictions are normal, and they rarely get the opportunity to question them.

Why do you think such issues often go unnoticed?

Shivangi: *Many human rights violations remain unnoticed because they do not directly affect privileged sections of society. If something does not impact us personally, we rarely question it.*

For instance, there are still families that do not prioritise educating their daughters simply because they do not see its value. These issues persist quietly, without receiving enough attention.

How do local communities usually respond to your work?

Shivangi: Most communities are not openly hostile, but they can be silent. Many beliefs are deeply rooted in tradition and everyday life.

When we ask women why they do not want certain items, they often say, "We have never worn them." That response reflects how strongly social norms shape people's behaviour.

This silence is not necessarily resistance; it is often a quiet acceptance of long-standing practices. Sometimes people do not even realise they have the option to question these norms.

Have you faced criticism or pushback for working in the NGO sector?

Shivangi: Yes, occasionally. Some people still believe that working with NGOs is not a "real job." There have been moments when such comments felt discouraging.

However, whenever I face difficult days, I remind myself of my mother's story and the difference that timely support made in her life. That keeps me motivated.

What keeps you going when change seems slow?

Shivangi: *Even when change feels slow, it is still happening.*

When I first began visiting some villages, volunteers were not even allowed to enter certain communities, and women were not permitted to speak with us. Today, those same communities are more open and willing to interact.

When I look back and see that progress, it reassures me that change is possible.

I often remember a quote by Mother Teresa, "Not everyone can do great things, but everyone can do small things with great love. Even if we can change one life, the effort becomes worthwhile."

Looking back, what changes have made you feel that your work truly matters?

Shivangi: *When I first visited some villages, many women rarely stepped out of their homes and basic facilities were missing.*

Today, I can see visible progress. Women are more confident, communities are more open, and infrastructure has improved. Even small changes add up over time, and witnessing that growth makes me realise that this work truly matters.

What advice would you give students and young people who want to support human rights but don't know where to begin?

Shivangi: *My advice is simple: start small.*

You do not need to make large donations or immediately join an NGO. Look around you. There is always something that can be improved in your community.

If every person does one small good thing, it can collectively create meaningful change.

Through her work with Goonj, Shivangi demonstrates that human rights are not just theoretical ideas discussed in policy debates. They are lived realities shaped by everyday actions from sharing resources to questioning social norms and empowering communities to grow with dignity.





WHEN THE LAW FAILS THE INNOCENT: A REVIEW OF COURT: STATE VS. A NOBODY

Court: State vs. A Nobody (2025), a Telugu-language legal drama presented by Nani and directed by debutant Ram Jagadeesh, is a compelling courtroom narrative that resonates deeply with contemporary Indian socio-legal issues, particularly the misuse of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. *Court: State vs. A Nobody* blends intense legal proceedings with emotional depth, focusing on a teenage boy falsely accused under the POCSO Act due to a vengeful uncle's manipulation following a teenage romance gone awry.

The film centers on Chandrashekar, a 19-year-old from a modest background, who falls in love with Jabilli, a 17-year-old from a wealthy family. Their romance takes a dark turn when Jabilli's uncle, Mangapathi, files a POCSO case against Chandrashekar, alleging sexual misconduct. The narrative unfolds through the efforts of Surya Teja, a junior lawyer, to defend Chandrashekar against a corrupt system manipulated by wealth and influence. The film's strength lies in its unflinching portrayal of class disparities and the weaponisation of legal frameworks. Priyadarshi Pulikonda delivers a standout performance as Surya Teja, blending emotional depth with sharp courtroom oratory, while Sivaji's portrayal of a grieving father adds gravitas. Harsh Roshan and Sridevi, as the young lovers, bring authenticity to their roles, though the first half's pacing, focusing on their romance, feels sluggish compared to the gripping courtroom sequences.

The film's strength lies in its realistic depiction of courtroom dynamics, avoiding Bollywood-esque theatrics, and delivering clap-worthy dialogues that resonate with audiences. Its second half, particularly the courtroom scenes, is noted for gripping intensity and emotional weight, making it a standout in Telugu cinema's sparse courtroom genre. However, the slow-paced first half, focusing on teenage love, may test viewers' patience, though it sets up the stakes effectively.

The film's based on the POCSO Act is both its triumph and a point of critical contention. Enacted in 2012 to safeguard children from sexual offenses, the POCSO Act is a critical legal framework in India, but Court highlights its vulnerability to misuse. The Act's stringent provisions, such as mandatory reporting and special courts, aim to protect minors but can be exploited in personal vendettas, as depicted in the film. This narrative choice resonates with real-world concerns, as scholars note that false POCSO complaints, though a minority, can devastate lives due to the Act's presumption of guilt and prolonged legal processes (Tiwari, 2020). The film critiques how such misuse disproportionately affects the underprivileged, who lack the resources to navigate complex legal battles. By framing the POCSO case within a broader satire of judicial dysfunction, the film questions whether the system serves justice or perpetuates oppression.

The story underscores how personal vendettas can exploit the act's stringent provisions, leading to wrongful accusations that devastate lives. Through the protagonist's ordeal — arrested without bail and facing societal stigma — the film educates viewers on the act's implications while advocating for legal awareness. By framing the POCSO Act primarily through a lens of misuse, it may inadvertently downplay its necessity in protecting genuine victims. The absence of a nuanced exploration of legitimate POCSO cases limits the film's depth, potentially skewing audience perception toward skepticism of the law rather than a balanced critique of its implementation.

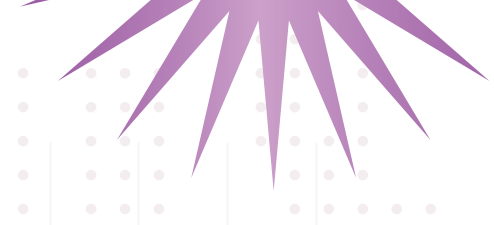
Critically, Court excels in portraying systemic issues—class disparities, corruption, and judicial apathy — echoing themes from Chaitanya Tamhane's 2014 Marathi film "Court." Its realistic aesthetic, bolstered by Vijay Bulganin's cinematography, grounds the drama in everyday struggles, making characters relatable. Yet, the film's reliance on a predictable resolution, where a junior lawyer heroically secures justice, slightly undermines its realism, leaning into commercial cinema's escapism.



Nevertheless, Court is a bold step which encourage discourse on social justice and legal reform. Its call for POCSO Act education in schools is a forward-thinking suggestion, though the execution could have been more comprehensive. Overall, Court: State vs. A Nobody is a must-watch for its emotional resonance and critical lens on India's legal landscape, despite minor narrative shortcomings.

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RETHINKING TEACHING IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial Intelligence has rapidly entered classrooms, not as a distant concept but as an everyday tool used by students for assignments, explanations, and even exam preparation. For many teachers, this shift has raised concerns about academic integrity, originality, and the diminishing role of human effort in learning. However, focusing only on these challenges risks overlooking a more important reality. AI is not replacing education, it is reshaping it. The responsibility now lies with educators to understand this shift and adapt their teaching practices accordingly.

Rather than resisting AI, teachers must begin to see it as part of the evolving learning ecosystem. Students are already engaging with AI tools, often with greater ease than educators themselves. Ignoring this reality creates a disconnect between teaching methods and learning practices. Instead, classrooms should become spaces where AI is openly discussed, critically examined, and meaningfully integrated. This requires a shift in the teacher's role, from being the primary source of information to becoming a guide who helps students question, interpret, and apply knowledge.

AI as a support system, not a shortcut

One of the most immediate advantages of AI in education is its ability to support teachers in routine and time consuming tasks. Lesson planning, content creation, question generation, and even basic assessment can be streamlined using AI tools. This does not reduce the importance of the teacher. Rather, it frees up valuable time that can be invested in student interaction, mentoring, and deeper engagement. In this sense, AI functions as a teaching assistant, efficient, responsive, and always available, but lacking the human sensitivity that defines meaningful education.

At the same time, AI has the potential to make learning more personalised. In a typical classroom, students have varied learning speeds, interests, and abilities, making it difficult for a single teaching method to address everyone's needs. AI can help bridge this gap by offering customised explanations, additional practice, and instant feedback. A student struggling with a concept can receive simplified guidance, while an advanced learner can explore more complex dimensions of the same topic. When used thoughtfully, AI can enhance inclusivity and improve overall learning outcomes.

The ease and accessibility of AI also make it tempting for students to rely on it as a shortcut rather than a support. Assignments generated with minimal effort, answers copied without understanding, and overdependence on automated responses can weaken critical thinking skills. This is where the teacher's role becomes even more crucial, not to restrict AI use, but to frame it responsibly. Students must be encouraged to question AI outputs, verify information, and engage with content beyond surface level answers.

Redefining learning and assessment

The growing presence of AI calls for a rethinking of traditional assessment methods. Assignments that can be easily generated by AI no longer serve as reliable indicators of student understanding. Instead, educators must design evaluation strategies that emphasise application, analysis, and reflection. Oral presentations, classroom discussions, project based learning, and process oriented assessments can ensure that students actively engage with the subject rather than passively reproducing information.

Equally important is the need to develop digital and ethical awareness among students. AI systems are not neutral. They can reflect biases, produce inaccurate information, and raise concerns related to data privacy. Teachers must guide students in recognising these limitations and using AI responsibly. This includes acknowledging AI assistance in academic work, understanding its boundaries, and maintaining academic honesty.



The integration of AI in education is not about technology replacing teachers, but about teachers evolving alongside technology. The essence of teaching, empathy, mentorship, and the ability to inspire cannot be replicated by machines. What AI can do is enhance efficiency and expand possibilities, but it is the teacher who gives direction and meaning to the learning process.

As classrooms continue to change, the question is no longer whether AI should be used, but how it can be used effectively. Educators who embrace this shift with clarity and purpose will not only remain relevant but will also shape a more thoughtful and responsible generation of learners.

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