



BAJIRAO IAS ACADEMY

THE HINDU ANALYSIS

27th JANUARY 2026

What is UGC and why is there controversy surrounding its new regulations for 2026?



**UGC EQUITY GUIDELINES
2026**

How will U.S exit affect solar alliance?

India needs public funded geriatric care

Uproar against new UGC equity regulations

Gallantry awards in India

Prelims Practice question for Today

Q. With reference to the Monroe Doctrine, consider the following statements:

- 1. It was proclaimed by the United States in the early 19th century.
- 2. It opposed further European colonization in the Americas.
- 3. It declared that the United States would not interfere in the internal affairs of European countries.
- 4. It led to the immediate withdrawal of European powers from their colonies in Latin America.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4



The Donroe Doctrine, Venezuela's fragile pragmatism

Several other rules on contraband, which is more evident than in the aftermath of the U.S. military intervention in Venezuela and its abolition of sitting President Nicolás Maduro. On January 15, as Venezuela's opposition leader María Corina Machado met U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House and handed over the Nobel Peace Prize she had won in 2022 for leading Venezuela's movement against "autocracy," CIA Director John Ratcliffe was in Caracas meeting with Nancy Rodríguez, the Maduro's former Vice President and now the interim President of the beleaguered country. On January 14, Mr. Trump had directed Mr. Rodríguez as "a useful person" with whom the U.S. was "getting along very well."

This article, when the outbreak of an invasion is underway, is a sign of an regime's power to lead the nation and its citizens to a better future. It is a sign of a regime's power to lead the nation and its citizens to a better future. It is a sign of a regime's power to lead the nation and its citizens to a better future.

Learnings beyond borders

Mr. Washington's latest focus is on its own constraints. Venezuela's crisis is predominantly a result of its own policy, especially in the oil and reform. Excessive chief executive publicly called Venezuela "unsustainable" with oil prices relatively low, the profit margins that would justify such investment remain uncertain. This economic reality may ultimately require the administration to draw down its assets for Venezuela's (and including only its own and India through licensed intermediaries and more investment to restore the regime's control of the oil industry and the economy.

Donroe and a balancing act

As Vice President overseeing the economy under U.S. sanctions, Mr. Rodríguez managed to bring down hyperinflation and achieve modest GDP growth from a low base. Oil production, which had collapsed below 400,000 barrels a day, recovered to 100,000 barrels a day.

MONROE DOCTRINE

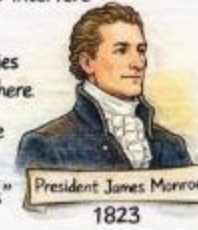
(1823) EXPLAINED SIMPLY



THE MONROE DOCTRINE

OVERVIEW

- US policy established in 1823, warning European powers not to interfere in the Americas;
- No new European colonies in the Western Hemisphere.
- US sphere of influence in the Americas.
- “America for Americans”



SINCE 1823: “America’s Backyard”



1823: Asserted US influence.

Cold War: Curb communism in Latin America

CONTEXT & REASON

- 1815: After Napoleon’s defeat, European powers wanted to reclaim colonies in Latin America.
- US feared threats to its influence.



| 1823 | Cold War | Now |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| - Asserted US influence | - Curb communism in Latin America | - Counter China’s growing presence |

CRITICISM & CONCERNS

- “Big Brother” attitude of US dominance.
- Interference in Latin American affairs.
- Actions often in self-interest (e.g., supporting coups).



CURRENT RELEVANCE

- China & Russia increasing influence in Latin America
- US seeks to counter these efforts to protect its strategic interests.



Prelims Practice question for Today

Q. With reference to the Gallantry awards, consider the following statements:

1. These awards are given by the Government of India to individuals who have made significant contributions in various fields such as art, literature, science, public service, and social work.
2. These awards are announced twice a year.
3. The highest gallantry award is the Param Vir Chakra, followed by the Ashoka Chakra in terms of precedence.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- [A] 1 and 2 only
[B] 2 and 3 only
[C] 1 and 3 only
[D] 1, 2 and 3

Military might meets heritage of the nation on Kartavya Path

President leads ceremony marked by gaiety and patriotic fervour; 100 artists came together to kick-start the celebration on the theme of unity in diversity; EU military contingent participates; tri-services tableau showcases weapon systems

Alisha Dutta
Suruchi Kumari
NEW DELHI

India celebrated its 77th Republic Day on Monday with a grand display of military prowess and cultural heritage, as missiles, armed forces battalions and artists competed for attention on Kartavya Path. While the 150th year celebrations of the National Song, *Vande Mataram*, was the prominent theme, the event celebrated the country's successes during last year's "Operation Sindoor".

President Droupadi Murmu presided over the event. President of the European Council, Antonio Costa and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen were the chief guests. Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted Ms. Murmu and the chief guests, who arrived in traditional horse-drawn buggies, at the podium. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and several other Union Ministers, top military officials, foreign



Big honour: President Droupadi Murmu confers Ashoka Chakra on Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla on Monday. *AP*

diplomats, and senior officials were among the spectators.

The celebrations began with Ms. Murmu conferring India's highest peacetime gallantry award, Ashoka Chakra, on Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla for being the first Indian to set foot on the International Space Station.

Over 100 artists came together to kick-start the celebration on the theme of *Vividata Mein Ekta* (unity in diversity), perform-

ing with traditional musical instruments from across the country, to demonstrate the nation's rich cultural diversity. The parade was led by Parade Commander Lieutenant-General Bhavish Kumar, General Officer Commanding, Delhi Area, a second-generation officer.

A tri-services tableau showcased replicas of major weapon systems deployed by the defence forces during Operation Sindoor in May 2025.

30,000 personnel keep Delhi under tight watch

Alisha Dutta
NEW DELHI

The national capital remained under tight security with Delhi Police deploying over 30,000 personnel and monitoring every movement with AI-enabled cameras, smart glasses and multi-layered security, as the country

celebrated its 77th Republic Day on Monday.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Additional Commissioner of Police Devesh Kumar Mahla said, at least 10,000 police personnel were stationed in the New Delhi district alone, which included the ceremonial parade route and several high security zones.

The celebration also saw the parade debut of the newly raised Bhairav Battalion, a specialised assault infantry unit. In addition, a military contingent from the European Union participated. It was the EU's first participation at such an event outside Europe. A total of 30 tableaux – 17 of States and Union Territories and 13 of various Ministries and Departments – rolled down Kartavya Path. Showcasing India's first Water Metro,

Kerala's tableau depicted the State's achievement of 100% digital literacy and green mobility. Chhattisgarh's tableau, themed "The Mantra of Freedom, *Vande Mataram*", paid tribute to tribal freedom fighters while Gujarat's tableau highlighted *Vande Mataram* and honoured Bhikaji Cama, underlining the State's role in the freedom movement. This year, the enclosures for the parade were named after the rivers of the nation.

How will U.S exit affect solar alliance?

How will U.S. exit affect solar alliance?

When was the International Solar Alliance first set up? Where is it based? Will U.S. actions affect India's solar module manufacturing capacity? What about investments in solar power projects? How will it affect African nations and other poorer developing countries?

EXPLAINER

Kunal Shankar
Shikha Kumari

The story so far:
In January 7, the U.S. government announced that it would withdraw from 66 international organisations. The reason given was that these bodies no longer served American interests. Among them were major climate platforms, including the International Solar Alliance (ISA), an organisation headquartered in India and jointly led by India and France.

What is the ISA?
The ISA was set up in 2015 to make solar power cheaper and easier to adopt, especially in developing countries. While it doesn't build solar plants itself, it helps countries access finance, reduce risk for investors, and speed up solar adoption. Today, the Alliance has over 120 member countries and works across Africa, Asia, and island nations. The U.S. joined fairly late, in 2021. Over three years, it has contributed around \$2.1 million.

How will U.S. exit affect the ISA?
The U.S. exit will not really harm the alliance financially. U.S. contribution made up only about 1% of the Alliance's total funds. Indian officials have already said that the ISA's day-to-day work will continue, and that ongoing programmes will not be shut down. Moreover, training and capacity-building efforts are still in place. But economics is not only about budgets, it's also about confidence. And that's where the ripple effects begin.

What about India's solar industry?
As India does not depend on the U.S. for solar panels or key equipment, solar power will not become more expensive. In fact, India now makes a large share of solar components on its own. As of late

these jobs are not affected by U.S. climate policy. There is even a possible upside. As the U.S. becomes more inward-looking and slows renewable approvals at home, it may still need clean energy equipment. With the U.S. having supply tensions with China and Mexico, Indian manufacturers could find openings, either through exports or by setting up units that meet U.S. standards. A lot however, hinges on the ongoing talks for a bilateral trade agreement between New Delhi and Washington.

Where is the real economic risk?
Mostly outside India. The ISA works extensively in Africa and poorer developing countries. These regions depend heavily on cheap loans and international cooperation to build solar projects. When a large economy like the U.S. steps back from climate engagement, lenders can turn cautious; projects can slow down; and decisions can take longer. If solar growth slows in these regions, Indian companies looking to expand abroad may feel the impact.

The ISA is also one of India's key tools for climate leadership and diplomacy in the Global South. It helps India build influence, open markets, and support Indian companies overseas. While the U.S. exit removes one influential partner and some technical expertise, it does not change who leads the alliance. India still does. That leadership now comes with more responsibility.

What next?
Solar power in India does not become costlier, domestic projects are not threatened, and jobs inside India remain secure. The real challenge then is a more divided global climate landscape, where cooperation is harder and emerging markets need to work harder to attract finance. For India's solar industry, this is not a shock. It is a stress test. And compared with where it stood a few years ago, India appears to be better prepared to handle it.

THE GIST

- ▼ The U.S. exit will not really harm the alliance financially. U.S. contribution made up only about 1% of the Alliance's total funds.
- ▼ Most solar projects in India are driven by domestic demand. They are backed by long-term contracts with state utilities and central agencies.
- ▼ The ISA works extensively in Africa and poorer developing countries. When a large economy like the U.S. steps back from climate engagement, lenders can turn cautious.

Stress factor: President Droupadi Murmu addresses the inaugural session of the Eighth International Solar Alliance Assembly, in New Delhi on October 28, 2025. *AP*

2025, India's solar module manufacturing capacity was close to 144 gigawatts. Solar cell manufacturing was around 25 gigawatts and is growing fast, with Indian companies investing across the entire supply chain. Moreover, China is by far the largest producer of high-efficiency mass market solar modules and cells, with 70% of the global cell producing capacity. In fact, India imported about \$1.7 billion worth of Photovoltaic (PV) modules from China in FY25, as per a Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) report in Parliament. This makes it clear that the recent U.S. decision does not push up project costs in India. It does not affect electricity tariffs either. For consumers, nothing changes.

Will investments slow down?
Again, unlikely. Most solar projects in India are driven by domestic demand. They are backed by long-term contracts with state utilities and central agencies. Investors look at India's power demand, policy stability, and growth potential. The U.S. is not the main source of funding for Indian solar projects. Indian banks, global funds, and development institutions continue to invest based on India's market fundamentals. So the pipeline of projects inside India remains intact. Even with respect to jobs, India is relatively well-protected. Solar jobs in India come mainly from manufacturing, installation, and operations within the country. Since India is rapidly building a strong local manufacturing capacity,

U.S. Exit from the International Solar Alliance (ISA): Implications

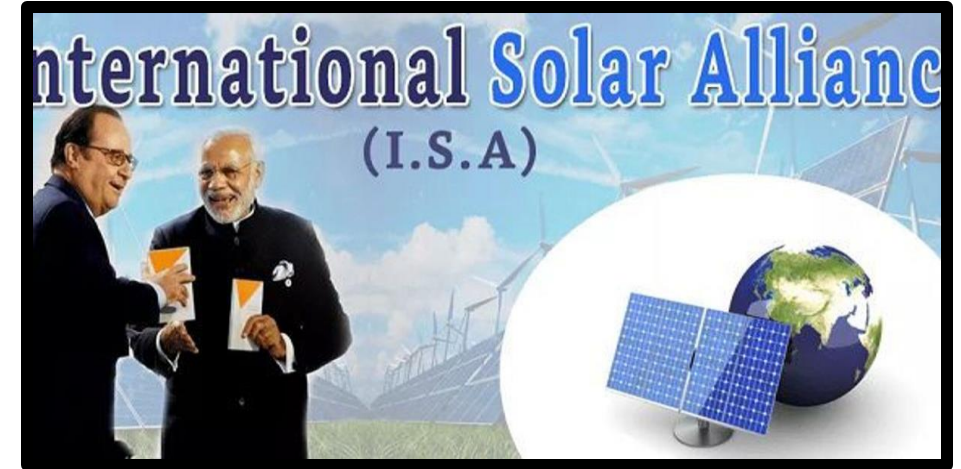
- On January 7, the United States announced its withdrawal from 66 international organisations, including the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, citing that these platforms no longer served U.S. national interests.
- The ISA, headquartered in India and jointly led by India and France, is a key multilateral initiative aimed at promoting solar energy adoption, particularly in developing countries.
- While the decision has raised concerns globally, its implications vary for India, the ISA, and the broader climate governance framework

About the International Solar Alliance (ISA)

Established in **2015**, the ISA seeks to make solar power **affordable, accessible, and scalable**, especially in the Global South. Rather than building projects directly, it focuses on:

- Mobilising finance
- Reducing investment risks
- Capacity building and training
- Accelerating solar adoption

Today, the ISA has **over 120 member countries** across Africa, Asia, and Small Island Developing States. The U.S. joined relatively late in 2021 and contributed about **\$2.1 million**, roughly **1% of total funds**.



An **international** group of solar-rich countries located between the **Tropics of Cancer** and **Capricorn**.



isa

- 120 signatory countries, 102 fully ratified.
 - All **UN member states** can join the ISA.
- Non-tropical countries can join but lack voting rights.**

India and **France** collaborate to address climate change with **solar energy solutions**.



Launched: COP21 - Paris (2015), it came into force in **2017**.

Vision :  Let us together make the sun brighter.

Aims to achieve : SDG



Headquarters: National Institute for Solar Energy of India, Gurugram.

Mission :  Every home no matter how far away, will have a light at home.

The **UN General Assembly** granted **observer status** to the **ISA** in 2021.

The ISA's **'Towards 1000' strategy** aims to :

- Mobilize **\$1000 billion** in solar **investments** by 2030
- Provide clean energy for **1 billion individuals**.
- Install **1000 GW** of solar capacity



Impact of the U.S. Exit on the ISA

Financially, the impact is limited. Indian officials have clarified that:

- Day-to-day operations will continue
- Ongoing programmes will not be shut down
- Training and capacity-building initiatives remain intact

However, the **confidence effect** is more significant. The withdrawal of a major economy can:

- Increase lender caution
- Delay project approvals
- Weaken multilateral climate momentum

This is particularly relevant for **Africa and poorer developing countries**, where ISA-supported solar projects rely heavily on international cooperation and concessional finance.



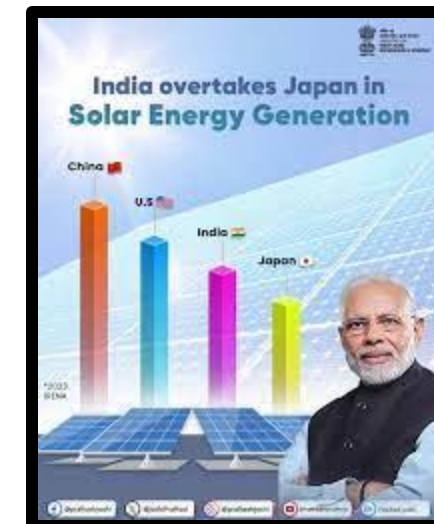
Implications for India's Solar Industry

For India, the direct economic impact is minimal:

- India does not depend on the U.S. for solar equipment
- Domestic manufacturing capacity is strong (≈ 144 GW modules; 25 GW cells)
- Imports largely come from China, not the U.S.

Solar tariffs, project costs, and domestic investments remain **unaffected**. Employment in manufacturing, installation, and operations is also secure.

In fact, there may be an **upside**, as Indian manufacturers could find export opportunities if the U.S. reduces domestic renewable approvals but still needs clean energy equipment.



India needs public funded geriatric care

Mind the time

India needs public-funded geriatric care to take care of its elderly

While India is often celebrated for its demographic dividend, its States are undergoing a significant but uneven demographic transition. According to a new RBI report, Kerala and Tamil Nadu will be "ageing States" by 2036 because their elderly populations will exceed 22% and 20%, respectively. On the other hand, the working age populations of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Jharkhand will continue to rise beyond 2031. Karnataka and Maharashtra occupy the middle ground, balancing growth with the onset of ageing pressure. In response, the RBI has advised ageing States to "rationalise" their subsidies to afford rising pension costs and youthful States to "invest heavily in human capital". But how mindful is the RBI's fiscal advice of the political undertones? Southern States, having successfully tamed population growth, face a double whammy: lower Central tax devolution because population weightage in Finance Commission formulae favours the populous northern States plus lower parliamentary representation due to the upcoming delimitation exercise. On the other hand, while the youthful States have a "window of opportunity" to boost growth using a larger workforce, the share of their spending on education has stagnated or declined, and the question of employability persists. These people will also enter the workforce at a time of manufacturing automation and AI in industry, so the RBI's suggestion to "boost labour-intensive sectors" may leave these States vulnerable to the possibility of ageing before they get rich.

Research has shown that ageing in India disproportionately affects women, who often live longer but with fewer financial assets. The RBI's focus on "workforce policy" overlooks the majority of elderly women who were never in the formal workforce and thus have no pension. The RBI model also assumes some level of family support, but with migration and nuclear families becoming the norm, the informal safety net is collapsing. Ultimately, the demographic transition cannot be managed by fiscal changes alone. First, a new industrial policy is needed to create jobs en masse in new sectors such as green energy and the care economy. Second, the youthful States must build healthcare and pension services now to avoid fiscal shocks if and when the replacement fertility rate drops. Third, for most of India's elderly, the future looks less like "graceful ageing" and more like financial dependency, unless the state drastically expands social pensions, but this directly contradicts the RBI's call for fiscal consolidation. Finally, without a massive expansion of public geriatric care, the "graceful ageing" that the report envisions will be available only to the wealthy.

Geriatric Care in India: Emerging Challenges and Policy Imperatives

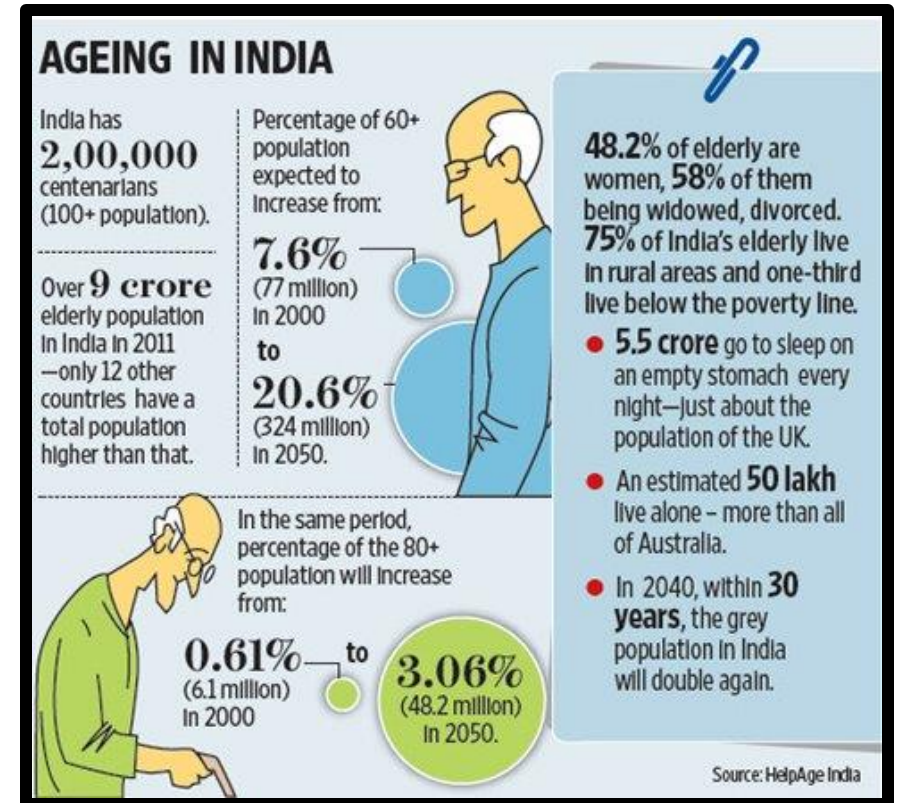
- India is often viewed through the lens of its demographic dividend, but this national average masks sharp inter-State demographic contrasts.
- According to an **RBI report**, States such as **Kerala and Tamil Nadu will become ageing States by 2036**, with elderly populations exceeding **22% and 20%** respectively.
- This rapid demographic transition has brought **geriatric care**—health, income security, and social support for the elderly—to the forefront of public policy debates.

Status of Ageing and Geriatric Care in India

India's elderly population (60+ years) stood at about **10.1% in 2021** and is projected to rise to nearly **20% by 2050** (UNFPA). Ageing is uneven:

- **Southern States** face advanced ageing due to low fertility and high life expectancy.
- **Northern States** like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh remain youthful but will eventually age, risking “ageing before getting rich.”

Existing geriatric care infrastructure is limited. Public health systems remain focused on maternal and child health, while **specialised geriatric wards, long-term care facilities, and community care services** are inadequate.



Gendered Nature of Ageing

Ageing in India disproportionately affects **women**:

- Women live longer but often lack **formal employment history and pensions**.
- According to studies, a majority of elderly women depend on family or meagre social pensions.

Schemes such as the **Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS)** provide ₹200–₹500 per month, which is insufficient to meet rising healthcare and living costs. This highlights the fragility of income security for elderly women.

WHAT'S GERIATRIC CARE

- **Comprehensive medical management:** It involves diagnosing and treating multiple, often chronic, health conditions common in older adults, such as heart disease, arthritis, diabetes, and cognitive decline
- **Multidisciplinary approach:** A team of healthcare providers addresses the diverse needs of elderly patients
- **Functional and cognitive support:** It emphasises improving physical function and cognitive health, aiming to enhance quality of life"
- **Medication management:** Monitoring and adjusting medications due to the person's increased sensitivity to drug interactions and side effects
- **Holistic care:** This includes addressing mental health, social support, end-of-life care and coordination of long-term care



Erosion of Traditional Support Systems

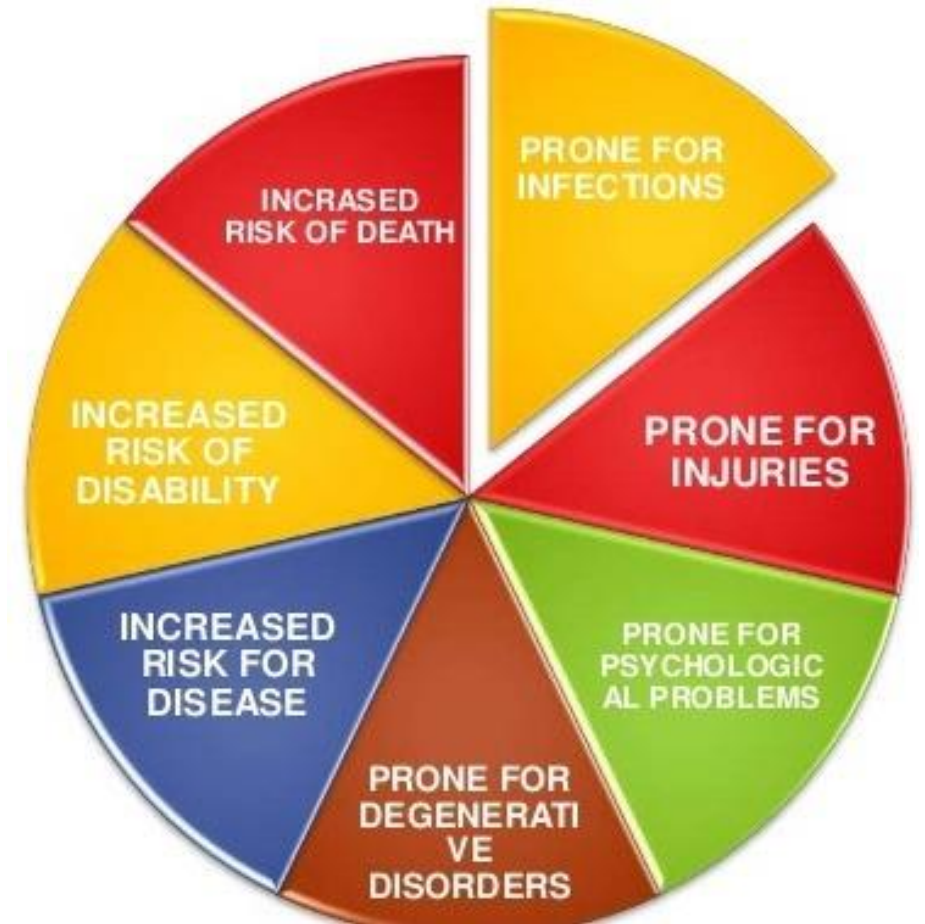
The RBI's assumptions of family-based support are increasingly unrealistic:

- **Migration, urbanisation, and nuclear families** have weakened informal care networks.
- Elderly persons, especially in rural areas, face social isolation and unmet care needs.

Without institutional alternatives, many elderly are pushed into **financial dependency and neglect**.

Policy Gaps and Emerging Risks

- **Fiscal consolidation pressures** limit States' ability to expand social pensions and healthcare.
- The RBI's focus on rationalising subsidies risks under-investment in geriatric welfare.
- Automation and AI reduce labour-intensive job creation, shrinking the tax base needed to fund elderly care.



Uproar against new UGC equity regulations

Uproar intensifies against new UGC equity regulations

Several groups have alleged bias against 'general category' students, while anti-caste activists say the new regulations do not adequately protect SC, ST, and OBC students from discrimination

Abhinav Lakshman
Mayank Kumar
NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW

Opposition against the University Grants Commission (UGC)'s new regulations on the promotion of equity in higher education campuses intensified on Monday, with critics questioning the 2026 rules' definition of "caste-based discrimination" and alleging bias against "general category" students in not providing for measures against "false complaints".

A writ petition challenging the University Grants Commission (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026 has been filed in the Supreme Court by Mrityunjay Tiwari, a post-doctoral researcher at the Banaras Hindu University, Uttar Pradesh.

Political opposition to the regulations has also grown. Rajya Sabha member Priyanka Chaturvedi took to social media, calling for the regulations to be "withdrawn or amended as necessary". Uttar Pradesh Bharatiya Janata Party MLC Devendra Pratap Singh has written to



A writ petition challenging the UGC regulations has been filed in the Supreme Court. FILE PHOTO

the UGC, saying it should be concerned with protecting discrimination against Dalits and backward class students, and not with "making general category students feel unsafe".

Student bodies have also joined the opposition. The students' union of Kurmaun University in Uttarakhand's Nainital has submitted a letter to the UGC, saying that the regulations went against the "principle of natural justice". In their letter, submitted through the Vice-Chancellor of the University, the students' union said that these regulations may disturb the "balance" at university campuses and could create an atmosphere of "fear

and distrust", potentially leading to the regulations' "misuse".

Amid growing criticism, BJP MP from Jharkhand Nishikant Dubey said on social media that "all misconceptions" about the new regulations would soon be addressed.

The UGC notified the 2026 regulations on January 13, updating its 2012 regulations on the same subject. The revised rules defined "caste-based discrimination" as discrimination "only on the basis of caste or tribe" against members of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes, further removing a provision for punishments for

false complaints, which was present in a draft circulated in 2025.

These are among the principal issues that opponents of the regulations have cited, arguing that the definition excludes students from the general category. They also said that this would create a presumption of guilt against them.

However, even as the uproar against the regulations gathered steam, some anti-caste activists have argued that the new regulations did not protect the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, and Other Backward Classes strongly enough from the discrimination they face.

Nethrapal, a serving IRS officer, articulated this position in a thread on X, saying that the 2026 regulations are missing specific forms of discrimination that SC, ST, and OBC students face during specific higher education processes like admissions, interviews and oral examinations. He also alleged that omnibus equity committees would not be able to address specific discriminations faced by SC/ST students sufficiently.



Why in News?

- The **University Grants Commission** has notified the **University Grants Commission (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026**, aimed at tackling caste-based discrimination in higher education institutions (HEIs).

What are the Key Provisions of the UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026?

- **Broad Coverage of Caste-Based Discrimination:** The regulations define **caste-based discrimination** as any unfair or biased treatment against **Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs)**.
- **Expanded Definition of Discrimination:** Discrimination is defined as any **unfair, biased, or differential treatment**, whether explicit or implicit, on grounds such as **caste, religion, race, gender, place of birth, or disability**.
- **Mandatory Equal Opportunity Centres (EOCs):** Every higher education institution is required to establish an **Equal Opportunity Centre (EOC)** to promote equity, social inclusion, and equal access, and to address complaints related to discrimination on campus.
- Each institution must form an **Equity Committee** under the EOC, chaired by the head of the institution, with mandatory representation from **SCs, STs, OBCs, persons with disabilities, and women**, ensuring inclusive decision-making.
- The regulations place a clear duty on institutions to **eradicate discrimination and promote equity**, with the **head of the institution** made directly responsible for effective implementation and compliance.

UGC Notifies New Anti-Discrimination Rules for Campuses

The **University Grants Commission (UGC)** has notified new regulations to **address caste-based discrimination in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)** on **Jan 13**, making it mandatory for campuses to **establish equity-focused bodies** and follow a structured mechanism to **prevent and act against discrimination**.

- **National-level Monitoring Mechanism:** UGC will establish a **national monitoring committee** comprising representatives from statutory bodies and civil society to oversee implementation, review complaints, and suggest preventive measures, meeting at least twice a year.
- **Penalties for Non-compliance:** Institutions violating the regulations may face **debarment from UGC schemes**, prohibition on offering degree, distance, or online programmes, or even **removal from UGC recognition**, making the rules enforceable rather than advisory.

Significance

- They strengthen the **legal and institutional framework** against caste-based discrimination in higher education, addressing a serious concern highlighted by a **2019 IIT Delhi study**, which found that **75% of students from historically disadvantaged castes faced discrimination on campus**.
- Inclusion of OBCs marks a **more comprehensive approach to social justice**.
- Strict penalties signal a shift from advisory guidelines to **enforceable regulation**.



Thank you

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