Department of Political Science
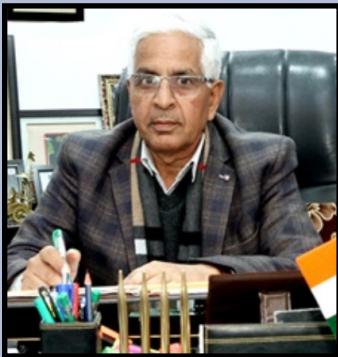# University of Jammu, Jammu

organises

Two-Day International Seminar
(February 23-24, 2026)

on

Dynamics of Democracy, Civil Society and Governance in South Asia

Chief Patron
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Vice-Chancellor,
University of Jammu

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About Jammu University

The University of Jammu, accredited as **an "A++" Grade University by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council of India,** was established in 1969 under the Kashmir and Jammu Universities Act of 1969, following the division of the former University of Jammu and Kashmir. The university offers instruction in various academic disciplines as deemed appropriate and provides a conducive environment for research and the advancement and dissemination of knowledge. The University embodies the principles of spiritual and material well-being, nurtured by the pursuit of knowledge and virtue amidst the majestic backdrop of the Trikuta Hills.

About Department of Political Science

The Department of Political Science was established in 1969 to impart the subject of Political Science to the students of Jammu and Kashmir. The department has been diligently working to disseminate knowledge of the discipline through its Master Degree Programme (MDP). Primarily, it caters to students from the rural and urban areas of the Jammu region who have aspired to pursue higher education in the field of political science. A distinguishing feature of this department is the comprehensive and contemporary curriculum of its MDP, which has significantly benefited its students. They have successfully qualified for various competitive examinations, including the UPSC, KAS, KJS, UGC-JRF/NET, and SLET. In addition to its teaching responsibilities, the department has been actively involved in research on topics of local, national, and international significance. Its thrust areas of research include politics in Jammu and Kashmir, India, South Asia, and international politics, as well as India's worldview.

Concept Note of Seminar

Democracy, civil society, and governance are interconnected as they are sharing a common objective to enhance the well-being of people by improving governance. A thriving democracy necessitates a robust civil society characterized by vigilance, critical thinking, tolerance, and a constant challenge to arbitrary power with a purpose to democratize it. Consequently, democracy and civil society reinforce each other by sharing a common purpose of providing public-owned and public-centric governance. The civil society struggles in the Indian subcontinent not only transformed the nature of the state from colonial to post-colonial but also evolved absolute monarchy into constitutional monarchies and multi-party democracies.

Civil society mobilization has not only dismantled the praetorianism in Pakistan and Bangladesh but has also transformed republican authoritarianism into democratic republicanism in the Maldives. Nepal and Bhutan have also witnessed political transition from absolute monarchy to democracy & constitutional monarchy. Subsequently, Nepal transitioned to republicanism, democracy and federal polity. Due to the inability of democracy to achieve its full potential through a symbiotic relationship with civil society, states have consistently attempted to exert control over civil society by emphasizing on procedural democracy instead of substantive democracy. Such type of democracy has not empowered masses rather the political elite which culminated into the crisis of governance as the South Asian democracies indulge too much into governing and to less into serving. The civil society struggles Aragalaya, July Revolution and Gen-Z in Sri Lanka (2022), Bangladesh (2024) and

Nepal (2025) respectively have brought change of political regimes as the crisis of governance was compounded in these states.

Political shifts in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal highlight challenges to democracy. Despite civil society's efforts, vote-bank politics and neo-liberal policies, influenced by globalization and external pressures, hinder substantive democracy and public-centric governance. The 1990s IT revolution, coupled with globalization, reshaped governance and politics. This led to a surge in civil society and regime change in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal, with Nepali youth drawing inspiration from regional events.

President Sirisena's reconciliation efforts in Sri Lanka faced opposition from the Rajapaksa-led opposition and Sinhala hardline groups. Nepal's democratic pursuit involved three civil society mobilizations, transforming the monarchy and establishing a republic. Pakistan's democratic journey has faced obstacles, including military rule and challenges to free and fair elections. Despite civil society's role in restoring democracy, concerns remain about representation, rights, and the rule of law. The IDEA Report 2024 highlights Pakistan's low rankings in representation, rights, and the rule of law. Recent events, including mass sentencing of PTI members and the Supreme Court's decision on reserved seats, raise concerns about political repression and weakening of the opposition.

India has sustained liberal democracy despite challenges, including political violence and reliance on coercive state apparatus. While it has achieved milestones like grassroots democracy and human rights legislation, issues persist, reflecting broader trends in South Asia.

The Maldives transitioned to democracy in 2008 but faced challenges under President Yameen, who undermined democratic principles by controlling state institutions, imprisoning political adversaries, and restricting opposition. Yameen's authoritarian regime targeted the judiciary, removing independent judges and making it reliant on the executive branch. Despite court rulings, Yameen maintained control through media controls, restricted judiciaries, and crackdowns on opposition.

Bhutan, a constitutional monarchy, held its fourth parliamentary election in January 2024, with the People's Democratic Party winning. While Bhutan ranks highly in Rule of Law and Representation, access to justice and judicial independence have declined.

South Asian states have made significant efforts to establish democracy, but it has not fulfilled its constitutional mandate. Political regimes and elites have failed to deliver effective governance, exacerbated the state debt, and compromised welfare credentials. Populism has replaced welfarism in South Asian politics, and personalization of power has become the defining characteristic of democracy and governance. The deinstitutionalization of political processes has eroded public trust in institutions. While Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal secured electoral victories, they failed to ensure effective, efficient, public-centric, and corruption-free governance. This led to civil society upsurges and regime changes. The electoral system's lack of transparency, accountability, and impartiality has questioned its credibility. In neo-liberal South Asia, the economic and political imperatives of democracy have led to a recent political crisis. The increasing role of religion and the reduction of

democracy to the rule of the majority undermine liberal democracy. To understand these political transformations through civil society initiatives and their implications, the Department of Political Science proposes a two-day International Seminar titled "Dynamics of Democracy, Civil Society, and Governance in South Asia" on February 23rd and 24th, 2026.

Sub-Themes of Seminar

- **Democracy in South Asia-A Historical Perspective**
- **Constitutional Framework of Democracy of South Asian States**
- **Democracy in South Asia: Emerging Trends and Challenges**
- **Democracy and Governance Deficit in South Asian States**
- **Democratic Deficit and Human Security in South Asian States**
- **Civil Society and Democracy in South Asia: A Trajectory of Relationship**
- **Electoral System and Representative Democracy in South Asia**
- **Demography and Democracy in South Asia**
- **Political Parties, Political Elites and Democracy**
- **Globalization, Democracy and Governance**
- **Media, Democracy and Governance**
- **Gender, Minority, Subaltern issues in Democracy in South Asia**
- **Governance in South Asia: A Shift from Legislative to Executive Model.**
- **Any other topic related to the theme of Seminar**

Call For Papers

The International Seminar on Dynamics of Democracy, Civil Society and Governance in South Asia invites scholarly papers that critically examine

the contemporary dynamics of democratic governance in South Asian states, situated within their historical and constitutional contexts. The seminar seeks contributions that address emerging trends and persistent challenges shaping democracy in the region, including governance and democratic deficits, constitutionalism, human security, civil society–state relations, electoral systems, representative institutions, and the evolving role of political parties and political elites.

Country-specific and theme-based papers are particularly encouraged, focusing on issues such as democracy and demography, globalization and governance, media and democratic accountability, gender justice, minority and subaltern perspectives, and the increasing concentration of power marked by a shift from legislative to executive-centric models of governance. While grounded primarily in political science, the seminar welcomes analytically rigorous perspectives drawing from law, history, sociology, and development studies where they directly illuminate contemporary democratic challenges in South Asian Countries.

Submission Guidelines

- Paper presenters must submit an abstract of 250-300 words with five or six keywords in a word file, providing a concise overview of their proposed paper, via email to **depttofpolsc.ju@gmail.com** no later than **January 25th, 2026**. The word file should include the name and academic/institutional affiliation of the paper presenter. The abstract should clearly demonstrate how the paper aligns with the seminar theme and sub-themes. Please indicate 'Submission to the International Seminar-2026' as subject while sending the email for abstract submission.

- The Organizing Committee will notify paper presenters of their abstract's acceptance status by **January 30th, 2026.** The Committee's decision regarding the selection of papers for presentation shall be final.

- Authors whose abstracts are accepted must submit their complete papers by **February 15th, 2026**.

- Paper Formatting Guidelines

    Length: 4,000 - 6,000 words (inclusive of references)
    Structure: Must include headings and sub-headings.
    Citation Format: The APA 7th Edition style is recommended.
    Document Settings: MS Word format, A4 size paper, 1-inch
                      margins on all sides, TimesNew Roman
                      font, size 12, and 1.5 line spacing

- The department intends to publish the proceedings of the seminar in the form of an edited book from a reputed publisher. Therefore, all the paper presenters are requested to bring their original work for presentation as well as publication. The department follows a strict policy against plagiarism and hence, the plagiarized papers will not be considered for presentation and publication.

Attendance & Certification

Attendance of the paper presenters at the seminar is mandatory for presenting their research. Upon successful presentation, they will be awarded a presenter's certificate. Each presentation will have approximately 20 minutes allocated, during which time the presenter will have the opportunity to engage with the jury and audience through comments and questions.

The seminar will be conducted primarily in physical (in-person) mode. However, online participation may be accommodated in exceptional or unavoidable circumstances.

Registration Details

Successful paper presenter (whose abstract has been selected) need to pay the prescribed non-refundable seminar registration fee on or before **February 5th, 2026**. Details regarding the payment mode will be communicated via email to selected authors. The break-up of registration fee for different categories are as follows:

International Delegates: Rs. 3000-/ Per Author
Academicians/Professionals/Faculty Members: Rs. 1500-/ Per Author
Research Scholars: Rs. 1000- /Per Author
Students: Rs. 500-/ Per Author

About the Accommodation

Accommodation may be available upon special request made at the time of registration. All associated costs must be borne by the presenters. No TA/ DA will be provided to the presenters.

Important Dates

Last date for abstract submission: January 25th, 2026

Communication of acceptance: January 30th, 2026

Registration fee deadline: February 5th, 2026

Full paper submission: February 15th, 2026

Date of conference: February 23rd and 24th, 2026