
The INDIAN JOURNAL OF CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

Call for Papers for IJCL's Special issue on Dignity: Promise and Practice

The *Indian Journal of Constitutional Law* invites submissions for its special issue on *Dignity: Promise and Practice*, to be published in 2026. In its decade-long history, the Journal has borne witness to outstanding scholarship from leading and budding scholars of our time, spanning the breadth of professors, researchers, and students. From now onwards, the Journal will strive to put out two issues per volume, one being the General issue and another being the special issue, with this issue being the first of the latter kind. All pieces are subject to the same review process consisting of multiple rounds of examination.

Theme Note - Dignity: Promise and Practice

This special issue builds on the conversations initiated at the **National Conference on Dignity Law: Promise and Practice, held on 5–6 July 2025** at NALSAR University of Law. Bringing together judges, academics, practitioners, and students, the conference sought to interrogate one of the most invoked yet under-theorised constitutional values, dignity.

The **conference note** may be accessed here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1eCg_RNT5q4mQxRvSHk2DWD_8fuGjVSea

Conference recordings are available here:

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzwRRj2rg8VNqps8M6zf_NkdL3VV-3bFf&si=Xbq4viF7isfG2xp7

Dignity has travelled a remarkable constitutional journey. From its tentative articulation in early jurisprudence to its expansive recognition in cases such as *Puttaswamy*, it now occupies a central place within Article 21 and beyond. Yet, as the conference highlighted, dignity remains both foundational and elusive. It is frequently invoked, but rarely defined with precision. This tension between promise and practice lies at the heart of this special issue.

At one level, dignity operates as a constitutional value. It acts as a moral anchor that shapes rights adjudication, informs state obligations, and structures the relationship between the individual and the state. Courts have drawn upon dignity to expand the horizons of privacy, equality, and autonomy, often positioning it as the normative core of constitutional personhood. At another level, dignity is experienced, or denied, in deeply material ways. This is visible in courtrooms, prisons, police stations, welfare systems, and everyday interactions with the state. As the conference underscored, the gap between dignity as doctrine and dignity as lived reality remains stark.

This special issue invites contributions that engage with dignity across this spectrum, from its philosophical foundations to its doctrinal articulations, and from its institutional manifestations to its everyday violations.

Submissions may explore, inter alia:

- The **philosophical and moral foundations** of dignity, including its relationship with autonomy, equality, personhood, and human worth;

- The role of dignity in **constitutional interpretation**, including debates on its determinacy, legitimacy, and limits;
- The evolution of dignity in **Indian constitutional jurisprudence**, and its comparative trajectories across jurisdictions;
- The operation of dignity **within criminal justice processes**, including questions of procedural dignity, incarceration, bail, and custodial violence;
- The intersections of dignity with **caste, gender, sexuality, disability, and other axes of marginalisation**;
- The ways in which dignity is shaped, constrained, or undermined by **institutional practices and state power**;
- The **role of clinical legal education, advocacy, and public engagement** in translating dignity from abstract principle to lived experience;
- **Critical perspectives** that question whether dignity, as currently deployed, risks becoming a rhetorical device that obscures structural injustice.

Importantly, this issue also welcomes work that moves beyond traditional doctrinal analysis. We encourage submissions that adopt **interdisciplinary, empirical, critical, or creative approaches**, and that engage with dignity as a relational, contested, and evolving concept.

At its core, this special issue seeks to take seriously the challenge posed by the conference. Can dignity move from constitutional promise to lived practice? If so, what must change in law, institutions, and our understanding of justice for that transformation to occur?

Instructions for Authors

Contributions are solicited under the following categories:

1. Articles (4,500 – 7,000 words) Articles should contain sustained analysis on legal topics. They may be either doctrinal or theoretical (or both) and must comprehensively deal with all relevant literature on the chosen subject to formulate well-reasoned positions. An Article is therefore ordinarily conservative in its method of analysis.

2. Essays (3,000 – 4,500 words) Essays, in comparison with Articles, are usually more adventurous in their method, and seek to challenge existing legal paradigms or innovatively address well-known problems. It is strongly recommended that essays be considerably more concise, in terms of scope and conceptualization. Fresh approaches to issues are encouraged.

3. Case comments and legislative comments (1,500 – 3,000 words) Case comments should be a study of any contemporary judicial pronouncement (Indian or foreign) and must contain its analysis, the context in which it has been delivered, its contribution to existing law, and must necessarily comment on the judicial process involved. Legislative comments entail a critical analysis of any existing Indian legislation or proposed Bills and their constitutional implications. Critical, comparative pieces dealing with similar issues across jurisdictions are encouraged.

4. Other submissions (1,500-3,000 words) Other pieces that do not specifically fall into any of the aforementioned sections will also be considered. The Board specifically solicits book reviews, short responses to previous publications and notes on an author's practical experiences in constitutional litigation, judgment deliberation, legislative drafting, etc.

All word limits are *exclusive* of footnotes.




Submission Guidelines

- 1. Citation Format:** All submissions must conform to the *Oxford University Standard for the Citation of Legal Authorities, (4th Edition) citation system*. (The same can be accessed *here*.) Speaking footnotes are not discouraged. A submission that is either insufficiently cited or not adhering to the citation format will be deemed as rejected.
- 2. Font specifications:** The body of the manuscript should be in *Times New Roman, font size 12, with 1.5 line spacing*. The footnotes should be in *Times New Roman, font size 10, with single line spacing*.
- 3. Abstract:** Every submission must be accompanied by an abstract of not more than 350 words that outlines the area of study and any important conclusions that may be drawn by the author(s).
- 4. Joint Contributions:** Collaborative articles and essays by up to two authors shall also be considered.
- 5. Authors:** Authors must submit their *designations, current institutional affiliations, email and postal addresses* and other such relevant details. Such details shall be mailed in a *separate document* and must not appear anywhere in the manuscript or the abstract.

Note to Authors

The Journal is presently in the process of finalising its Editorial Policy, Copyright Policy, Publication Ethics guidelines, Plagiarism Policy, standards relating to editorial propriety, and author indemnity requirements, in order to maintain consistent academic and publication standards. These policies will be made available on the Journal's website and its Social Media handles on or before 10 April. Prospective authors are requested to kindly take note of the same, as submissions made in response to this Call for Papers will be considered in accordance with the policies as notified. Authors are therefore encouraged to review the policies once published to ensure that their submissions are in conformity with the Journal's editorial and ethical requirements.



Submission of Contributions:

Submissions should contain the manuscript, abstract and authors' details in three separate documents. All documents must be in Microsoft Word's .doc or .docx format only. Submissions must only be in the form of electronic copies.

Your submissions will be acknowledged within 48 hours. We are committed to an efficient yet optimal review procedure and follow a peer review process, where the piece is sent out for peer review after two rounds of internal scrutiny by the Editorial Board.

In case the submission is accepted, the Board shall inform the authors of the Reviewer's comments and the authors will be afforded a reasonable time to submit a revised draft considering the reviewer's comments. Authors are advised to anticipate the same.

All submissions must be via this Google Form:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScvHzkifglaEKtNcwy_0Xhwa9pb8Hwy_0fCpAAnIhtXaFy--g/viewform?usp=dialog

Other related queries are to be sent to ijcl@nalsar.ac.in

Timeline:

To be considered for the special issue of the XIV Volume of the journal (2026), we expect the submissions to reach us before May 31, 2026.

Final conveyance of acceptance will be communicated by August 15, 2026.

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