

JOURNAL OF UNDERREPRESENTED & MINORITY PROGRESS

A Refereed Journal Dedicated to the Educational, Economic, and Social Progress of Minority & Underrepresented Community Around the World

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November 27, 2025

Call for Papers: Special Issue on Digital Marginalisation, AI Bias, and Cultural Representation in South Asia

The *Journal of Underrepresented & Minority Progress (JUMP)* invites contributions for a special issue exploring how digital cultures and systems can both reflect and reinforce social marginalisation in the Global South, with a focus on South Asian contexts. This issue will examine caste, ethnic, gender, religious, and linguistic marginalisation in digital spaces, analysing how these forms of exclusion manifest in different regions while intersecting with broader East-West digital divides. We seek academically rigorous discussions that critically examine the cultural biases and power imbalances inherent in digital technologies. By bringing together interdisciplinary scholarship, this special issue aims to advance the understanding of digital marginalisation and provide a platform for scholarly discourse on these pressing issues.

The Journal of Underrepresented & Minority Progress (JUMP) is a refereed interdisciplinary publication (Print ISSN 2574-3465 & Online ISSN 2574-3481) dedicated to the educational, economic, and social progress of minority and underrepresented communities around the world. It is an interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed, and international open-access journal published by the STAR Scholars Network and is indexed in SCOPUS, one of the major indexing databases for peer-reviewed literature.

Scope and Rationale

Digital technologies are deeply entwined with society's power structures. Research shows that axes of identity, such as race, gender, class, caste, religion, and language, fundamentally shape digital knowledge production and access (Risam, 2018). As a result, historically marginalised communities often face new forms of digital exclusion even as connectivity spreads globally. For example, biases and blind spots in data-driven systems can mirror existing social hierarchies: predictive algorithms have exhibited race and gender biases (Prescott 2023), and concerns have arisen that caste-based discrimination is echoed in online spaces and datasets (e.g., the “digital Dalit” experience of caste-oppressed groups) (Nayar, 2014). This special issue begins from the premise that digital culture is not socially neutral; it can unwittingly amplify inequities embedded in society.

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At the same time, the East-West digital divide inflects these challenges. The design and governance of major platforms and AI systems remain largely rooted in Western contexts and values. Scholars have found that many AI frameworks implicitly assume Western norms as universal, overlooking the needs of non-Western cultures (Peters and Carman, 2024). This cultural bias in technology design can lead to the misrepresentation or erasure of Global South cultures, a phenomenon Qadri et al. (2023) term an “outsider’s gaze” imposed on South Asian digital content. Generative AI models, for instance, may fail to faithfully produce local cultural subjects, defaulting to hegemonic tropes and stereotypes that marginalise South Asian identities. Such phenomena highlight the power imbalances in global digital culture, where the epistemologies of the Global North often dominate and displace Indigenous and Global South perspectives. Emerging critiques of data colonialism also highlight the continuity of historical power dynamics: today’s data practices can serve as a form of colonial extraction, with global tech corporations harvesting data from the South and reinforcing asymmetries in knowledge and power (Mohamed et al., 2020). In short, local forms of marginalisation are increasingly intertwined with global digital structures.

This special issue aims to explore the complex dynamics of marginalisation in digital contexts. It will transition from broad theoretical and comparative discussions to specific case studies and analyses, focusing on particular countries or communities. Contributors are encouraged to examine how caste-, ethnicity-, gender-, religious-, and language-based exclusions take shape within digital cultures in South Asia and to what extent these mirror or diverge from patterns observed elsewhere. We especially welcome studies that bridge scales – for instance, linking the global politics of AI bias or internet governance to the local cultural context of a village in India or a minority community in Pakistan. By situating regional specificities against the backdrop of global digital divides, the issue aims to generate an integrated understanding of digital marginalisation.

Key Themes and Topics

We invite papers offering both empirical research and theoretical analysis from across disciplines (digital humanities, media and communication studies, computer science, sociology, political science, science and technology studies, etc.). Submissions may address broad socio-technical questions or in-depth case studies. We especially encourage contributions that incorporate perspectives from or about the five focus countries (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka,

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Nepal), although relevant work on other Global South contexts, specifically Southeast Asia, is welcome. Topics of interest for the special issue include, but are not limited to:

- **Intersectional Digital Exclusions:** Analyses of how caste, gender, ethnicity, religion, and language intersect to shape inclusion or exclusion in digital platforms and practices. For example, studies might explore hate speech or harassment on social media, gendered disparities in access to digital education, or the experiences of minorities using online forums. How do multiple identity factors combine to impact one's agency and safety in digital spaces? How are historically privileged voices and knowledges reproduced online, potentially sidelining marginalised identities (Gairola, 2022).
- **Social Media and Marginalised Voices:** The role of social media in both empowering and silencing minority or underrepresented communities. This could include research on activism and counter-publics formed by marginalised groups via Twitter, Facebook, regional platforms, and other online platforms, as well as examinations of how misinformation, online harassment, or algorithmic amplification affect ethnic or religious tensions. What strategies do marginalised users employ to be heard, and how do platform policies or algorithms help or hinder them? How are linguistic minorities served by content moderation and recommendation systems, given that algorithms often perform unevenly across languages.
- **Algorithmic Bias and Governance:** Critical evaluations of algorithms and AI systems used in governance, public services, or everyday digital applications within South Asia. Papers might examine biased outcomes in automated decision-making (such as biometric ID systems, credit scoring, predictive policing, or welfare distribution algorithms) and their impact on populations. For instance, how do global AI products (voice assistants, computer vision, etc.) perform for South Asian users? Are certain accents, skin tones, or cultural contexts misrecognised? What lessons emerge about making AI transparent, accountable and culturally aware, in line with calls for explainability to combat inequities (Prescott, 2023)? We also welcome meta-analyses of AI research itself, e.g. critiques showing that explainable AI research has overwhelmingly focused on Western users and assumed Western notions of explanation (Peters and Carman, 2024), highlighting the need to broaden research demographics and evaluation frameworks.

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- **Data Colonialism and Digital Economies:** Investigations of how global data flows and digital economies may perpetuate colonial-era patterns of extraction and dependency. Topics here include the political economy of data in South Asia, such as the outsourcing of data labour, reliance on Western tech infrastructures, or the exploitation of user data by international corporations. How do concepts like data colonialism or algorithmic colonality apply to scenarios such as global social media or e-commerce platforms operating in the South? Are we witnessing forms of “digital empire” where knowledge production (e.g. mapping data, cultural content online) is concentrated in the West, with local users primarily supplying data or content under unequal terms? We seek scholarship that connects historical analyses of empire, postcolonial theory, and political economy to contemporary digital development, including decolonial AI approaches that aim to centre the needs and knowledge of those traditionally disempowered in technology design (Mohamed et al. 2020).
- **Censorship, Surveillance, and Digital Rights:** Comparative studies of how states and powerful actors regulate digital spaces in ways that marginalise certain groups or narratives. South Asia has witnessed internet shutdowns, content censorship, and surveillance measures, often justified by authorities in the name of security or public order. We invite research on cases such as government-imposed Internet blackouts during protests as seen in regions of India and Sri Lanka, the policing of online speech under blasphemy or anti-hate laws in Pakistan and Bangladesh, or the monitoring of social media for dissent in Nepal. How do these practices disproportionately impact minority communities or dissenting voices? Nishant Shah’s concept of the “disconnected subject”, where users who are deliberately cut off when their digital presence poses a challenge to authority, offers one framework for examining these phenomena (Shah 2019). What are the social and political consequences of systematic connectivity restrictions on underrepresented populations? Conversely, how are activists and civil society responding (e.g. creating mesh networks, using censorship circumvention tools) to assert digital rights?
- **Digital Archives, Memory and Cultural Heritage:** Explorations of the creation and use of digital archives, digital libraries, and online collections related to South Asian cultural heritage and minority histories. We encourage papers that investigate whose knowledge is being preserved and highlighted in digital archives and whose is omitted or undervalued. For example, are there efforts to digitise Dalit or Indigenous community histories, and

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what challenges do they face? How do national digital heritage projects balance majority and minority narratives (such as Sinhala vs. Tamil history in Sri Lanka's digital archives)? We are interested in projects that decolonise the archive (Risam, 2018) and make space for subaltern memories, as well as analyses of "archival silences" where important perspectives remain absent. How can digital humanities methods be applied to recover or amplify the voices of marginalised groups in historical data? What ethical considerations arise in archiving sensitive or traumatic histories online? Overall, how might digital preservation be made more inclusive, aligning with calls to acknowledge diverse technoscientific traditions and cultural values in our digital practices (Cocq 2022)?

- **Language, Localisation and Digital Inclusion:** Research on linguistic diversity and technology in the South Asian context. Topics might include: the availability (or lack) of content and interfaces in minority languages; challenges in NLP (natural language processing) for less-resourced languages such as Nepali, Sinhala, or regional dialects; the impact of English dominance on knowledge creation and online access; and community initiatives for digital localisation. Linguistic marginalisation is a critical yet often overlooked aspect of digital equity, for example, when voice assistants only recognise certain languages or accents, or when search algorithms work more effectively for English speakers, leaving those of other languages behind. We welcome case studies on projects trying to bridge these gaps (such as open-source translation tools, localised Wikipedia editions, or keyboard/font innovations for Indigenous scripts) and critical analyses of tech companies' localisation efforts.

(If your proposed paper does not fit neatly into one of the above categories but is related to the overall theme, we still encourage you to submit. The list of topics is illustrative, not exhaustive. Authors may propose other relevant topics that resonate with the special issue theme. If you are unsure whether your topic fits, please feel free to contact the guest editors for clarification.)

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Regional Focus: South Asian Contexts

While theoretical insights and global comparisons are valued, we especially seek papers with grounded examinations of South Asian countries. The issue aims to illuminate both the differences and commonalities in digital marginalisation across India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. We also welcome cross-country analyses that explore shared regional patterns, divergences, and the relationship between local nuance and broader Global South experiences.

We encourage authors to connect South Asian cases to wider global structures and theories. Through this interplay of the local and global, the special issue seeks to avoid treating South Asia in isolation; instead, we position it within the wider conversation on decolonising digital technologies and bridging global knowledge gaps. By bringing South Asian evidence into dialogue with concepts such as platform capitalism, algorithmic governance, and postcolonial computing, we aim to enrich international scholarship with perspectives rooted in the lived realities of these countries. We particularly welcome perspectives from researchers and practitioners based in or originating from the Global South, as well as collaborations between scholars from the Global South and the Global North that can enrich analysis through diverse viewpoints.

This regional focus is ultimately tied to broader conceptual concerns. The special issue seeks to deepen our understanding of how digital systems can both perpetuate and challenge social marginalities. By examining who gets to speak and be visible in digital realms and who is left out, we align with the core questions raised by postcolonial digital studies: Who is speaking? Who is being spoken of or for? In what language? Under what assumptions? Grappling with these questions in concrete socio-digital contexts will yield insights relevant not only to South Asia or the Global South but to global efforts toward more just and inclusive digital cultures.

Submission Information

JUMP seeks to provide a venue for meaningful, purposeful, and actionable scholarship and invites articles, dialogues, and further remarks in accordance with its editorial policy (see <https://ojed.org/index.php/jump/about/submissions>).

- **Abstract Proposal:** Prospective authors must first submit an extended abstract (approximately 300–500 words) outlining the paper’s key arguments, methodology, and relevance to the special issue theme. Please email your abstract (in MS Word or PDF) to the guest editors at criticaldh@gmail.com and linkedinjump@gmail.com by January 30, 2026. Include the paper title, all author names, affiliations, and contact information in the email body (do not include author identifying information in the abstract file itself to facilitate blind review). The guest editors will screen abstracts for fit and significance.

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- **Notification of Abstract Outcome:** Authors will be notified by March 15, 2026, whether their proposed paper has been shortlisted. Shortlisted authors will be invited to submit full manuscripts. Feedback or suggestions may be provided at this stage to help guide the development of the paper.
- **Full Manuscript Submission:** Invited full papers should be submitted via the JUMP online submission system by June 30, 2026. Manuscripts must be in Microsoft Word format and 4,500–7,000 words in length (excluding references, tables, and figures). Please prepare the manuscript according to APA 7th edition style guidelines for format and citations. All submissions should be anonymised; do not include author names or affiliations anywhere in the manuscript file. (Author details will be provided separately in the submission form.) Tables and figures should be placed within the text at appropriate points, with clear captions.
- **Review Process:** All full manuscripts will undergo double-blind peer review, coordinated by the guest editorial team in collaboration with JUMP's editorial board. Each paper will be evaluated by at least two reviewers with expertise in the relevant area. Review criteria will include originality, methodological rigour, relevance to the special issue theme, and contribution to the field. We expect to provide an initial decision (acceptance with minor revisions, revise and resubmit, or rejection) by September 2026.
- **Revision and Final Decision:** Authors of papers recommended for revisions will be given an opportunity to resubmit a revised manuscript (with a detailed response to reviewer comments) by November 2026. Based on the revisions and reviewer recommendations, the guest editors will make final acceptance decisions in consultation with the journal's Editor-in-Chief. Final camera-ready versions of accepted papers will be due shortly thereafter (the exact date will be communicated upon acceptance).
- **Publication:** The special issue is scheduled for publication tentatively in January 2027 as a volume of the *Journal of Underrepresented & Minority Progress*. All published articles will be made available freely online to a global audience in an open-access format.

Note: Submitted work must be original and not under consideration by other publications. We will use plagiarism detection tools to screen submissions. There are no submission or publication fees for authors; this special issue is fully open access as part of JUMP's commitment to accessible knowledge. Authors are responsible for obtaining any necessary permissions for copyrighted content (e.g., images, extensive quotations) used in their manuscripts.

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Tentative Timeline

- **Abstract Proposal Deadline:** January 30, 2026
- **Notification of Abstract Acceptance/Rejection:** March 15, 2026
- **Full Manuscript Submission Deadline:** June 30, 2026
- **Peer Review Decision (First Round):** September 2026
- **Revised Manuscript Due (if invited):** November 2026
- **Final Decision Notification:** TBA 2026
- **Expected Publication of Special Issue:** January 2027

Please note that the above timeline is tentative. Any updates to deadlines or procedures will be communicated to authors in a timely manner. We encourage authors to submit their abstracts and papers as early as possible and to inform the guest editors of any potential delays or issues.

For any inquiries or clarifications regarding this Call for Papers, please contact the corresponding guest editor, Dr S Anas Ahmad, at anas.en994@gmail.com

Editorial Positionality Statement

We are aware and conscious of the positional biases inherent in our currently homogeneous, India-based, cis-male English Studies guest editorial team; we adopt a stance of vigilant self-reflexivity. We are currently expanding the guest editorial body for this special issue to ensure a diverse and inclusive South Asian scholarly space that counters these structural limitations.

Guest Editors:

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References (selected): *The following references (cited above) may serve as a useful starting point for authors to situate their work.*

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(Additional references and readings were provided during the CFP preparation and are available upon request.)