Savitribai Phule Pune University

Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies

Dhammasākacchā: Students' International Conference 2027

on

Concepts of Marginalization and Inclusivism in Buddhist Literature

9th January 2027

Announcement and Call for Papers

Date Extension

Abstract Submission: 15th November 2026

Final Paper Submission: 5th December 2026

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The Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, SPPU, Pune, India, has been organizing a students' conference since 2014 in order to provide a research platform to the students of Pali and Buddhist Studies to share their research findings. In this academic year 2026–27 the Department is organizing the 14th Dhammasākacchā students' conference on Saturday, 9th January 2027 from IST 9:00 am to 6:00 pm. In this regard we hereby invite regular bonafide students of an academic institute pursuing Ph.D., M. Phil (Research Group); M.A (PG Group); Integrated M.A (UG Group), PG Diploma, Diploma, Advanced and Foundation programs (UG Group) to participate and present their research papers. The conference will be organized in offline mode. Only students outside India maybe allowed to attend the conference online on request.

Concept Note

Societies across history have constructed rigid hierarchies based on birth, gender, ethnicity, and economic class. These systems naturally harmed the minority and vulnerable groups. The emergence of Buddhist literature in ancient India offered a radical counter-perspective. This year's conference aims to address the issue of marginalization based on gender, physical and mental disability, caste, race, ethnicity, religion, economic status, language and culture through Buddhist Literature in different languages. It will also try to understand the concept and mechanism of inclusivity in Buddhist literature. It will try to establish a critical framework for analysing how these ancient Buddhist texts can be systematically re-evaluated to address challenges of marginalisation and Inclusivity.

Marginalization is a social process where certain individuals or groups are pushed to the edge of society and denied equal access to opportunities, resources, and power. Marginalization harms both the excluded individuals and society as a whole. On the other hand, inclusivism is an approach or belief system that seeks to include and value diverse groups, ideas, or people. Instead of rejecting things that are different, inclusivism tries to find common ground or create space for everyone. Marginalization affects the mental and physical health of an individual. It also leads to poverty, affects education system and voices are silenced, people lose their power. It also has a bad impact on economy as large group of people cannot work. It also impacts the collective consciousness of the society. To overcome marginalisation, society must use a dual strategy i.e., top-down institutional reforms combined with grassroot community empowerment. In the *Vinayapiṭaka* we see rules prohibiting ordination of transgenders, chronically ill and disabled persons. On the other hand, we have instances of disabled persons attaining the highest spiritual position. These instances can help us understand how ancient traditions approached the issue of gender and disabilities. On the positive side, we come across anti-marginalization ideas rejecting birth-based hierarchy as in *Vasalasutta* and *Ambaṭṭhasutta*, arguments proving human biological unity as in *Assalāyanasutta*, radical inclusivity of the monastic order i.e., *Saṅgha*, systemic economic responsibility as in *Cakkavattisīhanādasutta*, radical empathy as depicted in *the Therigāthā*. In this context, it is important to analyse the reasons behind marginalization and anti-marginalization episodes in the Buddhist literature. The most radical expression of social inclusivism is the *Saṅgha*, i.e., the monastic community. The Buddha designed the Saṅgha to act as an egalitarian society that completely erased worldly hierarchies. In the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, the Buddha uses a powerful metaphor of rivers losing their distinct identities upon flowing into the ocean. People from all four varṇas, i.e., Brahmins (priests), Khattiyas (warriors), Vessas (merchants), and Suddas (labourers), similarly lose their old lineages when they ordain as monks and nuns. Buddhist literature explicitly documents the inclusion and elevation of individuals who were highly stigmatized in ancient Indian society. Stories of *Upāli* the barber and *Sunīta* the scavenger overcoming severe social marginalisation are good testimony to this fact. One more example is of *Sopāka* the outcast born in a cemetery community of corpse-burners. In a time when women were legally and socially dependent entirely on men, the *Vinayapiṭaka* records the establishment of the Bhikkhunī Saṅgha i.e., the order of nuns. The Buddha explicitly confirmed in the *Majjhimanikāya* that women possess the exact same capacity for highest spiritual awakening i.e., *arahant* as men. The *Sigālovādasutta* opposed the exploitation of lower-class laborers. In the *Kuṭadantasutta* the Buddha suggests structural economic inclusion providing seed capital to farmers, capital to traders, and fair wages to government workers. By ensuring economic inclusion, society naturally becomes

peaceful. The Buddha's open attitude to the use of regional languages, opposition to one sacred language, and the importance given to the spirit over letters can also be seen from the point of view of linguistic inclusivity. The conference aims at encouraging brainstorming discussions on this pertinent theme under the following sub-themes.

Sub-themes

1. Gender based Marginalisation

- Women's voices in the Buddhist literature
- Buddhist perspectives on queer and non-binary identities
- Monastic hierarchy, patriarchy, and debates on gender equity
- Feminist and gender-critical readings of Buddhist narratives and Monastic discipline
- Ideas of gender equality in Buddhist literature

2. Disability and Neurodivergence

- Marginalisation based on Illness, impairment, and disability in Buddhist literature
- Stigma, karma, and contemporary reinterpretations of disability narratives

3. Caste and Social Stratification

- Buddhist critique of the varṇa–jāti order
- The Buddha's engagement with outcastes and untouchable communities in early texts
- Ambedkarite readings of Buddhist literature on caste and emancipation
- Contemporary Dalit-Buddhist reinterpretations of canonical narratives

4. Race and Ethnicity

- Buddhist literature on ethnic identity in South and Southeast Asia
- Representations of tribal and indigenous communities in Buddhist texts
- Modern Buddhist responses to racial discrimination and colonialism.
- Cross-cultural and diasporic Buddhist literary traditions

5. Religion and Inter-faith Dynamics

- Buddhist–Brahmanical and Buddhist–Jaina dialogues and polemics
- Interactions with other śramaṇa traditions
- Buddhism and religious pluralism, historical and contemporary
- Interfaith ethics and dialogue as reflected in Buddhist literature

6. Economic Status and Class

- Poverty, labour, and economic ethics in early Buddhist texts

- Generosity and redistribution of wealth as social equalizers
- Monastic economy and lay–saṅgha relations
- Buddhist responses to economic exclusion and exploitation

7. Culture and Linguistics

- Vernacularization of Buddhist thought (Pāli, Prākṛta, Buddhist Sanskrit, regional languages)
- Translation, transmission, and cultural adaptation across Asia as a strategy of inclusivity
- Absorption of indigenous and folk traditions into Buddhist literature
- Issues of linguistic hierarchy and marginalization within canonical/commentarial traditions

8. Age — Children, Youth, and the Elderly

- Novitiate (sāmaṇera) ordination of minors and questions of consent and agency
- Filial duty and intergenerational ethics in Buddhist literature
- Care and dignity for the elderly in Saṅgha and lay society
- Youth marginalization and modern Buddhist educational responses

9. Political Marginalization, Exile, and Statelessness

- Persecution and survival of Buddhist communities across history
- Refugee Saṅghas and diaspora Buddhist literature
- Statelessness and identity in modern Buddhist writing
- Buddhist responses to political violence and displacement

Note: The participants may choose any of these sub-themes and present their papers in the light of the broad theme of the conference highlighting the Buddhist Literature on Marginalization and Inclusivism.

Instructions:

- Paper presentation can be done in Pali, Sanskrit, Hindi and English.
- You can present your paper individually or in a group of two/three/four researchers.
- For Research Group (M. Phil., Ph. D.) the allotted time for the paper presentation will be 15 minutes plus 5 minutes for discussion, total 20 minutes.
- For PG, and UG, Diploma Groups the allotted time will be 10 minutes for paper presentation and 5 minutes for discussion, total 15 minutes.

Registration Details:

Please email your details as follows on dhammasakacchapbs@gmail.com

Name of the Student:

Country of Residence:

Name of the University/College:

Name of the Course:

Academic Year:

Student Identity Card: (Compulsory)

Mobile Number:

Email.id:

Registration Fees:

**Link for paying Registration Fees will be shared with the registered participants only.

**Registration Fee covers the refreshment on the conference day.

**Only for those participants who require accommodation for two nights should pay INR 750 extra which would cover the cost of their accommodation, and two dinners and one breakfast of the next day.

Registration Fees as Paper Presenters:

For Indian Participants:

- Registration fees with accommodation INR 750
- Registration fees without accommodation INR 350

For Foreign Participants:

- Registration fees with accommodation $ 10
- Registration fees without accommodation $ 5

Note:

Last date for paying registration fee: 20th November 2026

Registration Fees as Attendee:

- For those who wish to attend the conference without presenting the paper in offline mode the registration fee will be INR 150. This includes attendance certificate and refreshments.

Note:

Last date for paying registration fee: 25th December 2026

Please note:

- All the fees are non-refundable
- No TA/DA is admissible.

- Out station participants / foreign participants in need of accommodation may send a request through email to **dhammasakacchapbs@gmail.com** in advance till 30th November 2026. The department will try to organise their accommodation in the university guest house subject to the availability of rooms.
- The accommodation will be available from the evening of 8th January 2027 till the morning of 10th January 2027.

Please note the following points:

1) Students should confirm their participation in the conference through an email to **dhammasakacchapbs@gmail.com** along with abstract.
2) Abstract Submission: Last date 25th October 2026
   - Title of the paper
   - Abstract in around 250 – 300 words (Not more than 300 words)
   - Contact details
   - Course name and
   - Name of the institute
   - Student Identity Card
3) Final Paper Submission: Last date 30th November 2026
4) Formal acceptance of the research paper will be conveyed after the scrutiny.
5) Bring your Institution I-Card on the Conference Day.
6) Please bring two hardcopies of your paper on the day of the conference for the submission to the conference organisers.
7) The best two papers from each category of.,
   a) Research Programs: Ph. D., M. Phil.,
   b) Post-Graduate Programs: M.A., and
   c) Undergraduate Programs: Foundation, Advanced, Diploma,
   PG Diploma, BA, Integrated MA (UG Level), will be selected for special awards.
8) The decision of judges will be final and binding.

Conference Co-ordinator	Conference Convenor	Head of the Department
Dr. Mrigendra Pratap	Dr. Truptirani B. Tayade	Prof. Mahesh Deokar
+91 8805842677	+91 8329141760	

Please Scroll down for Format of Abstract and Guidelines for writing Research Paper

Dhammasākacchā: Students' International Conference 2027

on

Concepts of Marginalization and Inclusivism in Buddhist Literature

2026 – 27

Abstract

Title of the Paper

_____

Name of the Student: _____

Name of the Course: _____

Name of the University / College: _____

Mobile Number with country code: _____

Abstract: Write an abstract in 200 to 300 words.

Font Size: For English: Times New Roman 12; Spacing 1.5

For Hindi: Sanskrit 2003 13; Spacing Single

Points to be included:

- Statement of the Research Problem / Statement of the Research Topic
- Aims and Objectives
- Scope of Study
- Methodology to be used
- Keywords

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Dhammasākacchā

Guidelines for writing Research Paper

Title of the paper

1. Introduction

1.1 Broad theme of the paper

1.2 Survey of the work done by other scholars

1.3 Reasons to undertake the study

1.4 Aims and objectives

1.5 Scope and limitations of the study

1.6 Methodology used: Literature survey or questionnaire method or field work, etc.

2. Content of the paper

2.1 Detailed statement of the research problem

2.2 Explanation or arguments with the help of supporting references from the original sources such as primary sources (Pali Literature / Buddhist Sanskrit Literature / Chinese / Tibetan and any other relevant original text) and references from secondary sources like books written by modern scholars on the topic of the research.

3. Analysis of the contents

3.1 Analysis of the information given in point no. 2

4. Conclusion

4.1 Conclusion based on the analysis of contents as in point no. 3

4.2 Your views based on the analysis

5. Bibliography (Chicago Manual Style)

Primary Sources

Secondary Sources

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