



DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY, SONEPAT

organises

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

on

50 YEARS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL DISSENT: REVISITING JUSTICE H.R. KHANNA'S LEGACY

IN COLLABORATION WITH

NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY, DELHI

DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY, PRAYAGRAJ

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF HARYANA

LAW CENTRE- II, UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

DEPARTMENT OF LAWS, PANJAB UNIVERSITY, CHANDIGARH



INTRODUCTION

“A dissent in a court of last resort... is an appeal to the brooding spirit of the law, to the intelligence of a future day.” — Justice H.R. Khanna

The trajectory of constitutional democracies is shaped not only by majority decisions but also by principled dissent. One of the most significant moments in Indian constitutional history is the dissenting opinion of Justice H.R. Khanna in *ADM Jabalpur v. Shivkant Shukla*, delivered during the Emergency (1975–77), a period marked by the suspension of civil liberties.

The central question before the Supreme Court was whether the right to life and personal liberty could be effectively extinguished by suspending the right to constitutional remedies. While the majority upheld the State’s position, Justice Khanna’s dissent asserted that the right to life and liberty is not solely a creature of Article 21 but inherent in the rule of law itself. Even in the absence of explicit constitutional protection, the State cannot deprive an individual of life or liberty without authority of law.

His opinion reaffirmed foundational constitutional principles—limited government, judicial independence, and the supremacy of the rule of law—at a time of institutional strain. In contemporary times, marked by evolving tensions between liberty and the state’s power, revisiting this dissent is not merely commemorative but normatively significant. It offers a critical lens to examine constitutional resilience, judicial responsibility, and the enduring relevance of dissent in safeguarding democratic values.

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The National Conference on “50 Years of the Constitutional Dissent: Revisiting Justice H.R. Khanna’s Legacy” is a collaborative academic initiative jointly organised by Dr B.R. Ambedkar National Law University, Sonapat; National Law University, Delhi; Dr. Rajendra Prasad National Law University, Prayagraj; Central University of Haryana; Law Centre - II, University of Delhi; and Department of Laws, Panjab University, Chandigarh.

The conference aims to advance constitutional scholarship and foster interdisciplinary dialogue on questions of liberty, rule of law, and judicial independence. It commemorates the 50th anniversary of Justice Khanna's dissent as a defining moment of constitutional conscience. A year-long academic series will be organised to discuss the development of the right to life and liberty in India.

The event will be conducted in a coordinated manner across the participating institutions through keynote addresses, panel discussions, and paper presentations, bringing together judges, academicians, practitioners, and students from across the country.

ABOUT DBRANLU SONEPAT

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar National Law University, Sonapat (DBRANLU) was established by the State Government of Haryana in the year 2012 under the Haryana Act No. 15 of 2012 under the name of National Law University Haryana, enacted by the legislature of the State of Haryana. As a tribute to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a great social reformer and architect of our present legal system and the Constitution, the State Legislature of Haryana, through an amendment in 2014, changed the name of this university to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar National Law University, Sonapat. The university has firmly resolved to impart advanced legal education and to hone practical legal skills and interdisciplinary understanding, keeping in view the requirements of a just and equitable society.

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Surya Kant, The Chief Justice of India is the Visitor of the University. Prof. Ashim Kumar Ghosh, Hon'ble Governor, Haryana is the Chancellor. Prof. (Dr.) Devinder Singh is the Vice Chancellor and Prof. (Dr.) Ashutosh Mishra is the Registrar of the University.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

- ▶ To commemorate the 50th anniversary of Justice Khanna's dissent and its enduring constitutional significance
- ▶ To critically examine the jurisprudence and role of dissent in constitutional adjudication
- ▶ To facilitate scholarly engagement on constitutionalism and civil liberties
- ▶ To promote institutional collaboration and interdisciplinary dialogue

THEME OF THE CONFERENCE

"50 Years of the Constitutional Dissent: Revisiting Justice H.R. Khanna's Legacy"

The conference is anchored in the idea that dissent is a vital constitutional instrument that preserves democratic values, safeguards individual liberties, and contributes to the evolution of law. The conference includes the following broad themes:

1. Right to Dissent: 50 Years of Justice H.R. Khanna's Legacy
2. From Authoritarianism to Constitutionalism: Revisiting the 42nd and 44th Amendments
3. Emergency Powers and the Constitution: Limits and Accountability
4. Samvidhan Divas and the Emergency: Reaffirming Constitutional Values
5. Preventive Detention in India: Law and Practice
6. Right to Privacy vis-à-vis Surveillance Laws: Constitutional Challenges in the Digital Age

SUB-THEMES

Participants may engage with (but are not limited to) the following themes:

I. ***Constitutional Theory and Jurisprudence***

- ▶ Jurisprudence of Dissent in Constitutional Courts
- ▶ ADM Jabalpur: Contemporary Relevance
- ▶ Rights Jurisprudence and Expanding Liberties
- ▶ Judicial Independence and Constitutional Morality

II. ***State Power, Emergency, and Accountability***

- ▶ Rule of Law during Emergencies
- ▶ Preventive Detention and Civil Liberties
- ▶ Emergency Powers and Constitutional Governance
- ▶ Law, Politics, and the Sociology of Dissent

III. ***Contemporary and Emerging Challenges***

- ▶ State Surveillance and Privacy
- ▶ Digital Constitutionalism and Technology
- ▶ Media, AI, and the Future of Liberty

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Keynote addresses by distinguished members of the judiciary.
- ▶ Panel discussions with leading academics and experts.
- ▶ Paper presentation sessions for academicians, researchers and students.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The organisers invite original and unpublished research papers from academicians, practitioners, research scholars, and students. Interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives are encouraged.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- **Abstract:** 200–250 words clearly indicating the research problem
- **Word Limit:** 4000–6000 words (excluding references)
- **Citation Style:** APA 7th Edition
- **Formatting:** Times New Roman, 12 pt font, 1.5-line spacing

Selected papers will be considered for publication in an edited volume.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Submission must be an original work of the author(s).
- A maximum of two authors is allowed per paper.
- Registration is required separately for every author.

- Selected manuscripts will be invited for presentation. Presenters are required to submit their PowerPoint presentations along with the full paper.
- The details filled in during the registration process shall be used for certification purposes. No request for change will be entertained later

ELIGIBILITY

Submissions are invited from:

- Academicians
- Research Scholars / Students
- Legal Practitioners and Professionals

PARTICIPATION & REGISTRATION

- The conference shall be held in a hybrid mode.

- The registration fee for

Category A: Academicians/Professionals—**₹1500 per author**

Category B: Research/PHD Scholars & Students – **₹1000 per author**

Category C: DBRANLU Students, Research Scholars & Faculty—**₹500 per author**

- Members of the Organising Committee and volunteers are exempted from paying the registration fee.
- Registration fees for offline participants do not include boarding and logistical charges.
- No refund request shall be entertained after the payment of the registration fees.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Last Date for Abstract Submission/Registration: 20th June, 2026
- Last Date for Shortlisting of Abstracts: 30th June, 2026
- Last Date for Submission of Final Manuscript: 20th July, 2026
- Inaugural & Valedictory Ceremony: 30 July, 2026

PAYMENT AND REGISTRATION DETAILS

- Last Date for Registration: 20/06/2026

Registration Link & Submission of Abstract:
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScamr92icm8ILCUlaOVVa4ViDKd60Hb-krtredeHDrNbL3yWw/viewform?usp=publish-editor>

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