



Policy Document

Journal of Social Practices

Department of Sociology

Virtual University of Pakistan

Contact Us

Editor

Journal of Social Practices

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Journal of Social Practices

Journal of Social Practices, published by the Virtual University of Pakistan, is an open-access, peer-reviewed journal that focuses on the exploration and dissemination of empirical knowledge on various social practices in indigenous and international communities. The journal aims to reconnoiter norms, values, behaviors, social and institutional dynamics, and change in the diverse cultural and social contexts. The journal provides a scholarly platform to analyze cultural and social practices, changes in values, cultural lags, information technology-based transformation, and the role of structural forces in Pakistan, the South Asian region, and globally.

Scope of the Journal

The Journal of Social Practices, published by the Department of Sociology at the Virtual University of Pakistan, is a peer-reviewed, open-access academic journal. The journal aims to disseminate knowledge and practices in the socio-cultural context of indigenous, national, and international societies. It aims to promote awareness about malpractices, good practices, and balanced societies through academic and research work. In this regard, the journal explores what is meant by social practices and perspectives, how cultures practice them, and how these practices can be helpful for humans and societies in general.

The main objectives of JSP are:

1. To create theoretical multidimensional scholarly discourse on socio-cultural issues that contribute towards collective sensitization for bring social stability and cohesion.
2. To analyse practical societal narratives through the critical lens that would ultimately leads to increase human interaction, specifically in Asia or global.
3. To apply technical and innovative strategies for fostering engagement of policymakers and building social dialogue for sustainable social practices.

Fostering critical dialogue across academic disciplines, the journal welcomes original, peer-reviewed research advancing theoretical, empirical, and applied knowledge in sociology and related fields, with an emphasis on Asian societies and global perspectives.

Types of submissions accepted:

- Theoretical research articles
- Empirical research articles
- Case studies
- Applied research articles
- Review articles

Core Areas of Interest Include (but are not limited to):

- Social rituals and everyday life practices
- Collective behavior and social norms
- The evolving role of social institutions (family, education, religion, media etc.)
- Practices of social inclusion, exclusion, and marginalization
- Online social practices and digital cultures
- Participatory practices in civic engagement and community mobilization
- Social identity and changing lifestyles
- Governance, Political Transformation, and State–Society Relations
- Gender, Law, and Social Protection
- Gender-Based Violence and Workplace Harassment
- Child Rights, Labor, and Social Inequality in Practice
- Qualitative and Interpretive Approaches in Social Research
- Indigenous knowledge and social practices
- Institutional reforms, social policy and practices
- Social Practices in health, caregiving, and well-being
- Social media, change in Youth culture and transition to adulthood
- Gendered practices and intersectionality in indigenous and online communication
- Exploitation in work, labor, and informal social economies
- Changing Urban vs. rural social dynamics and community practices
- Environmental behavior and sustainability practices
- Belief models and social practices in indigenous and modern communities

Frequency of Journal

Publication Frequency

- **Publication:** JSP is published **Bi-annually** (Summer & Fall)
- **Special Issues:** These may be announced periodically based on emerging themes, conferences, or collaborations.

Submission Method

- Manuscripts must be submitted electronically via the journal's submission portal <https://journal.vu.edu.pk/Pages/login.aspx> or email.



Double-Blind Peer Review

All submissions undergo a **double-blind peer review** process by at least **two independent reviewers**.

Review Timeline

- Initial editorial screening: 1–2 weeks
- Peer review: 4–6 weeks
- Final decision: Within 10 weeks of submission

Formatting Requirements

- Font: Times New Roman, Size 12, 2 Line Spacing
- Referencing Style: APA (latest edition)
- Include an Abstract (250 words) and 4–6 Keywords
- Plagiarism below 17% as per HEC guidelines

Language

- Articles must be written in **English** with clarity, coherence, and academic tone.

Review Criteria

Originality and Relevance of Topic

Manuscripts should present novel ideas, perspectives, or data that contribute meaningfully to the field. The topic must be timely, address a significant issue within the discipline, and reflect current academic or practical concerns relevant to the journal's scope.

Clarity of Research Problem and Objectives

The research problem should be well-defined and articulated. Objectives must be specific, measurable, and logically aligned with the overall research aim. The purpose of the study should be evident and coherent throughout the manuscript.

Methodological Rigor

Submissions should demonstrate a sound research design appropriate to the study's aims. The methodology must be described in detail to ensure reproducibility and validity. For qualitative and quantitative studies alike, data collection and analysis processes should be robust, transparent, and ethically sound.

Coherence of Argument and Analysis

Arguments should be logically developed, well-structured, and supported by relevant evidence. The manuscript must display critical engagement with literature and a clear analytical framework. Findings should be interpreted rigorously and consistently.

Contribution to the Discipline

The manuscript should advance knowledge within its field, either by filling a research gap, challenging existing theories, or offering new insights. It should have implications for policy, practice, or future research, demonstrating significance beyond the study itself.

Submission of the Article

The corresponding author submits the article through the online system or via email at the given email address. A confirmation of receipt of the article via email or online system is sent to the author

Initial Editorial Screening

Once the article is received, the editorial office scrutinizes the paper and reviews the submission for:

- Relevance to the journal's scope
- Basic quality standards (clarity, originality)
- Compliance with authors' guidelines
- Plagiarism check

Assessment of Initial Decision

The editorial members, after initial scrutiny, refer the article to editorial office. The following decisions are made based on significance of article, relevance to the scope, originality and quality of the paper and proceed accordingly.

- Proceed to review
- Request revisions before review
- Desk reject (with reasons)

An email is forwarded to the authors by managing editor regarding the selection of the article for double blind peer review.

Reviewer Assignment

The selected articles are further assigned to the selected reviewers for review process.

- Manuscript is anonymized (author details removed).
- Two or more qualified peer reviewers are selected based on expertise, preferably one local and one foreign national.

- Review invitations are sent. If accepted, the associate editors send the anonymized articles to the reviewers along with review forms.

Double Blind Peer Review Process

Double-Blind Peer Review

The articles are sent to the reviewers for evaluation on the given form that includes the recommendation of the decision (accepted, accepted with major changes, accepted with minor changes, rejected) along with the reason and details of the decision. A reviewer is given 3-4 weeks' time for the review of an article, and in case of delay a reminder email is sent by the editorial office.

Reviewers are requested to go through the guidelines carefully and then evaluate the manuscript independently, focusing on:

- Originality and significance
- Methodology and data
- Coherence and clarity
- Relevance to the field

Decision of the Editorial Office

The associate editors review all reviewer comments and submit a report to the editor in chief. If the comments and assessments of reviewers differ then the editorial office call for another review of the same article.

Communication of the decision to the Authors

Once the decision is finalized, it is communicated through email to the corresponding author, keeping in copy to all the authors along with all the suggestions and comments that need to be incorporated in the manuscript (if accepted).

Revision of Manuscript

If the revisions are required, then authors are given time frame of a maximum of two weeks for the revision. The revised manuscripts are sent to the same reviewers for confirmation. If revisions are made satisfactorily, then a formal letter of acceptance is sent to the authors.

Copyediting and Publication

All accepted manuscripts are copied, and authors are sent review proofs. The final version is sent for publication online, mentioning the issue and volume.

- Authors may be invited to respond to future issues.

Decision Categories

Accept

The manuscript meets all the journal's standards and is ready for publication without any revisions.

Minor Revisions

The manuscript is strong but requires slight improvements in clarity, formatting, or reference citations. These changes do not affect the core research outcomes.

Major Revisions

Substantial changes are needed, such as refining the methodology, expanding the literature review, or restructuring the argument. The paper will require re-evaluation after revision.

Reject

The manuscript does not meet the standards of originality, methodological rigor, or relevance, and is not suitable for publication in its current form.

Editorial Responsibilities

Maintain Confidentiality of Submissions

Editors must protect the confidentiality of all submitted manuscripts and the identity of

reviewers. Manuscripts must not be shared or discussed with others outside the review process.

Ensure Fairness and Impartiality

Editors should evaluate manuscripts solely on academic merit without discrimination based on race, gender, nationality, institutional affiliation, or other personal factors.

Avoid Conflict of Interest

Editors must avoid handling manuscripts in which they have a personal, professional, or financial conflict of interest. In such cases, editorial responsibility should be reassigned.

Promote Academic Integrity

Editors must actively discourage unethical practices such as plagiarism, data fabrication, or duplicate publication. They should verify the authenticity of submissions using appropriate tools.

Communicating with Authors and Reviewers Promptly

Editors should ensure a timely, transparent, and respectful review process. They must respond to inquiries from authors and reviewers without undue delay.

Author Responsibilities

Ensure Originality and Avoid Plagiarism

Authors must submit only original work and appropriately cite the work and ideas of others. Plagiarism in any form is unacceptable.

Disclose All Sources and Conflicts of Interest

Authors must acknowledge funding sources, institutional support, and any personal or financial conflicts of interest that may influence the research.

Obtain Ethical Clearance Where Applicable

If the research involves human or animal subjects, authors must provide ethical approval from a recognized institutional review board or ethics committee.

Responding to Reviewers' Feedback Constructively

Authors are expected to address reviewers' comments with professionalism and revise their manuscripts accordingly. Responses should be clear, detailed, and respectful.

Assign Authorship Responsibly

Only individuals who have made significant intellectual contributions to the research and writing process should be listed as authors. All authors must approve the final version of the manuscript.

Ethical Considerations

The journal strictly adheres to the **Higher Education Commission** guidelines. Authors, editors, and reviewers are expected to adhere to ethical standards to uphold scholarly integrity.

Misconduct Includes

- Plagiarism
- Data fabrication or falsification
- Improper authorship or ghostwriting
- Duplicate submissions

Open Access Policy

JSP follows an **open-access model**, making all content freely available online without subscription charges. Authors retain copyright but grant JSP the right to publish.

Publication Charges

Currently, **no publication fees** are charged. However, this may be reviewed in the future with prior notice to contributors.

Conflict of Interest Declaration

All authors, reviewers, and editors must disclose any potential conflicts of interest that could influence the content or review of the manuscript.

Retraction and Corrections

- Articles may be **retracted** in cases of serious misconduct.
- **Corrections or errors** may be issued post-publication for minor errors.

The journal follows the ethical guidelines provided by HEC. All authors are requested to follow these guidelines.

Ethical Guidelines for the Author(s)

The following ethical guidelines are obligatory for all author(s) violations of which may result in

application of penalties by the editor, including but not limited to the suspension or revocation of publishing privileges.

Reporting Standards

- It is the author(s)' responsibility to ensure that the research report and data contain adequate detail and references to the sources of information to allow others to reproduce the results.
- Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behavior and are unacceptable.

Originality and Plagiarism

- It is the author(s)' responsibility to ascertain that s/he has submitted an entirely original work, giving due credit, by virtue of proper citations, to the works and/or words of others where they have been used.
- Plagiarism in all its forms constitutes unethical publishing behavior and is not acceptable.
- Material quoted verbatim from the author(s)' previously published work or other sources must be placed in quotation marks.
- As per HEC's policy, in case the manuscript has a similarity index of more

than 19%, it will either be rejected or left at the discretion of the Editorial Board for the purposes of a conditional acceptance.

Declaration

- Authors are required to provide an undertaking / declaration stating that the manuscript under consideration contains solely their original work that is not under consideration for publishing in any other journal in any form.
- Authors may submit a manuscript previously published in abstract form, for e.g. in the proceedings of an annual meeting, or in a periodical with limited circulation and availability such as reports by the Government agencies or a university.
- A manuscript that is co-authored must be accompanied by an undertaking explicitly stating that each author has contributed substantially towards the preparation of the manuscript in order to claim right to authorship.
- It is the responsibility of the corresponding author that s/he has ensured that all those who have substantially contributed in the manuscripts have been included in the author list and they have agreed to the order of authorship.

Multiple, Redundant and Current Publication

- Authors should not submit manuscripts describing essentially the same research to more than one journal or publication except if a re-submission of a rejected or withdrawn manuscript is.
- Authors may re-publish previously conducted research that has been substantially altered or corrected using more meticulous analysis or by adding more data.
- The authors and editor must agree to the secondary publication, which must cite the primary references and reflect the same data and interpretation of the primary document.
- Concurrent submission of the same manuscript to more than one journal is unethical publishing behavior and is unacceptable.

Acknowledgment of Sources

- A paper must always contain proper acknowledgment of the work of others, including clear indications of the sources of all information quoted or offered, except what is common knowledge.
- The author(s) must also acknowledge the contributions of people, organizations and institutes who assisted the process of research, including those who provided technical help, writing assistance or financial funding (in the acknowledgement).
- It is duty of the author(s) to conduct a literature review and properly cite the original publications that describe closely related work.

Authorship Credit

- Authorship of the work may only be credited to those who have made a noteworthy contribution in conceptualization, design, conducting, data analysis and writing up of the manuscript.
- It is the responsibility of the corresponding author to include the name(s) of only those co-authors who have made significant contributions to the work.
- The corresponding author should ensure that all co- authors have seen and approved the final version of the paper and have agreed to its submission for publication. Others who have participated in certain substantive aspects of the research should be acknowledged for their contribution to an "Acknowledgement" section.

Privacy of Participants

- Authors must respect the privacy of the participant of research and must not use any information obtained from them without their informed consent.
- Authors should ensure that only information that improves understanding of the study is shared.

- Authors must ensure that in instances where the identity of the participant needs to be revealed in the study, explicit and informed consent of the concerned party is obtained.
- In the case of the demise of a participant, consent must be obtained from the family of the deceased.

Data Access and Retention

- If any question arises about the accuracy or validity of the research work during the review process, the author(s) should provide raw data to the Editor.

Images

- The author(s) should ensure that images included in an account of research performed or in the data collection as part of the research are free from manipulation,
- The author(s) must provide an accurate description of how the images were generated and produced.

Disclosure and Conflicts of Interest

- The potential and relevant competing financial, personal, social or other interest of all authors(s) that might be affected by publication of the results contained in the manuscript must be conveyed to the editor.
- The author(s) should disclose any potential conflict of interest at the earliest possible stage, including but not limited to employment, consultancy, honoraria, patent applications/registrations, grants or other funding.
- All sources of financial support for the project should be disclosed alongside a brief overview of the role played, if any by the responses during various stages of the research.

Copyright

Authors may have to sign an agreement allowing the journal to reserve the right to circulate the article and all other derivative works such as translations.

Manuscript Acceptance and Rejection

- The review period can last between 1-2 months or longer and during this period the author(s) reserve the right to contact the Editor to ask about status of the review.
- Once the review process has been completed, the author will be informed about the status of the manuscript which could either be an acceptance, rejection or revisions. In the case of rejection, the author(s) reserves the right to publish the article elsewhere.
- In case of revisions, the author(s) must provide an exposition of all corrections made in the manuscript and the revised manuscript should, then, go through the process of affirmation of revisions and be accepted or rejected accordingly.
- In case of dissatisfaction over the decision of rejection, the author can appeal the decision by contacting the Editor. For COPE guidelines, you may visit: <https://publicationethics.org/guidance?f%5B0%5D=type%3A21>

Reviewers Guidelines

Purpose of Peer Review

Peer review is essential to maintaining the academic quality and credibility of the *Journal of Social Practices*. Reviewers are expected to provide constructive, unbiased, and timely feedback that enhances the scholarly merit and clarity of the submitted manuscripts.

Reviewer Responsibilities

- Maintain confidentiality of the manuscript and its content.
- Avoid any conflict of interest.
- Provide an objective, balanced, and evidence-based assessment.
- Adhere to the review deadline.

- Suggest improvements, not just criticisms.
- Recommend acceptance, revision, or rejection based on the journal's quality standards.

Criteria for Evaluation

Reviewers should assess manuscripts based on the following criteria:

Relevance and Scope

- Is the manuscript relevant to the themes and aims of the *Journal of Social Practices*?
- Does it contribute new insights to the field?

Originality and Contribution

- Does the work present original thought, research, or analysis?
- Is it a valuable contribution to current academic or practical knowledge?

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

- Is the theoretical grounding adequate and well-integrated?
- Are key concepts clearly defined and appropriately applied?

Research Design and Methodology (if applicable)

- Is the methodology appropriate and sound?
- Are sampling, tools, and data analysis techniques clearly described?

Argumentation and Analysis

- Are arguments coherent, logical, and well-supported by evidence?
- Is critical thinking demonstrated?

Structure and Clarity

- Is the paper well organized and clearly written?
- Are headings, transitions, and formatting consistent?

Language and Style

- Is the language academically appropriate and grammatically sound?
- Is the tone formal and consistent with academic writing norms?

Ethical Considerations

- Are ethical research standards (e.g., informed consent, plagiarism) observed and documented?

Reviewer Comments Structure

Reviewers should organize their comments into two sections:

Comments for the Author

- Constructive and specific feedback addressing strengths and weaknesses.
- Suggestions for revision or improvement.
- Avoid harsh or personal remarks.

Confidential Comments to the Editor

- Recommendation (accept, minor revision, major revision, reject).
- Justification for the recommendation.
- Any ethical concerns or conflicts of interest.

Review of Outcomes and Recommendations

Select one of the following outcomes:

- **Accept as is**
- **Minor revision**
- **Major revision**
- **Reject**

Each recommendation must be justified based on the evaluation criteria.

Confidentiality and Ethical Conduct

- Reviewers must not share, use, or cite any part of the manuscript before publication.
- If plagiarism, duplication, or ethical misconduct is suspected, it should be reported confidentially to the editorial office.

Timeliness of Review

Reviews should be completed within the stipulated deadline (typically 2–4 weeks). If a reviewer is unable to meet the deadline, they should inform the editorial team promptly.

Recognition and Acknowledgment

The *Journal of Social Practices* values the time and expertise of its reviewers. Names of outstanding reviewers may be acknowledged bi-annually (if policy allows), and certificates can be issued upon request.

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Email: JSP@vu.edu.pk

Website: <https://journal.vu.edu.pk/JSP>

Signature: Head of Institution

Name: Dr. Athar Aziz Designation: Registrar

Contact Number: 0321-4028246 Official Stamp: _____

Dated: _____

Registrar
Virtual University of Pakistan