

PAPER PRESENTATION RULEBOOK

7TH GNLU ANNUAL LEGAL SERVICES FORUM



21st-22nd
March, 2026

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DEFINITIONS

- 1.1. “Competition”** refers to the 7th GNLU LSC Annual Grant Presentation, 2026.
- 1.2. “Cumulative Score”** means the total score obtained by a Team, calculated as the sum of the average of the scores awarded by judges evaluating the Research Paper and by the judges evaluating the Presentation.
- 1.3. “Faculty Convenor”** means the faculty representative of the participating university or college and includes any other person from the university administration specifically authorised to act on their behalf.
- 1.4. “Forum”** refers to the GNLU Annual Legal Services Forum which has this competition as one of its components.
- 1.5. “GNLU LSC”** refers to the Gujarat National Law University Legal Services Committee.
- 1.6. “GNLU”** refers to Gujarat National Law University.
- 1.7. “On-Ground Application”** refers to the practice, implementation, and lived experience of statutory rules & regulations in comparison to their existence as textual.
- 1.8. “Organiser(s)”** means the Legal Services Committee of Gujarat National Law University, the members thereof, or any person(s) appointed for the administration and conduct of the Competition.
- 1.9. “Presentation”** means the second round of the Competition where the Research Report prepared by a Team is required to be presented before a panel of judges.
- 1.10. “Presentation Resource”** includes any slides, videos, graphics, and any other material, excluding any resource that provides direct or indirect reference disclosing the team’s identity that may be used by the Teams for their Presentation.
- 1.11. “Presenter(s)”** means the student member(s) and/or faculty member(s), who shall represent the Team and present the Research Paper during the Presentation Round of the Competition.

1.12. “Research Paper” means the final submission by a team of the research and analysis undertaken on one chosen sub theme.

1.13. “Rulebook” means this document and includes any annexure, addendum, corrigendum, and other supplementary material that may be released by the Organisers.

1.14. “Sub-Theme” refers to three Sub-Themes on Contract Labour, Children in Conflict with Law & ASHA Workers, finalised by the organising committee to undertake empirical research for this competition.

1.15. “Synopsis” refers to a concise brief of the research proposal adopted by the participating team and drafted as per the format specified in Annexure I.

1.16. “Team Code” means the code allotted to a Team by the Organisers upon completion of registration, which will serve as a Team’s unique identifier in the course of the Competition.

1.17. “Team” refers to the team comprising of the Faculty Convenor or Member(s) and 15 student members of the legal aid/service committee representing a university or college in this Competition.

INTERPRETATION

The Organisers shall have the exclusive authority to interpret the rules of the competition. All requests for clarification shall be submitted to the Organisers, and the decision whereof shall be final and binding.

ABOUT THE COMPETITION

The Grant Paper Presentation Competition, scheduled to be held on **21st and 22nd March**, constitutes a flagship academic component of the 7th GNLU Annual Legal Services Forum (GALSF). The Competition embodies the Forum's commitment to research-driven advocacy, informed academic discourse, and evidence-based evaluation of socio-legal issues, by providing a national platform for institutions and students to present rigorous research on contemporary access-to-justice concerns in the era of emerging new technologies.

The Competition seeks to encourage students and institutions to engage critically with issues of access to justice, particularly for communities that continue to remain structurally marginalised despite the existence of progressive statutory frameworks.

In an era of rapid technological transformation, the Competition also foregrounds the role of emerging technologies in reshaping access to legal rights, remedies, and institutions. While digital courts, AI-driven legal services, online grievance redressal mechanisms, and data-driven governance have the potential to bridge longstanding gaps, they also risk deepening existing inequalities through digital exclusion, algorithmic bias, and unequal access to technological infrastructure.

By emphasising empirical research, the Competition aims to examine how technology operates at the ground level, assess its impact on diverse stakeholders, and bridge the gap between law as enacted and law as experienced, thereby fostering socially responsive, inclusive, and future-oriented legal scholarship.

The theme for the Paper Presentation Competition under this edition of the Forum ***“From Statute to Street: Empirical Realities of Access to Justice for Marginalised Populations in the Technological Era”*** seeks to critically examine the functioning and real time implementation of legal and administrative systems at the grassroots level for vulnerable groups within an increasingly digitised governance framework concerning Contract Labour Force, Children in Conflict with Law and Asha Workers.

While technological integration and legislative reforms promise efficiency and inclusion, their implementation often exposes persistent structural, administrative, and socio-economic barriers that hinder the effective realisation of rights by marginalised populations and creates

the need for designing safeguards appropriate for community level uptake of such digital governance instruments.

Within this theme, participants are invited to undertake empirical and policy-oriented research on the following **Sub-Themes**. The detailed guidelines regarding each Sub-Themes is provided under *Annexure II*:

CONTRACT LABOUR FORCE OF INDIA

A critical evaluation of the administrative and structural gaps between the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, with particular emphasis on on-ground (non)implementation, enforcement challenges, and the lived realities of contract workers across sectors.

Participants are encouraged to include, among other things, the impact of technology on access to & enforcement of rights of contract workers across sectors – i.e., the consequences of technologies on contract workers, contractors &/or principal employers and whether they can improve and ease their access to justice or conversely makes it more complicated for them to claim their rights.

CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH LAW

An examination of legal and administrative loopholes under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, focusing on, among other things, procedural delays, institutional limitations, discretionary misuse, and the impact of technological and bureaucratic processes on children's access to justice.

Additionally, participants are encouraged to focus on prominence and adoption of new technologies in governing the Juvenile Justice. As juvenile justice administration becomes increasingly mediated by online portals, biometric records, and interlinked child-protection databases, there is need for research on role of technology in making JJB justice delivery efficient, fair and protective of a child's care.

THE CRITICAL ARCHITECTS OF INDIAN SOCIETY: ASHA WORKERS

A critical analysis of the working conditions, remuneration structures, and social security framework governing Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA Workers) in India, assessing

the disconnect between their indispensable role in public health delivery and the extent of legal recognition and protection afforded to them.

The participants are encouraged to also emphasise the added need to examine the intersection of technology with their service delivery- its impact on the livelihoods of the workers, accessibility and training, assistance in work management, among others.

This two-day academic competition aims to showcase rigorous empirical research contributions from institutions across the country. Participants are expected to engage with field data, case studies, administrative practices, and stakeholder perspectives, and to propose innovative legal, social, and policy-based recommendations for strengthening access to justice.

STRUCTURE OF THE COMPETITION

4.1. Each Team is expected to conduct **empirical research using either questionnaire or interview methodology** on any one of the three Sub-Themes. The team is not allowed to use both research methodologies as part of their research and are mandated to opt for either one of the two options.

4.2. The team is mandated to select one sub-theme and prepare their research report for this competition. **A team cannot opt to work on more than one Sub-Themes.**

4.3. However, the team is permitted to focus on either one or multiple stakeholders associated with the sub-theme using the specified empirical research methodology opted by the team.

4.4. The teams shall submit a **Synopsis of the Research** done in the format provided in **Rule 10**. The Team shall submit the Synopsis by **22nd February 2026**.

4.5. Subsequently, each Team shall prepare a comprehensive **Research Paper** using the data collected from the empirical research. The paper shall contain the **mandatory headings** as prescribed in **Rule 10.4**.

4.6. Each team will be marked out of a **maximum of two hundred (200) points**. The Research paper & the presentation would be individually marked out of a **maximum of one hundred (100) points each**.

4.7. In case of any component being marked by more than one judge, the **average score out of 100** shall be considered for each component.

4.8. Awards and Prizes, as specified in Rule 15, shall be determined based on the said Cumulative Score.

ELIGIBILITY

- 5.1.** The Competition is open to **all recognised universities and colleges** offering undergraduate course or its equivalent.
- 5.2.** Each recognised university or college shall be entitled to send only **one Team** to the Competition.
- 5.3.** Where a university has constituent or affiliated colleges, each such college may send a separate Team, or the university as a whole may be represented by a team comprising students from its constituent or affiliated colleges.

TEAM COMPOSITION

6.1. A Team may consist of the following:

- I. One Faculty Convenor, who shall also act as the coordinator for duration of, and in relation to, the Competition.
- II. Fifteen student members who shall conduct research, prepare the Research Paper and a maximum of Two members (within the group of 15 members) shall present the paper at the GNLU campus during the forum.
- III. One of the Fifteen student members shall be the Student Coordinator for the purpose of this competition, who shall be the student coordinator of the team.

6.2. The Presentation for a Team shall be delivered solely by the Presenters.

6.3. Once registered, a Team shall not alter its composition without the prior written permission of the Organisers, granted at their sole discretion and upon providing due reason.

6.4. The certificates of participation for Team members shall be issued on the basis of the team list submitted by the team. It is, therefore, incumbent on the Team to ensure the correctness of all details.

REGISTRATION

7.1. A university or college may register its team of presenters & faculty convenor, latest by **11:59 PM (IST) of 13th February, 2026** through the following link: [Registration Form](#)

7.2. The schedule of fees is as follows:

REGISTRATION FEES FOR SINGLE OR CO-AUTHORS Rs. 2000/- per team

CO-AUTHORS

OPTIONAL ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation will be provided to the students as per the standard rates and subject to availability. To avail, please fill this form - [link](#).

7.3. Accommodation will be arranged by the Organisers for the Faculty Convenor without cost for the duration of the event.

7.4. The Registration Fee shall not be refunded once a Team has successfully registered.

CLARIFICATIONS

8.1. In case of any queries, Teams may request clarifications, latest by 11:59 PM (IST) **13th February, 2026** through the [Clarification Form](#).

8.2. All clarifications will be communicated through an email sent to the respective Faculty and Student Coordinator.

ANONYMITY OF TEAMS

- 9.1.** Teams must identify themselves solely by the Team Code allotted upon registration.
- 9.2.** Teams shall, at no point in time, disclose (directly or indirectly) the name of their university or college either in the Research Paper or in the course of the Presentation.
- 9.3.** Teams shall also not make use of, or display, in any manner, any logos, pins, badges, etc. in the Research Paper or in the course of the Presentation that could indicate their affiliation with any university, college or city where the university/college is situated.
- 9.4.** Any other information in the report or presentation that shall provide any form of indication about the name or location of the university (Including but not limited to place of survey) will be considered a violation of Anonymity.
- 9.5.** Any violation of this rule may result in **deduction of five points** per disclosure from the final score.
- 9.6.** The Presenters and the Faculty Convenor may refer to themselves by their respective Team codes during the Presentation.

SYNOPSIS AND RESEARCH PAPER

10.1. Each Team is required to prepare a Synopsis which shall constitute a concise and structured brief of the proposed research undertaken by the Team. It shall not be more than 10 pages.

10.2. The Research Paper shall not be more than 40 pages (excluding Synopsis, References and Bibliography).

10.3. The Synopsis and Research Paper shall be prepared on MS Word or Google Docs (with margin of one inch on all sides) and be written in English only.

10.4. Formatting Guidelines:

(i) The **Synopsis** must contain the following section:

- Cover Page
- Introduction & Background
- Research Problem
- Significance of the Study
- Objective of the Study
- Aims
- Hypothesis
- Research Questions
- Scope and Limitation of the Study
- Research Methodology

(ii) The **Research Paper** must contain the following sections:

- Cover Page

- Table of Contents
- Table of Abbreviations
- Synopsis
- Research Findings & Analysis (maximum of 10 chapters)
- Suggestions/Recommendations/Way Forward
- Conclusion
- References/Bibliography
- Annexure I: Research Questionnaire / Interview Questions
- Annexure II: Research Data Entries
- Annexure III: Declaration Form (refer Annexure 1A of this rulebook)

(iii) The following specifications must be adhered:

- For Headings (excluding Cover Page):

- a. Font: Times New Roman
- b. Font Size: 16
- c. Line Spacing: 1.5
- d. Alignment: Centre
- e. Style: All-Capitalised/Small Capitalised and Bold

- For Sub-headings (excluding Cover Page):

- a. Font: Times New Roman
- b. Font Size: 14
- c. Line Spacing: 1.5

d. Alignment: Centre

e. Style: Bold/Italicised/Underlined (any uniform) and numbered

- For body (excluding Cover Page):

a. Font: Times New Roman

b. Font Size: 12

c. Line Spacing: 1.5

d. Alignment: Justified

- For footnotes:

a. Font: Times New Roman

b. Size: 10

c. Line Spacing: 1

d. Paragraph Spacing: 0

e. Alignment: Justified

f. No additional space between consecutive footnotes

(iv) Cover Page must contain only the Team Code in the upper right-hand corner and name and year of the Competition.

(v) Table of Abbreviations must contain all the abbreviations used in the Research Report including commonly used abbreviations, acronyms, and marks and signs such as ‘%’, ‘&’, etc. and must be in alphabetical order.

(vi) Use of diagrams and charts is preferred in Analysis and Findings.

(vii) Suggestions/Recommendations are expected to be thoroughly justified and actionable.

(viii) Speaking footnotes are permitted.

10.5. The Organisers retain the exclusive right to publish and disseminate the Research Paper along with the Synopsis submitted for the Competition. By submitting a Research Paper, the Teams provide their consent for such publication and dissemination.

SUBMISSION OF SYNOPSIS AND RESEARCH PAPER

11.1. Submission of Soft Copy:

Every Team shall submit a soft copy of its Synopsis and Research Paper in both MS Word and PDF format, latest by 11:59 PM (IST) of **8th March 2026**, through the following links: [Research Paper Submission Link](#) and [Synopsis Submission Link](#).

The soft copy of the Research Paper shall be named as '[Team Code] – Research Paper'.

11.2. Late Submission:

Any soft copy submission made after the prescribed time of submission shall be considered late submission. For every hour of delay in the submission of soft copy, one point shall be deducted from the Cumulative Score. Further, no submission shall be accepted after 48 hours from the time prescribed above, and the Team will be disqualified from participation at the discretion of the Organisers.

Note: For reckoning the delay, even a partial hour shall count as a full hour. For example, a Research Report submitted at 12:01 AM will result in a deduction of one point.

11.3. Submission of amended Research Paper:

A prior request for submission of an amended Research Report has to be made to the Organisers and in the event that the request for submission of an amended Research Report is accepted, the deduction for late submission as prescribed above shall continue to apply and the last time to submit in this case shall be construed as the time of the submission of the earlier report. However, the time taken by the organisers to decide on the acceptance of the amended report shall be excluded while calculating the deduction for late submission.

11.4. Hard Copies:

Teams are not required to submit hard copies of their Research Report for any purpose related to the Competition, including for evaluation by the judges, as the same shall be arranged by the Organisers.

11.5. Teams will not be allowed to make any submission to the judges on the day of presentation, and all materials including the synopsis and reports shall be printed and presented by the OC.

EVALUATION OF RESEARCH PAPER

12.1. Each Research Paper shall be evaluated out of a total of one hundred (100) points, divided as follows:

a. Synopsis	20
b. Quality of Research	20
c. Data Analysis and Findings	30
d. Suggestions/Recommendations	20
e. Report Outlook	10

12.2. Criteria Description:

(i) Understanding of Synopsis purpose: Clarity, contextual insight, socio-legal appreciation of the theme.

(ii) Quality of Research: Use of diverse sources, comprehensive literature review, inter-disciplinary approach and quality of questions in the questionnaire or interview.

(iii) Data Analysis and Findings: Meaningful deductions and inferences, logical connecting between data, findings, and objectives, effective data presentation, coherent interpretation.

(iv) Suggestions/Recommendations: Realistic and actionable ideas, addressing the socio-legal gaps innovatively, feasibility and long-term impact.

(v) Research Outlook: Formatting, logical flow, effective language, overall presentation.

12.3. Penalties:

Non-compliance with the rules concerning the preparation of Research Paper shall result in penalties including in the form of deductions from the Cumulative Score. However, irrespective of the actual penalties, the maximum amount of deductions shall be 10 out of the Cumulative Score.

Furthermore, the penalty for late submission of Research Report and Presentation Resource shall be applicable separately as per **Rules 11.2** and **13.7** respectively.

RULE	VIOLATION	PENALTY
10.2	Exceeding the page limit	1 point for every page that is in excess
10.4 (i)	Missing section	2 points for every violation
10.4 (ii)	Incorrect formatting	1 point for every page on which there is a violation
9.5	Violation of Anonymity	5 points for each disclosure in the Research Paper

PRESENTATION

13.1. Each Team is required to present its Research Paper to a panel of three (3) judges.

13.2. The Presentation shall consist of two segments: the Paper Presentation, which shall not exceed 15 minutes, followed by the Question-and-Answer Session, which shall not exceed 10 minutes.

13.3. The Organisers shall notify the Presenters and the Faculty Convenor of the remaining time by displaying placards at the following intervals: 'Five Minutes Remaining', 'Two Minutes Remaining' and 'Time Over' for the Report Presentation segment; 'Five Minutes Remaining' and 'Time Over' for the Question-and-Answer segment.

13.4. Teams may utilise slides, videos, and other graphics in the course of the Presentation.

13.5. Any presentation resource, shall be in soft copy only and no hard copy of such resource shall be permitted to be shared with judges.

13.6. The soft copy of the Presentation Resource shall be submitted latest by 11:59 P.M. of **19th March, 2026**. The Presentation Resource shall be submitted through the following link: [Presentation Resource Submission](#).

13.7. Rules 11.2 and 11.3 shall apply, mutatis mutandis, for late submission and amended submission of the Presentation Resource.

13.8. The Presentation shall be in English or Hindi Language.

13.9. The detailed fixtures and schedule for the Competition shall be communicated to the Teams in due course.

13.10. It is mandatory for all the Presenters and Faculty Convenors to attend the presentation sessions of all Teams on both days of the Competition. However, the Faculty Convenors shall not attend those sessions that clash with the timing of the Round Table Conference.

13.11. Teams are required to maintain decorum in the presentation room when other Teams are presenting.

EVALUATION OF PRESENTATION

14.1. Each Presentation shall be evaluated out of a total of one hundred (100) points, divided as follows:

a. Content	30
b. Delivery	10
c. Organisation	10
d. Findings & Analysis	20
e. Suggestions	10
e. Response to Questions	20

14.2. Criteria Description:

- (i) Content: Depth of knowledge and understanding, information presented, and relevance to the theme of the Competition.
- (ii) Delivery & Organization: Clarity of speech, effectiveness of communication, professionalism, presentation style, engagement with the audience, and effective use of visual aids such as pie-charts, graphs, and images, logical flow and structure, effectiveness of introduction and conclusion, and time management.
- (iv) Analysis and Suggestions: Thoroughness of analysis and evaluation of issues, consideration of diverse viewpoints, and actionability of suggestions.
- (v) Response to Questions: Clarity and conciseness, evidence-backed responses, contextual insights, and team coordination.

14.3. Penalties:

- (i) Breach of Anonymity: Any direct or indirect disclosure of the identity of the Team, including but not limited to the name of the university/college, logos, insignia, geographical indicators, or verbal references during the Presentation or through the

Presentation Resource, shall constitute a breach of anonymity. Such breach shall attract a penalty of five (5) points for each instance of disclosure.

(ii) Exceeding Time Limit: The maximum time allotted for the Paper Presentation segment is fifteen (15) minutes. A buffer time of twenty (20) seconds shall be permitted beyond the stipulated time.

Upon expiry of the buffer time, a penalty of zero point five (0.5) marks per minute, or part thereof, shall be deducted from the Presentation Score for every minute of delay.

(iii) Cumulative Application: The penalties prescribed under this Rule shall apply cumulatively, where applicable, and shall be independent of penalties imposed under other Rules of this Rulebook.

AWARDS AND PRIZES

15.1. The Team acquiring the highest Cumulative Score shall be adjudged as the 'Winner' and be awarded with a grant of Rs. 20,000/- along with a Trophy, Books and a Certificate of Merit.

15.2. The Team acquiring the Second highest Cumulative Score shall be adjudged as the 'Runner-Up' and be awarded with a grant of Rs. 15,000/- along with a Trophy, Books and a Certificate of Merit.

15.3. The Team acquiring the Third highest Cumulative Score shall be adjudged as the 'Second Runner - Up' and be awarded with a grant of Rs. 10,000/- along with a Trophy, Books and a Certificate of Merit.

MISCELLANEOUS

16.1. All queries, requests, and other communication regarding the organisation and administration of the Competition, for which any other mode including Google Form, has not been provided elsewhere, shall be directed to the Organisers through the following email: galsf.legalservices@gnlu.ac.in

16.2. The Organisers reserve the right to amend, modify, change, or repeal any of the Rules of the Competition. In event of any such amendment, modification, change, or repeal, the Organisers shall communicate the same to the Teams.

16.3. By registering for the Competition, the Teams agree that the Organisers shall have the sole rights, including copyright, over any material submitted by the Teams as a part of the Competition including the Research Paper, the Presentation Resource, and the research database made up of the survey responses.

16.4. The Organisers reserve the right to take any decision on any matter related to the Competition, whether or not mentioned in the Rulebook, at their sole discretion and in the interests of the Competition, which shall be final and binding.

IMPORTANT DATES

LAST DATE FOR REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT 13TH FEBRUARY, 2026

LAST DATE FOR REQUESTING CLARIFICATIONS- SYNOPSIS 13TH FEBRUARY, 2026

LAST DATE FOR SYNOPSIS SUBMISSION 22ND FEBRUARY, 2026

LAST DATE FOR REQUESTING CLARIFICATION: PAPER 1ST MARCH, 2026

LAST DATE FOR SOFT COPY SUBMISSION 8TH MARCH, 2026

LAST DATE FOR PRESENTATION RESOURCE SUBMISSION 19TH MARCH, 2026

DATES OF THE COMPETITION (PRESENTATION) 21ST & 22ND MARCH, 2026

ANNEXURE – I

DECLARATION FORM BY THE FACULTY CONVENOR

I hereby declare that the research paper titled “.....” is an original work of mine and no part of the research paper has been submitted for award of any degree or for any publication.

Signature

Name of the Faculty Convenor

Date

ANNEXURE – II

CONTRACT LABOUR FORCE OF INDIA

1. Aims & Objectives:

The contract labour system constitutes a large portion of the Indian labour force, especially within government institutions, universities, hospitals, manufacturing facilities, and service providers. Although a statutory framework exists to regulate, and in some cases prohibit, contract labour, concerns remain about actual working conditions, the provision of welfare benefits, and the enforcement of legal protections available to contract workers in practice. The key objective of the research topic is to allow the participants to conduct an empirical study of the disconnect between the legal framework of the contract labour and its actual implementation with references to the shift between the *Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970* and the *Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020*.

The study aims to develop a critical understanding of how administrative practices, contractual arrangements, and institutional structures shape the lived experiences of contract workers. It further examines whether recent legislative consolidation meaningfully addresses the long-term vulnerabilities inherent in contract labour, particularly in an increasingly technology-mediated employment environment. In this context, technology is analysed not merely as a sector of employment but as a structural force that reshapes contractual control, monitoring, dispute resolution, and access to justice. Crucially, the study investigates how these shifts influence enforcement mechanisms and power asymmetries within contemporary labour relations

2. Scope of the Research:

The scope of the present study serves as a guiding framework, defining the specific boundaries within which the empirical study must be conducted. While participants must adhere to these topic and stakeholder limits, they retain autonomy to decide the internal structure and methodology of their study:

- The contract labour regulation regime in the institutional and establishment-based employment.
- The replacement of the *Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970*, by the *Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020*, and related rules, notifications, and administrative practices.

The study shall exclude gig workers, platform-based workers, and independent contractors who are not engaged in institutional contract relationships. Such workers may be included only where there is a demonstrable correspondence with a formal contract-labour system.

3. Stakeholders within the Scope:

The following are some of the stakeholders that the participants of the study can centre their empirical research on, depending on the design of their study:

- *Contract Workers*: persons engaged in or in connection with the work of an establishment by or through a contractor.¹
- *Contractors*: Persons who undertake to produce a given result for an establishment (excluding the mere supply of goods) or who supply contract labour for any of the establishment's work, including sub-contractors.²
- *Principal Employers / Establishments*: entities (e.g., companies, institutions, or public bodies) or persons that engage contractors to provide labour for work performed on their premises or in their operations.³
- *Administrative or Supervisory Authorities*: bodies responsible for registration, licensing, inspection, and enforcement under the relevant labour laws.⁴

The study can examine the relationships between such stakeholders, with particular emphasis on access to legal remedies, awareness of rights, enforcement mechanisms, and accountability frameworks.

4. Nature of Research Expected:

Research undertaken under this topic must be empirical in nature. Participants are expected to engage directly with relevant stakeholders or field realities, rather than confining their work to doctrinal or purely theoretical analysis.

Empirical research may be conducted using one or more of the following methods: **1)** Questionnaire-based surveys, or **2)** Interviews.

¹ *Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act*, No. 37 of 1970, § 2(1)(b), INDIA CODE.

² *Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act*, No. 37 of 1970, § 2(1)(c), INDIA CODE.

³ *Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act*, No. 37 of 1970, § 2(1)(g), INDIA CODE.

⁴ *Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code*, No. 37 of 2020, §§ 2(1)(zr), 3–5, INDIA CODE.

Submissions will be evaluated, *inter alia*, on the appropriateness and rigour of the empirical methodology employed, as well as on the extent to which the chosen method effectively advances an understanding of the subject matter.

5. Methodology Guidelines:

Depending on the empirical method adopted, participants are required to submit supporting material demonstrating how the research was conducted. This should include:

- *In case of questionnaire-based research:* a sample questionnaire along with compiled or summarised responses received from stakeholders
- *In case of interview-based research:* a list of interview questions and a summary of the responses or insights obtained from each interview

These requirements are intended to ensure the transparency and authenticity of the empirical research. No rigid format is prescribed, and participants are encouraged to present the material clearly and coherently.

6. The ‘Artificial Intelligence’ Component:

In light of the general theme of the paper presentation, participants are encouraged, but not required, to incorporate an element of ‘Artificial Intelligence’ or technology into their empirical research.

For example, the participants may examine:

- the use of digital or algorithmic systems in the management of contract labour, such as attendance tracking, performance monitoring, surveillance tools, and wage processing;
- the impact of automation and AI-based decision-making on the employment, work allocation, or supervision of contract workers;
- the role of technology in grievance redressal, compliance monitoring, or the enforcement of labour standards; and
- employees’ perspectives on AI-driven managerial practices and their implications for access to justice.

In designing their questionnaires or interviews, participants are advised to frame relevant questions that allow for an empirical assessment of whether, and in what ways, technology and ‘Artificial Intelligence’ influence the working conditions and legal protections of contract labour.

7. Concluding Note:

This annexure provides a systematic yet flexible guideline to assist participants in carrying out meaningful empirical research on the realities of contract labour in India. Participants are encouraged to approach their research critically, with sensitivity to the experiences of relevant stakeholders and with appropriate methodological rigour.

CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH LAW

1. Aim of the Research:

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (“**Juvenile Justice Act**”) is the primary law governing the treatment, care, protection, and rehabilitation of children who come into contact with the criminal justice system in India. Although the Act is founded on a child-centric and rehabilitative approach, its implementation in practice presents several challenges, including institutional constraints, administrative practices, procedural gaps, etc.

Notably, the increasing, though uneven, use of technological tools within juvenile justice institutions has begun to shape decision-making processes, giving rise to important questions around transparency and accountability.

This research component encourages participants to move beyond purely doctrinal analysis and focus on understanding the ground-level operations of legal provisions, institutions, and administrative factors.

2. Scope of the Research:

This section provides a guiding framework for participants by outlining the broad boundaries within which the research should be undertaken. While the scope set out below offers direction and clarity, participants are encouraged to design their empirical research independently and creatively, provided it remains aligned with the overall theme.

The scope of the research is confined to the functioning of the juvenile justice system in relation to children in conflict with law under the Juvenile Justice Act, read with allied rules, regulations, and administrative practices. Research focusing exclusively on children in need of care and protection, adoption processes, or child welfare schemes not directly connected to children in conflict with law falls outside the scope of this topic.

3. Children in Conflict with Law:

For this research, the term ‘children in conflict with law’ refers to persons below the age of eighteen years who are alleged to have committed, or have been found to have committed, an offence and who are dealt with under the juvenile justice system. The research may examine the experiences of such children at various stages of their interaction with the system, including apprehension, inquiry, adjudication, rehabilitation, and reintegration.

4. Institutional and Administrative Framework:

The research may focus on the functioning of institutions and authorities involved in the juvenile justice process, including but not limited to:

- Juvenile Justice Boards (“JJBs”).
- Observation Homes, Special Homes, and Places of Safety, insofar as they relate to children in conflict with law.
- Child Welfare Police Officers and other police personnel dealing with juveniles.
- Probation Officers and allied functionaries involved in assessment, supervision, and rehabilitation.

5. Stakeholders within the Scope:

Participants may choose to engage with one or more stakeholders connected with the juvenile justice system. These may include:

- Legal practitioners handling juvenile justice matters
- Members or staff associated with JJBs
- Probation Officers and social workers
- Child rights activists and non-governmental organisations working in the field of juvenile justice
- Academicians, researchers, or policy professionals with experience in juvenile justice administration
- Children who have either been accused or convicted under the Juvenile Justice Act.

The research may focus on a single category of stakeholders or adopt a multi-stakeholder approach, depending on the design and objectives of the study.

6. Nature of Research Expected:

Research undertaken under this topic must be empirical in nature. Participants are expected to engage directly with relevant stakeholders or field realities, rather than confining their work to doctrinal or purely theoretical analysis.

Empirical research may be conducted using one or more of the following methods: **1)** Questionnaire-based surveys, or **2)** Interviews.

Submissions will be evaluated, *inter alia*, on the appropriateness and rigour of the empirical methodology employed, as well as on the extent to which the chosen method effectively advances an understanding of the subject matter.

7. Methodology Guidelines:

Depending on the empirical method adopted, participants are required to submit supporting material demonstrating how the research was conducted. This should include:

- *In case of questionnaire-based research:* a sample questionnaire along with compiled or summarised responses received from stakeholders
- *In case of interview-based research:* a list of interview questions and a summary of the responses or insights obtained from each interview

These requirements are intended to ensure the transparency and authenticity of the empirical research. No rigid format is prescribed, and participants are encouraged to present the material clearly and coherently.

8. Instructions to Participants:

- The research undertaken under this topic must be empirical in nature. Submissions based solely on doctrinal or theoretical analysis, without any form of empirical engagement, shall not be considered sufficient for this Competition.
- Participants may choose to engage with either one stakeholder or multiple stakeholders, as per the design and objectives of their research. The selection of stakeholders must fall strictly within the scope outlined for this topic.
- The total number of stakeholders studied must be between 30 to 50 people.
- Where participants choose to focus on a single category of stakeholders, the entire sample size may consist of that one category (for instance, individuals who have been accused or convicted under the Juvenile Justice Act).
- Where participants choose to engage with more than one category of stakeholders, they may divide the sample size between such stakeholders in a manner suitable to their research objectives. Illustratively, 20 individuals who have been accused or convicted and 20 members associated with JJBs or allied institutions.
- Participants adopting a multi-stakeholder approach may either prepare a common questionnaire or set of interview questions applicable to all stakeholders or prepare separate questionnaires or interview questions tailored to each category of stakeholders. In either case, participants are required to submit sample copies of all questionnaires or interview questions used as part of their research.

- Participants are encouraged to ensure that the empirical research conducted is ethically sound, sensitive to the subject matter, and respectful of the rights and dignity of all stakeholders involved.

9. The ‘Artificial Intelligence’ Component:

In light of the broader theme of the 7th GALSf, participants are encouraged, though not mandatorily required, to incorporate an element of ‘Artificial Intelligence’ in their research and analysis.

Within the context of juvenile justice, participants may, for example, explore:

- Existing or potential use of AI-driven tools in case management, data analysis, or administrative decision-making
- Stakeholder perceptions regarding the role of technology and AI in improving efficiency, accountability, or rehabilitation within the juvenile justice system
- Ethical and legal concerns associated with the use of AI in matters involving children

Participants may frame questions or discussions around AI as part of their empirical research, where relevant and appropriate.

10. Concluding Note:

Participants choosing this topic must ensure that their research remains within the defined scope and engages meaningfully with the empirical aspects of juvenile justice administration. Given the involvement of children, the research should demonstrate sensitivity to the subject matter and adhere to appropriate ethical standards in all stakeholder interactions.

The evaluation will focus on the quality of empirical engagement, clarity of analysis, suitability of the adopted methodology, and the extent to which the research offers a critical assessment of how the juvenile justice system functions in practice.

THE CRITICAL ARCHITECTS OF INDIAN SOCIETY: ASHA WORKERS

1. Aim of the Research:

The National Rural Health Mission (“NRHM”), launched in 2005, introduced one of the most ambitious community health worker programs globally, i.e., the ASHAs. This initiative was specifically designed to address stark disparities in India’s healthcare landscape, particularly the “last mile” delivery gaps in rural and marginalised areas. ASHAs were envisioned as the cornerstone of grassroots healthcare, acting as a bridge between marginalised communities and the formal public health system.

While the program has been lauded internationally for reducing maternal and infant mortality, it operates within a complex web of legal and social ambiguities. Therefore, this research component aims to encourage participants to undertake empirical inquiry into the lived realities of the ASHA workforce at the intersection of law, administration, and technology.

The research must move beyond purely doctrinal analysis and instead focus on understanding how legal provisions, institutional mechanisms, and administrative actors function at the ground level. Through interaction with relevant stakeholders and engagement with empirical data, the research is expected to identify broad legal and administrative issues affecting ASHAs and to critically analyse whether the objectives of professional dignity and social security are being effectively realised.

2. Scope of the Research:

This section provides a guiding framework for participants by outlining the broad boundaries within which the research should be conducted. While it offers direction and clarity, participants are encouraged to design their empirical research independently and creatively, provided it remains within the overall theme.

The scope of the research is confined to the functioning of the ASHA program under the National Health Mission (“NHM”), read with allied rules, state-specific regulations, and administrative practices. Research focusing exclusively on general healthcare infrastructure, medical professionals (Doctors/Nurses), or health schemes not directly connected to the ASHA cadre falls outside the scope of this topic.

3. Institutional and Administrative Framework:

The research may focus on the functioning of institutions and authorities involved in the administration of the ASHA program, including but not limited to:

- *Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and Sub-Centres:* Insofar as they act as the administrative hubs for ASHA reporting, monitoring, and “Depot Holder” activities.
- *Block and District Health Offices:* The authorities responsible for the assessment of performance and the disbursement of Performance-Based Incentives (PBI).
- *Anganwadi Centres:* Where ASHAs collaborate to monitor nutrition, growth, and conduct community health sessions.
- *Specialised Units:* Such as Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs) for referral of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) cases and TB units for DOTS provision.
- *Grievance Redressal Mechanisms:* The administrative pathways (or lack thereof) available to ASHAs to address payment delays or occupational hazards.

4. Stakeholders within the scope:

Participants may choose to engage with one or more stakeholders connected with the ASHA system. These may include:

- *ASHA Workers:* The primary subjects, focusing on their identity as health activists, facilitators, and service providers.
- *Medical Officers and Auxiliary Nurse Midwives:* Who act as the immediate supervisors and trainers for the ASHA workforce.
- *Block Program Managers:* Personnel handling the data entry and incentive processing for ASHAs.
- *Legal Practitioners and Labour Activists:* Those handling matters related to the recognition of ASHAs as formal “workers” under the Code on Wages.
- *Community Beneficiaries:* Individuals who have accessed services like institutional delivery or immunisation through an ASHA.
- *Policy Professionals and Academicians:* Experts with experience in public health administration and social security models.

5. Nature of the Research Expected:

Research undertaken under this topic must be empirical in nature. Participants are expected to engage directly with relevant stakeholders or field realities, rather than confining their work to doctrinal or purely theoretical analysis.

Empirical research may be conducted using one or more of the following methods: **1)** Questionnaire-based surveys, or **2)** Interviews.

Submissions will be evaluated, *inter alia*, on the appropriateness and rigour of the empirical methodology employed, as well as on the extent to which the chosen method effectively advances an understanding of the subject matter.

6. Methodology Guidelines:

Depending on the empirical method adopted, participants are required to submit supporting material demonstrating how the research was conducted. This should include:

- *In case of questionnaire-based research:* a sample questionnaire along with compiled or summarised responses received from stakeholders
- *In case of interview-based research:* a list of interview questions and a summary of the responses or insights obtained from each interview

These requirements are intended to ensure the transparency and authenticity of the empirical research. No rigid format is prescribed, and participants are encouraged to present the material clearly and coherently.

7. ‘Artificial Intelligence’ Component:

In light of the broader theme of the 7th GALSF, participants are encouraged, though not mandatorily required, to incorporate an element of ‘Artificial Intelligence’ in their research and analysis. Within the context of community health, participants may explore:

- *AI-Driven Workload Optimisation:* How predictive public health planning can prevent worker overburdening.
- *Real-Time Digital Tracking:* Stakeholder perceptions on using technology to ensure transparent and immediate incentive disbursement.
- *Data-Led Policy Simulations:* The potential for AI to design sustainable social security models for informal workforces.

- *Ethical Concerns:* The legal and privacy risks associated with digitising community health data through the ASHA workforce.

8. Concluding Note:

Participants selecting this topic must ensure that their research remains within the scope outlined above and engages meaningfully with the empirical aspects of health administration. Evaluation will focus on the quality of empirical engagement, clarity of analysis, suitability of the methodology adopted, and the extent to which the research offers a critical assessment of the functioning of the ASHA system in practice. The research should seek to move beyond viewing ASHA workers merely as “volunteers” and instead recognise their role as central actors in the operation of a technology-enabled welfare state.