



1ST

**GNLU-LSC
ESSAY WRITING
COMPETITION
ON LEGAL AID
AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE
2026**

अभिलेख

ABOUT US

Gujarat National Law University, Gandhinagar is a premier institution of legal education in India established under the Gujarat National Law University Act, 2003. With its exemplary faculty, staff, and committed students, the University endeavours to impart quality legal education, contextualising it within the latest policy and practical developments in the fields of humanities, commerce, business administration, social work, science, and technology.

GNLU is the largest National Law University in India with regard to student, faculty, and academic discourse strength and the only Indian National Law University to offer integrated law degrees in five streams including B.S.W. L.L.B, and LL.M., Ph.D. and diploma programs in a wide multitude of legal and interdisciplinary fields.

GNLU LEGAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

The GNLU Legal Services Committee has been established as the epicentre of legal aid and all allied activities. The Legal Services Committee (LSC) is set up under Section 4(k) of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. The committee rides on the principles of empowering society with legal awareness and legal aid.

Over the years, the GNLU LSC has strived to recognize law as an instrument of social change. The Committee leads a wide range of activities from pro-bono and legal aid clinics to piloting research projects and piloting multiple drives, including one-of-its-kind Prison Legal Aid Clinic.



ABOUT ABHILEKH

Abhilekh is the newsletter of the GNLU Legal Services Committee (LSC), serving as a platform for engaging with contemporary legal and socio-legal issues through research, analysis and informed discourse. Through its issues, Abhilekh brings together diverse perspectives on questions of law, rights, social justice and access to legal remedies, encouraging meaningful engagement with issues affecting society.

Rooted in the larger vision of legal aid and access to justice, Abhilekh seeks to foster legal awareness and promote critical thinking on the relationship between law and society. Its publications feature scholarly contributions, contemporary legal discussions and reflections on issues concerning vulnerable and marginalised communities.

The publication reflects the GNLU LSC's broader endeavour to bridge the gap between law, legal institutions and the communities they serve.



ABOUT 2025 EDITION OF ABHILEKH

The 2025 edition of Abhilekh, themed “**Building Inclusive Societies: Quest for Quality Legal Aid,**” shifted the focus more directly towards legal aid, social protection and the lived realities of vulnerable and informal workers.

A significant focus of the edition was the position of women in domestic work, examining the lack of comprehensive social security available to domestic workers and the vulnerabilities created by informal employment arrangements. The edition highlighted issues of income security, healthcare, employment benefits, job security and the absence of adequate legislative protection.

It further examined the challenges faced by gig and platform workers, particularly the limitations of existing social-security frameworks. The discussion addressed issues such as worker classification, access to benefits, workplace injuries, economic insecurity and the difficulties created by the distinction between employees, unorganised workers and gig workers.

ABOUT 2026 EDITION OF ABHILEKH

The 2026 edition of Abhilekh turns its focus towards the foundational ideals of Legal Aid and Access to Justice, examining the extent to which the legal system can ensure meaningful and equitable access to justice for all. Building upon the publication’s earlier engagement with labour rights, inclusion and social protection, this edition seeks to explore the legal, institutional and socio-economic dimensions that shape an individual’s ability to understand, claim and enforce their rights.

The edition will engage with the constitutional vision of equal access to justice, the role of legal aid institutions, legal services authorities, legal aid clinics and alternative mechanisms of dispute resolution. It will also foreground the experiences of communities and individuals who continue to encounter barriers arising from poverty, social marginalisation, lack of legal awareness, geographical limitations and institutional constraints.

Through diverse perspectives and critical legal discourse, Abhilekh 2026 seeks to examine both the existing framework of legal aid and its effectiveness in practice, while encouraging reflection on how legal institutions can become more accessible, inclusive and responsive. The edition ultimately seeks to reaffirm that justice is meaningful only when it is accessible to those who need it most.

THEME

Access to justice extends beyond the formal availability of courts and legal remedies. For many, economic hardship, social exclusion, lack of legal awareness, institutional barriers and unequal access to legal assistance continue to impede the effective exercise of rights.

“LEGAL AID AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE”

ELIGIBILITY

The competition is open to all Undergraduate (UG) students across India.



REGISTRATION FEES

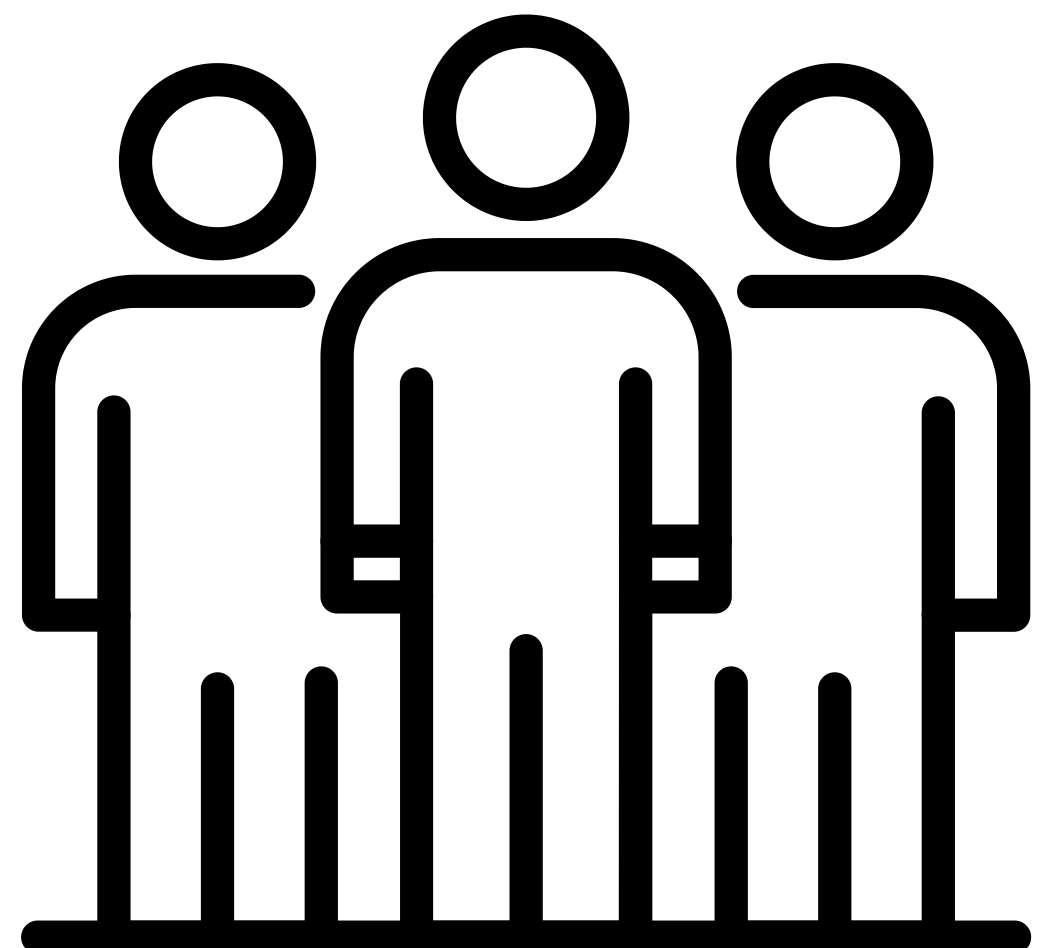
Single-author submissions: ₹200/-

Co-authored submissions: ₹300/-

Note: Co-authorship is allowed up to maximum of 2 authors.

Rewards

- 🥇 1st Position – ₹8,000/-
- 🥈 2nd Position – ₹5,000/-
- 🥉 3rd Position – ₹3,000/-



INDICATIVE SUB-THEMES

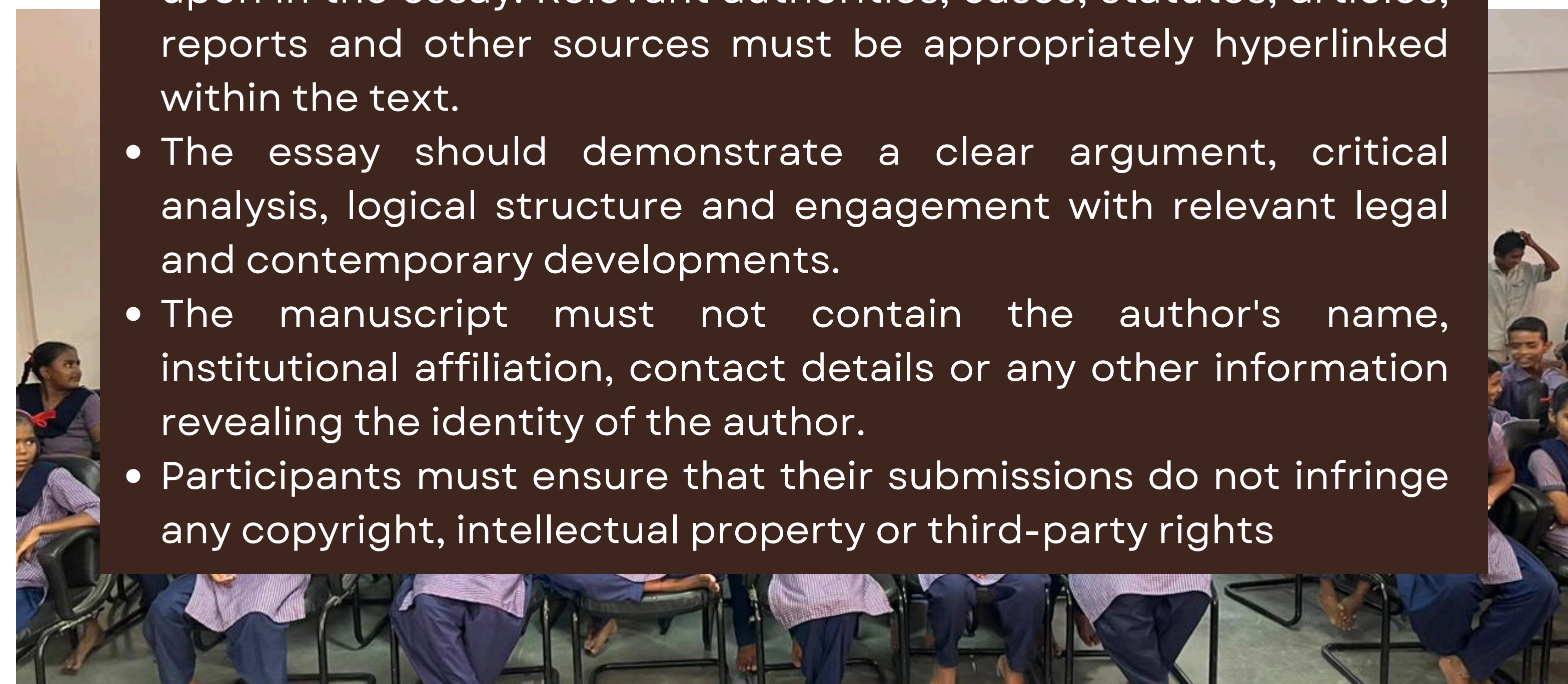
1. Constitutional Foundations of Legal Aid in India
2. Legal Aid as a Fundamental Component of the Right to Access Justice
3. Role of the National Legal Services Authority in Advancing Access to Justice
4. Legal Aid for Marginalised and Vulnerable Communities
5. Access to Justice and Socio-Economic Inequality
6. Legal Aid and the Criminal Justice System
7. Legal Aid and Undertrial Prisoners: Bridging the Justice Gap
8. Women's Access to Justice and Legal Aid Mechanisms
9. Child Rights and Access to Legal Assistance
10. Legal Aid Clinics in Law Universities: From Legal Education to Social Justice
11. Technology and the Future of Legal Aid
12. Digital Divide as a Barrier to Access to Justice

Note: The themes listed above are indicative and non-exhaustive. Participants are free to choose any topic that substantially relates to Legal Aid and Access to Justice.



SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- The submission must be original and unpublished and must not have been submitted elsewhere for publication or consideration.
- Co-authorship is permitted for a maximum of two authors.
- The manuscript must maintain a plagiarism similarity of not more than 10%. Submissions exceeding the prescribed limit may be rejected.
- The essay must be submitted in Microsoft Word (.doc/.docx) format.
- The essay shall not exceed 1300-1500 words.
- The essay must be formatted in Times New Roman, 12-point font, with 1.5 line spacing and justified alignment.
- 1-inch margins must be maintained on all sides.
- Hyperlinks are mandatory for all citations and sources relied upon in the essay. Relevant authorities, cases, statutes, articles, reports and other sources must be appropriately hyperlinked within the text.
- The essay should demonstrate a clear argument, critical analysis, logical structure and engagement with relevant legal and contemporary developments.
- The manuscript must not contain the author's name, institutional affiliation, contact details or any other information revealing the identity of the author.
- Participants must ensure that their submissions do not infringe any copyright, intellectual property or third-party rights



IMPORTANT DATES



*Last Date for
Registration &
Payment: 25
September 2026*

*Last Date for
Submission: 25
September 2026*

*Date of Results: 9
November 2026*

NATIONAL LEGAL SERVICES DAY: 9 NOVEMBER

National Legal Services Day, observed annually on 9 November, commemorates the enactment of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, which provides the statutory framework for delivering free and competent legal services to eligible persons and advancing the constitutional promise of equal access to justice. The day highlights the importance of ensuring that economic or other disabilities do not prevent individuals from seeking or securing justice.

In keeping with the very essence of Legal Aid and Access to Justice, the 1st GNLU LSC National Essay Competition on Legal Aid and Access to Justice will culminate with the declaration of its results on 9 November 2026: National Legal Services Day. Choosing this significant day for the announcement reflects the competition's commitment to encouraging dialogue, research and critical thinking on strengthening legal aid and making justice more accessible, equitable and meaningful for all.

[CLICK HERE FOR PAYMENT LINK](#)

[CLICK HERE FOR REGISTRATION AND SUBMISSION](#)

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