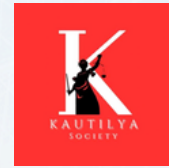




VIDHI | Centre for
Legal Policy



Legal Lumina 1.0

*An essay writing competition organised by National Law
University, Tripura and Kautilya Society*

In collaboration with Crime & Punishment, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy



Registration Starts: 17th January 2026

Registration ends: 1st February 2026

<https://nlutripura.ac.in/>

THEME:

**Reimagining Crime and
Punishment in India**

FOR ANY ENQUIRY

Hitesh Goyal (Convenor): 23ballb17@nlutripura.ac.in

Somya Singh(Co -Convenor): 24ballb66@nlutripura.ac.in



ABOUT NLU TRIPURA

National Law University, Tripura (NLU Tripura), is a prestigious institution established with the objective of advancing legal education, research, and advocacy in India. Situated in the north-eastern state of Tripura, NLU Tripura aims to serve as a centre of excellence in legal studies, fostering a deep understanding of law in its theoretical and practical dimensions. The university is dedicated to producing competent legal professionals, scholars, and policymakers who can contribute to the development of law and justice in India and beyond.

ABOUT KAUTILYA SOCIETY

Kautilya Societies, conceptualized by Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy and hosted by universities across India, are student-led initiatives designed to promote public policy as a career path. These societies enable students to conduct research on gaps in law, policy, and governance, producing reports and parliamentary submissions. By hosting discussions and events on recent legal and policy developments, they contribute actively to public policy discourse and socio-economic progress.

ABOUT THE COMPETITION

The Kautilya Society of National Law University Tripura, in collaboration with Crime and Punishment Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, is organizing an essay writing competition that invites students to critically analyse these issues and propose creative, principled, and reform-oriented solutions for criminal law in modern India.

REIMAGINING CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN INDIA

Criminal law is a powerful tool in the hands of the State, prohibiting wrongful acts that undermine society's core values and punishing offenders. While essential for maintaining order, its application must be judicious, used only when necessary and justified. In India today, over 7,300 acts and omissions are criminalised under 370 central laws, ranging from serious crimes like murder to regulatory lapses like failing to submit documents on time. This excessive and often disproportionate use of criminal law undermines ease of living, disproportionately impacts marginalized communities, and overburdens the justice system. It is also reflective of a deep mistrust between the State and its citizens.

THEMES & SUB THEMES

1. The Role and Purpose of Criminal Law in India

- Jurisprudence of crime: How do Indian lawmakers conceptualise crime?
- Objectives of criminal law: deterrence, protection, reform, and social order.
- Criminal law as an instrument of governance- limits and legitimacy.
- Should criminal law be a default governance tool?
- When not to criminalise: constitutional and judicial safeguards (e.g. SC judgments on homosexuality, adultery, attempt to suicide)

2. Criminalisation in India: What Should and Should Not Be a Crime?

- Principles for criminalising conduct (harm principle, proportionality, necessity)
- Expansion of criminal law into civil/regulatory domains- Criminalising technical or procedural non-compliance and its impact on ease of living and ease of doing business.
- Assessing recent decriminalisation efforts (e.g., Jan Vishwas Act)
- Frameworks for determining whether criminalisation is justified.

3. Punishment: Meaning, Purpose and Models

- Punitive vs. reformatory justice models
- Proportionality- Should punishment match the gravity of the crime?
- Evaluating the deterrent theory of punishment
- Exploring alternatives to incarceration (community service, plea bargaining, restorative justice)
- Discretion in Sentencing.

4. Marginalisation and the Criminal Justice System

- Impact of overcriminalisation on caste, class and gender.
- Criminalisation of poverty and social vulnerability
- Unequal access to justice: systemic barriers in policing, bail, and sentencing.

5. Reimagining Criminal Law-Making

- Principle-based criminalisation- What principles should guide future criminal law-making in India? Lessons from global best practices.
- Institutional reforms needed for better criminal law making.

6. Vision for Reimagining Crime and Punishment in 21st Century India

- what should the criminal justice system aim to achieve?
- Reducing reliance on incarceration and fear-based governance
- Building a justice system grounded in trust, dignity and public participation
- Preventive and rehabilitative approaches over punitive dominance.

Participants are encouraged to challenge conventional thinking.

Originality and innovative solutions will be valued.

Citations are welcome but not mandatory if narrative-based. (ILI MODE of Citation).

FORMATTING GUIDELINES

- Font and Size of Main Text and Footnote: Times New Roman, 12 Point for main text, 14 Point for headings in Times New Roman, 10 Point for footnotes.
- Size and Alignment: A4 Size with 1 Inch Margin
- Footnoting: The participant has to adopt an ILI style of citation with font size 10.
- Spacing: Submission should be 1.5-spaced (except footnotes, which should be single-spaced).

- Word Limit: The Word limit of the submission is 2500 – 4000 words (excluding footnotes).
- Plagiarism: Any submission that is found to be plagiarized beyond 10% shall be disqualified from the competition. The use of AI is strictly prohibited; if found, the submission will be disqualified.

All Submissions must be submitted in MS Word only

SUGGESTIVE RESOURCES

- <https://crimeandpunishment.in/>
- <https://crimeandpunishment.in/researches/how-india-punishes>
- <https://crimeandpunishment.in/researches/towards-better-criminal-law-making>
- <https://crimeandpunishment.in/researches/criminal-law-that-ought-to-be>
- <https://crimeandpunishment.in/researches/the-state-of-the-system>
- <https://crimeandpunishment.in/sos>

Prize Money: -

- 1st Position: ₹ 5000
- 2nd Position: ₹ 3000
- 3rd Position: ₹ 2000

PAYMENT METHOD

Registration Fee: Rs 300/- participant (non-refundable)

(NOTE - Registration is free for NLU Tripura students)

BANK DETAILS:

Bank Account: State Bank of India, Usha Bazar

Bank Account No: 42280472163

IFSC No: SBIN0018742

REGISTRATION LINK:

<https://forms.gle/rKoeqSFTx2Gag3va6>

[Please note that participants must save the receipt copy after payment of the registration fee, as it needs to be uploaded along with the registration link in the concerned Google Form link shared in this notification.]

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Open to students from Standard 12 onwards regardless of academic background.

This includes students from any discipline with a keen interest in criminal law and to reimagine punishments. The competition welcomes participants from diverse backgrounds, providing a platform to share thoughts on legal and policy issues.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Registration Starts: 17th January, 2026
- Last Day for Registration: 1st February, 2026 till 11:59pm
- Submission date & Time Period: 2nd February to 15th February, 2026, till 11:59 pm.
- Result Publication: 28th February 2026. (Tentatively)

FOR ANY QUERIES, CONTACT:

- Hitesh Goyal: 23ballb17@nlutripura.ac.in
(Convenor),
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(Co-Convenor)