



RAJIV GANDHI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LAW

NATIONAL JUDGEMENT WRITING COMPETITION 2025

ORGANISED BY:

**RGNUL INSTITUTE OF
COMPETITIVE
EXAMINATIONS**



About the University

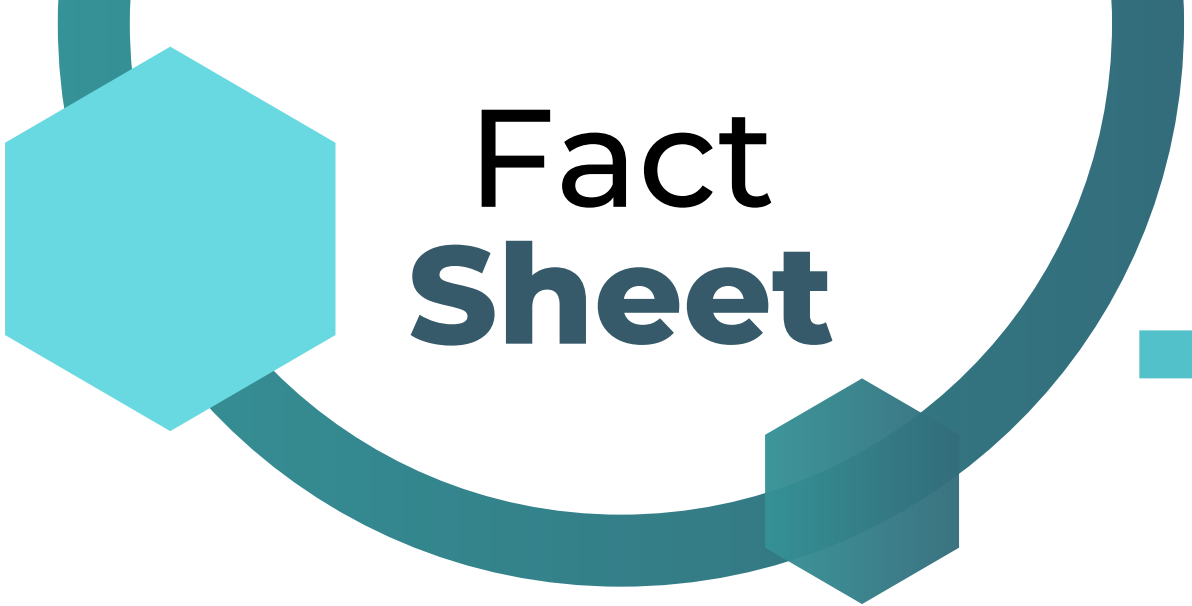


Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law (**RGNUL**) is a premier law university located in Punjab, India. Known for its academic excellence and focus on holistic legal education, RGNUL has consistently promoted innovative learning, research, and skill development among its students. The RGNUL Institute of Competitive Examinations (**RICE**) aims to provide platforms for legal skill enhancement, encouraging students to engage deeply with law beyond textbooks.



About the Competition

Judgment writing is a critical skill in the legal profession, requiring participants to think analytically, reason logically, and apply law innovatively. This competition encourages participants to assume the role of a judge, carefully evaluate the facts, and craft well-reasoned, precise, and creative judgments. Participants are expected to base their judgments on a thorough and diligent appreciation of the factual matrix and legal principles. The competition aims to foster the development of legal acumen, critical thinking, and the ability to communicate judgments effectively.



Fact Sheet

The present proceedings arise out of two connected matters raising substantial questions regarding the minimum age of sexual consent and the criminalisation of consensual adolescent relationships under the prevailing penal and child-protection laws of Aryavarta. The Supreme Court is seized of both an individual criminal appeal and a constitutional challenge. Under the statutory framework of Aryavarta, a “child” is defined as a person below 18 years of age. Sexual intercourse or sexual activity with a person under 18 constitutes an offence irrespective of any purported consent of that person; the minor’s consent is no defence. The provision operates on a strict liability footing, i.e., once minority is established, consent and comparable mens rea considerations are immaterial to culpability, and the enactment contains no codified close-in-age or peer-relationship exception. This baseline position is undisputed for the present record and is treated as the starting point for the matters before this court. The first case concerns Riya Sharma (female, aged 17 years and 6 months at the relevant time, student of class XI) and Aslam (male, aged 20 years, first-year IT diploma student). They had been acquainted for about two years and were in a close relationship known, to varying degrees, to their families. Riya’s parents had expressed strong objection to the relationship and opposed any prospect of marriage upon her attaining majority.

In May 2024, following a disagreement at home, Riya left her residence and met Aslam at the central bus terminal, Nandipur. CCTV footage records both boarding the 09:45 hrs bus to district Narayana. E-ticket logs corroborate the same. The two stayed together for approximately seventy-two hours in a rented accommodation arranged by Rehan, a friend of Aslam, whose identity proof was recorded in the landlord's register. No complaint of disturbance, force, or coercion was lodged during that period. On her return, Riya's father lodged FIR No. 708/2024 at police station Alipur, alleging that Aslam had enticed and taken away his minor daughter from her lawful guardianship and had committed sexual intercourse with her without legal consent.

The complaint invoked penal provisions relating to kidnapping and inducement of a minor girl for illicit purposes, and those under the child-protection law that criminalise penetrative sexual acts with a person under eighteen years of age, treating the same as an offence irrespective of consent. A medical examination was conducted within twenty-four hours of the FIR. The report recorded findings consistent with recent sexual intercourse, while noting no external injuries. The forensic report confirmed biological traces but was inconclusive as to timing. The chain of custody remained intact. In her police statement, Riya stated that she left voluntarily, travelled with Aslam of her own will, and that no coercion or threat was used. In her magisterial statement two days later, she admitted that physical relations occurred but stated she did not fully comprehend the implications of her conduct at that time and was emotionally distressed owing to family pressure.

Aslam was arrested on 10 May 2024 and continues to remain in judicial custody. His bail applications before the Sessions Court and subsequently before the High Court of Deoghar were rejected, both courts holding that consent of a minor is legally immaterial and that the matter must proceed to trial. Upon attaining majority in September 2024, Riya filed an affidavit before the High Court, affirming that her relationship with Aslam was consensual, that she desired to marry him, and that she did not wish to pursue the criminal proceedings. Her parents filed objections, contending that such indulgence would encourage grooming and exploitation of minors under the guise of “romantic relationships.” By its order dated 11 February 2025, the High Court of Deoghar declined to quash the proceedings, observing that voluntariness by a person under 18 cannot legalise conduct that the statute expressly prohibits, and that the allegations warranted trial scrutiny given the possibility of emotional manipulation or power imbalance.

Aslam has approached this court under SLP (Crl.) No. 123 of 2025, challenging the continuation of criminal proceedings because the relationship was mutual, near-age, and non-exploitative, and that the prosecution amounts to punishment through process inconsistent with Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution of Aryavarta. In parallel, W.P. (C) No. 32 of 2025 has been filed under Article 32 by a consortium of privacy rights advocates, questioning the constitutionality of criminalising consensual intimacy between adolescents aged 16–18, and seeking either (i) to lower the statutory age of consent to 16, or (ii) to lower the statutory age of consent to 16, or (ii) to read in a narrow

close-in-age exception for consensual, non-exploitative peer relationships.

The petitioners contend that the age of consent stood at 16 years for several decades before the 2013 Criminal Law Amendment, which raised it to 18 without a demonstrated empirical basis. They argue that this expansion has resulted in over-criminalisation, disproportionately affecting adolescents and burdening the justice system with cases arising out of consensual relationships. They invoke the principle of decisional autonomy under Article 21, arguing that absolute paternalism over adolescent sexuality violates bodily integrity and privacy. The petitioners further contend that most such prosecutions are parent-driven, often arising from inter-religious or inter-caste relationships, thereby weaponising criminal law to enforce social conformity. They term the existing regime an instance of state-endorsed moral policing, incompatible with constitutional values of dignity, equality, and liberty. It is further claimed that sexual expression within the sphere of privacy cannot be criminalised absent harm. They urge this Court to either read down the relevant provisions or evolve judicial guidelines distinguishing consensual adolescent relationships from exploitative conduct. They argue that Aryavarta should adopt a context-sensitive, capacity-based model aligned with global standards. The Union of Aryavarta asserts that the purpose of the existing framework is to protect, not to punish, adolescents, and that consent below 18 is inherently unreliable owing to emotional and cognitive immaturity and thus opposes any reduction or exception.

It is submitted that the State bears a constitutional duty to safeguard minors - and thus a uniform threshold of 18 provides clarity and deterrence, whereas exceptions would create ambiguity and complicate prosecution. It is further submitted that adolescents are susceptible to manipulation and peer pressure, and that any relaxation would shift the evidentiary burden onto victims, forcing them to prove lack of consent and thereby defeating the very rationale of the protective statute.

The Union stresses the need for coherence with allied laws, especially the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, which sets 18 as the minimum age of marriage for women. Lowering the consent age, it argues, would produce a contradictory legal regime, permitting sexual consent where marriage itself remains voidable. Citing data from national health surveys and medical research, the State submits that early sexual activity leads to higher risks of adolescent pregnancy, anaemia, and psychological distress, and adversely impacts education and nutrition. It argues that 18 years is an internationally consistent and scientifically validated standard balancing protection with autonomy. The Union also invokes Aryavarta's commitments under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (**CRC**) and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (**CEDAW**), both ratified by the Republic, which obligate States to protect children from sexual exploitation. It urges the court to reaffirm the 18-year benchmark as a nonderogable protective floor, warning that dilution could undermine global obligations. Vide order dated 24 September 2025, this court tagged SLP (Crl.) No. 123 of 2025 and W.P. (C) No. 32 of

2025 for analogous hearing before a three-judge bench. After hearing all parties, including the attorney general, amicus curiae, and representatives of child-rights, women organisations, and civil-liberties organisations, the judgment stands reserved. All laws and international instruments in Aryavarta are pari materia with those of the Republic of India.

Case Details:

SLP (Crl.) No. 123 of 2025 - **Aslam v. State of Deoghar & Anr.** with W.P. (C) No. 32 of 2025 - **Centre for Privacy Rights & Ors. v. Union of Aryavarta**



Registration

Mode: Online

Registration Opens: 16 Oct, 2025

Registration Ends: 16 Nov, 2025

Clarification Deadline: 5th Nov, 2025

Date of Submission: 16th Nov, 2025

Registration link

<https://forms.gle/hJttnJSqLn2CwbCq7>

Payment link

https://lsacademia.in/lisa_rgnul/eventPortal/loginFrom.jsp

Registration fees

Individual participant:

Rs. 500 (Non-RGNUL candidates)

Rs. 300 (RGNUL candidates)

For Co-Authors:

Rs. 300 (Non-RGNUL candidates)

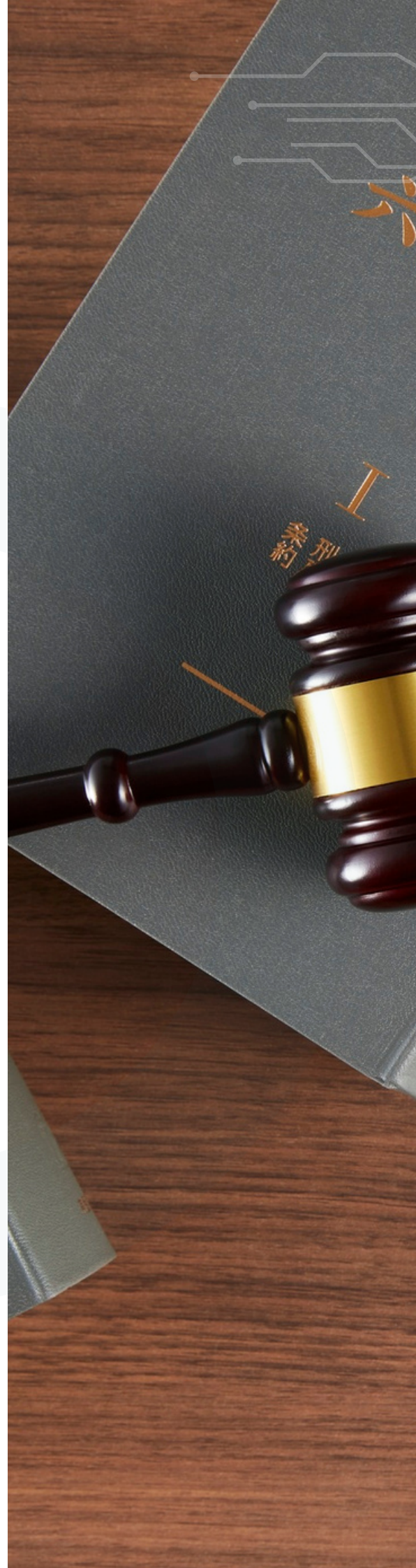
Rs. 200 (RGNUL candidates)

PRIZES

Position	Prize Amount	Certificate
Winner	₹7,000	Certificate of Excellence
Runner Up	₹5,000	Certificate of Excellence
2 nd Runner Up	₹3,500	Certificate of Excellence
Participants		Certificate of Participation

Eligibility

The competition is open to students in 5-year and 3-year LL.B. programs at all Bar Council of India (BCI) recognized law institutions.



Rules & **GUIDELINES**



- **Word Limit: 3000-5000 words (excluding footnotes)**
- **Times New Roman**
- **Font Size: 12**
- **Space Line: 1.5**
- **Citation Format: Blue Book 21st edition**
- **Candidates can submit their judgements via this link:**

<https://forms.gle/XXp6xiELTEBmf2Sv6>

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