



### **Letter of Invitation**

Greetings from the Election Commission of India (ECI), India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM), and Jindal Global Law School (JGLS), O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU) (**Competition Organizers**).

The ECI, the IIIDEM, and JGLS are pleased to announce the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the “*The Election Commission of India Annual National Essay Contest on Election & Democracy*,” conducted jointly by IIIDEM & JGLS, which will be conducted in both English and Hindi mediums. The objective of this essay competition is to encourage students to engage in research on the law and policy governing elections in India.

This competition seeks to promote scholarship on elections for developing and strengthening democratic institutions and electoral processes. The primary focus will be on legislative, judicial, and academic developments relating to elections. The Competition Organizers encourage students to develop independent thought, depth of knowledge, clear reasoning, critical analysis, and persuasive styles, all essential for the holistic development of individuals as thought leaders. A fine-grained understanding of election laws and processes is essential to appreciate the democratic process which is the bedrock of India’s constitutional framework. The National Essay Contest on Election and Democracy invites students to reflect on field of election law and questions surrounding electoral process in a manner which transcends the confines of the university curriculum.

We have enclosed herewith guidelines, rules and regulations along with the flyer to apprise you with the details about the essay competition. These are also available at: <https://eci-essay.org/>.

It is our immense pleasure to invite the students of your esteemed Institution to participate in this National Essay Competition. We sincerely hope that you will be able to accept our invitation and your students will contribute to this competition.

Thanks and best regards,

**Prof. Dabiru Sridhar Patnaik**  
**Registrar,**

**O. P. Jindal Global [Institution of Eminence Deemed to be University]**

## **GUIDELINES, RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE PARTICIPANTS:**

### **1. TOPICS & THEME**

*Note: Topical indications given below are non-exhaustive. Participants may author essays that may not relate to the described sub-themes but address the main topics in one way or the other. Participants can choose any one of the following two topics:*

#### ***Topic 1: Legal Framework for Social Media Regulations During Elections***

With political parties, election contestants & stakeholders considerably digitalising their election campaigns and advertisements, a new trend has developed over the last decade. Consequently, there is immense scope to reimagine the traditional legal framework that regulates these aspects. Is there a necessity to create a new legal framework uniquely to monitor electoral activities on social media apart from the current rules that discipline print and broadcast media? What should be the nature of that alternate legal provisions for effective regulation of speech and expenditure by parties/candidates on social media which are often powered by big data analytics and management teams? These questions can be addressed from the perspective of maintenance and promotion of electoral integrity in the digital space. Alternatively, essays can adopt a rights-based discourse to deal with them, as any regulation of campaigns and advertisements on social media will obviously prompt concerns about freedom of speech and constitutional sustainability. Additionally, legal issues surrounding the intermediary liability of social media companies in this structure could play a role in the discussions. Besides, potential practical challenges like enforcement of electoral silence period for campaigns on social media and controlling publication of fake and unauthorised exit poll results before the polling finishes that any future legal framework must consider and pay attention could also be discussed. In fact, all these sub-themes could be studied comparatively to justify legal arguments and proposals.

#### ***Topic 2: The ECI's Role in Protecting and Preserving Electoral Democracy***

This topic may be viewed from several perspectives. Essays could consider the ECI's role in protecting the integrity of our electoral democracy. How can the ECI play a role in the decriminalisation of politics? What should be the road ahead for ensuring transparency in fundraising and regulating illegal and unregulated expenditures by political parties during elections? Further, participants may discuss how the legal framework around the Model Code of Conduct could be reworked to ensure that ECI is able to effectively keep politicians and parties in check with regard to violations of the Code. This may be done apart from analysing whether the ECI should be conferred the power to deregister political parties for grievous violations of the rules, and principles of inner party democracy. Besides, one can assess how the ECI may enhance the democratic quotient of this electoral democracy. Essays on voting rights and facilities for NRI voters, diversification of voter education activities to improve voter turnouts, legal aspects concerning the integrity and verification of votes through EVMs, and prevention of voters' exclusion from electoral rolls may fall under this wing. Additionally, contributions could also focus on addressing the ECI's institutional independence as an aspect that ensures that the performs its role effectively.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY

For the smooth functioning of “*The Election Commission of India Annual National Essay Contest on Election & Democracy,*” conducted jointly by IIIDEM & JGLS (**Competition**), it will be conducted in both English and Hindi. Students pursuing any full-time degree programme conducted by law Universities / Institutes / Colleges recognized by the Bar Council of India shall be eligible to participate in the Competition.

Please see the website [www.eciessay.org](http://www.eciessay.org) or the enclosed flyer for further details regarding eligibility.

## 3. SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

### a) Editorial Guidelines

- (i) The essay should not be more than 3,500 words including footnotes. There is no minimum word limit. However, participants are encouraged to submit essays of not less than 1,500 words.
- (ii) All entries shall be typewritten in an A4 sized document with a 1-inch margin on all sides and shall be justified;
- (iii) The main text of the English essay shall be in Font Times New Roman 12-point. Further, footnotes shall be in Font Times New Roman 10-point;
- (iv) The main text of the Hindi essay shall be in Font Kruti Dev 12-point. Further, footnotes shall be in Font Kruti Dev 10-point;
- (v) Entries should be 1.5 spaced (except footnotes which have to be single-spaced);
- (vi) Participants are directed to adopt a uniform and recognized style of referencing throughout the document; and
- (vii) The Footnotes/Bibliography of the essay should comply with the following guidelines:
  - a. Footnoting Style: OSCOLA, Times New Roman, 10 Font, Justified and Weblinks (wherever provided should indicate the name/title of the page along with the ‘date and time of last access’)
  - b. Bibliography: OSCOLA Style, Times New Roman, 12 Font, Justified and Weblinks
- (viii) Participants should not include their names, in any form, in the essay. All entries would need to be anonymized before sending them to the respective judges. **Please note that any entries in breach of this condition shall be automatically disqualified.**

## **b) Procedure for the Submissions of Entries**

- (i) A participant can submit only one entry. In case it is found that any participant has submitted more than one entry, only the first entry will be considered as valid.
- (ii) All entries must be submitted as electronic copies in PDF format. Participants are required to use the 'restrict editing' function so that the formatting of the entry does not unravel and the content remains unchanged during electronic transmission to the Competition Organizers. Participants should email their entries only by uploading to this weblink provided at the website: [www.eciessay.org](http://www.eciessay.org);
- (iii) All entries must be accompanied by (a) a colored scan of a self-attested valid student identity card and (b) duly filled-in and signed entry form (see below) endorsed by the university / institute / college in PDF format;
- (iv) Entries submitted in hard copies and not in the prescribed format shall be summarily rejected without any intimation and NO query, correspondence; representation etc. pertaining to such entries shall be entertained by the Competition Organizers under any circumstances;
- (v) The file name of the essay must be 'Participant's name\_Topic';
- (vi) Entries shall be forwarded by participants or collaborating team of co-authors directly, and shall not be forwarded through any other person, at the Email prescribed above. All the fields in the entry form shall be compulsorily filled; and
- (vii) Only original essays will be considered for the competition. Previously published essays shall be rejected outright. Any form of plagiarism will result in disqualification of the essay.

There is no entry / application fee to the competition. Additionally, participants are also not required to register before sending in their entries.

## **4. DATES AND DEADLINES**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>EVENT/ PLAN</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> October, 2021	Release of essay topics and rules of the competition
21 <sup>st</sup> November, 2021 by 11:59pm IST	Deadline for submission of entries

## **5. JUDGING PROCESS**

The essay entries will be evaluated by JGLS faculty members with expertise in election laws, in consultation with the IIIDEM. All essay entries will be anonymised and shall be allocated a Unique Identification Code by the Competition Organizers before sending the same for evaluation.

- (i) Originality of content: 20 marks
- (ii) Formatting and Presentation: 15 marks
- (iii) Quality of Research: 25 marks
- (iv) Argumentation: 25 marks
- (v) Use of Authorities and Citations: 15 marks

*Note: Any decision taken by the Competition Organizers in relation to the Essay Contest is final and binding, and there is no scope of appeal*

## 6. PRIZES

All prizes for this competition have been sponsored by the ECI. Winners will receive prizes as per the following table:

### *English Essay Prizes*

<b>PRIZES</b>	<b>CATEGORY I</b> (Full-time Under-Graduate/ Graduate Students)	<b>CATEGORY II</b> (Full-time Post-Graduate Students)
FIRST	₹ 1,00,000	₹ 1,00,000
SECOND	₹ 75,000	₹ 75,000
THIRD	₹ 50,000	₹ 50,000

### *Hindi Essay Prizes*

<b>PRIZES</b>	<b>CATEGORY I</b> (Full-time Under-Graduate/ Graduate Students)	<b>CATEGORY II</b> (Full-time Post-Graduate Students)
FIRST	₹ 1,00,000	₹ 1,00,000
SECOND	₹ 75,000	₹ 75,000
THIRD	₹ 50,000	₹ 50,000

- The prize winners will also be awarded a certificate from IIIDEM/ECI. The names of the winners may also be published on the IIIDEM/ECI website.
- All participants with valid entries will be given a participation certificate.

## 7. CONTACT DETAILS

For queries related to Essay Contest, please contact the Competition Organizers at: [eciessaysupport@jgu.edu.in](mailto:eciessaysupport@jgu.edu.in)