

12th

Independent Thought National Legal Essay Competition 2025

under the aegis of SAIEVAC



Theme for the Year 2025

Bonded Labour to Modern Slavery – Is the System Abolished!?

Suggest Law & Policy Reform and Implementation Ideas

Last date of submission:

**15 October
2025 Declaration
Best Thoughts:
10 December
2025**

Rationale and Background

Citizens play a vital role in diverse ways towards strengthening democratic framework of the Nation, established legal system and rule of law. This is imperative for giving life to hidden spirit of the opening phrase of Indian Constitution “WE, the People of India”.

Independent Thought National Legal Essay Competition, 2025 under the aegis of SAIEVAC (South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children) is a platform for young and promising legal minds to participate in national building process with focus on children rights law.

The theme of the year focuses on “Bonded labour”, also known as debt bondage, is a form of forced labour where individuals / families are compelled to work to repay a debt under exploitative conditions. The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, completes 50 years in 2025-2026, of its enactment on 15 October 2025 and notification for implementation on 7 February 2026.

Law declared bonded labour illegal in India and governments have made efforts towards their release from bondage and rehabilitation; however there seems to be gaps in enforcement, identification, and rehabilitation efforts. The National Crime Records Bureau data [victims between 2020–2022 is ↑ 2,837 → ↓ 667 → ↑ 1,600] suggests, the crime continues.

Participation and Recognition

Indian students who have an interest in Law, Development, Business and Human Rights are invited to participate and be part of the change.

Three Best Thoughts to be awarded with citation and

- Best Thought ₹10,000
- Second Best Thought ₹8,000
- Third Best Thought ₹5,000

The fifteen Best Thoughts will get Certificate of Participation and ISBN published as Independent Thought Law Digest 2025

PANEL OF JUDGES (TBC)

- Dr. Rinchen Chopel, Vice Chair, UNCRC Committee and Director General, SAIEVAC
- Prof. D.P. Verma, Member, Law Commission of India
- Prof (Dr) Manoj Kumar Sinha, Vice Chancellor, Dharmashastra National Law University, Jabalpur
- Prof (Dr) Manu Singh, Principal, IPEM Law College, Ghaziabad

- Mr. Gadiraju Lakshmi Narasimhan, National Coordinator, PPLL Child Labour Project, ILO India
- Mr. Laxminarayan Nanda, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Assam & North East
- Prof (Dr) Uday Shankar, Rajiv Gandhi School of Intellectual Property Law, IIT Kharagpur
- Dr. Vikram Srivastava, Adv & Founder, Independent Thought

Independent Thought

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Important Instruction

- Essays written in English up to 5000 words with an abstract of 300 words should be sent to essay.ithought@gmail.com
- Details of author, which includes full name, phone numbers, college details, email id and postal address on cover page along with number of words.
- Format and Font: MS Word format; Times Roman Size 12; 1” margin with line spacing 1”.5’ Standard citations, footnotes and reference details (not included within word limit).
- Detection of plagiarism will lead to elimination.
- Entries submitted without personal details mentioned above or incomplete information on personal details will not be considered for evaluation

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Independent Thought offers Internship & Fellowship opportunities on Child Rights Law