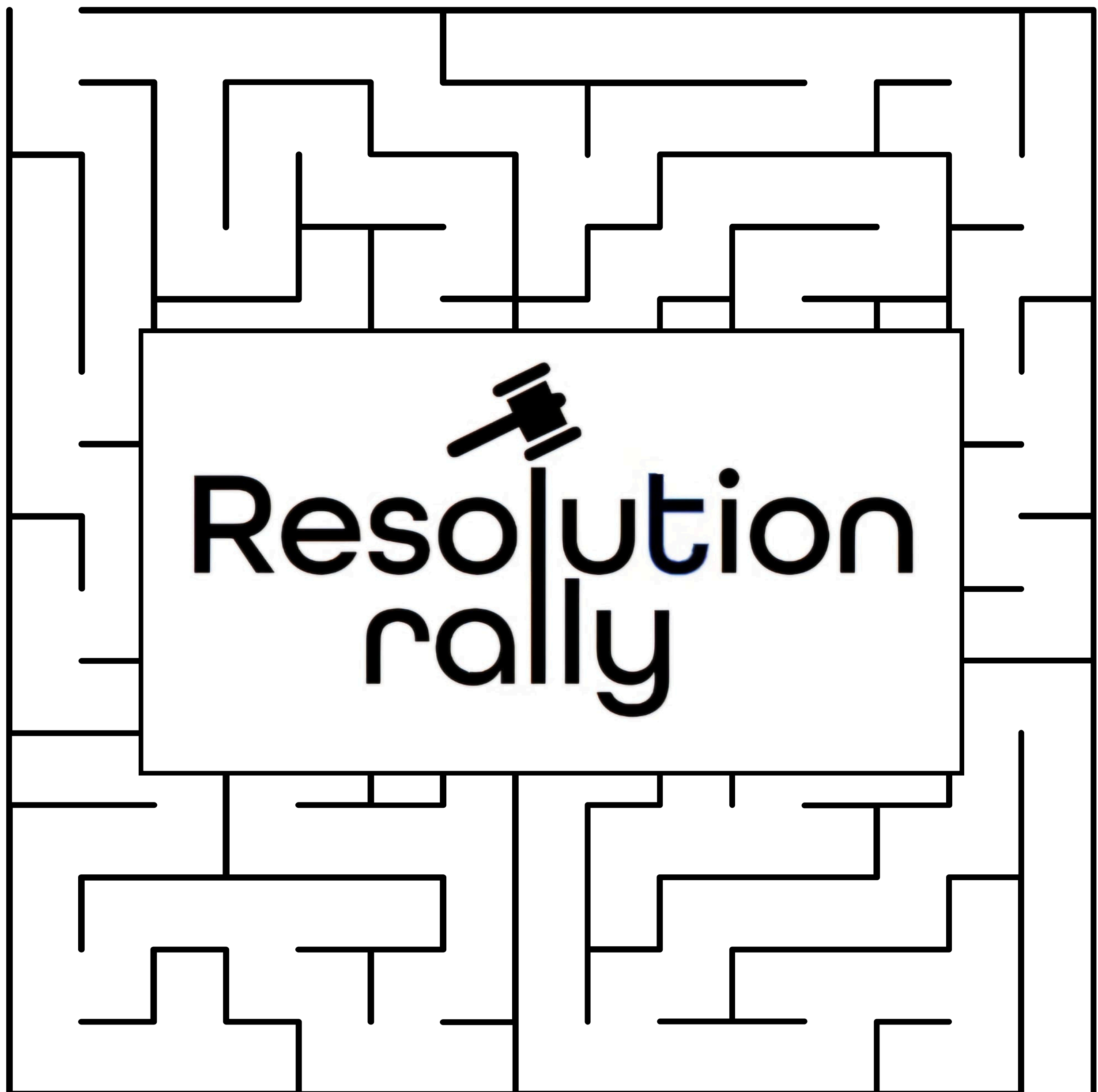


# THE RULEBOOK



September 26 & 27

Resolution Rally is Azim Premji University's flagship Policy Debate tournament, formulated with a unique twist. Each team will consist of three members. Two speakers will speak in Round One, and the third speaker (The Policy Speaker) will speak in Round two.

To start off each debate, a foundation statement and a policy motion are announced together. A Foundation Statement is a claim about the motion that both teams are required to agree upon for the purpose of the debate (e.g., Youth are more likely to develop a long-term addiction to cigarettes). A Policy motion proposes a solution to the problem identified in the foundation statement, that the Proposition has to adhere to (e.g., This House Would ban the sale of nicotine products in the vicinity of Educational Institutes).

While internet access is strictly not allowed during this period, index cards with broad strokes will be provided to both teams, to help form arguments and settle on some definitions to moderate the scope of the debate. Each debate will go on for around 60 minutes. A 5 minute preparation time is granted before the First Round.

## Round 1 – “The Case”

### Ideological Exposition

- Proposition's First Speaker contextualises the motion, provides definitions and introduces central arguments in favour of the foundation statement and the motion proposed.
- Opposition's First Speaker provides definitional challenges if applicable, and introduces central arguments as to why they agree with the foundation statement but disagree with the policy motion.
- Proposition's Second Speaker expands on their team's stance with new arguments, points and examples in addition to rebutting the reasoning provided by the Opposition Speaker.
- Opposition's Second Speaker rebuts the Proposition, adds to the team's arguments so far and concludes the ideology round.

Each speech is 4 minutes in length. In this round, no POIs or questions will be entertained. Rebuttals are only permitted in the duration of the speeches. This round is solely for establishing a moral ground upon which Round 2 is based.

## Round 2 – “The Evidence”

### Presentation of Policy and Counterpolicy

A 10 minute preparation time will be given to both teams to come up with a solution to address the motion. During these 10 minutes, participants can access the internet and brainstorm together, before the Policy Speaker presents their proposal. The proposal speech should not last for any longer than 6 minutes. Both teams should avoid information dumping, or justifying their stances, arguments for which will be considered obsolete following the Ideology round. Since this round is only for the Policy proposals, no rebuttals or counter arguments will be permitted, either.

- The Proposition Policy Speaker will provide feasible, ground-up ways to implement the motion, focusing on how the implementation should happen, on the basis of the whys that had been substantiated in the First Round. A workable framework with all stakeholders and individual benefits should be addressed in detail.
- The opposition, keeping in mind that they agree with the foundation statement, will be expected to come up with a comprehensive, creative alternative policy instead of the implementation of the motion, accounting for the reasoning provided in Round One. The countermodel should be realistic, and capable of tackling the status quo effectively, just through means dissimilar to the motion at hand.



## Round 3 – “The Gavel”

### Cross-Examination

After a 2 minute recess following the Opposition team’s Policy proposal, Round 1 Speakers from the Proposition Team will be given the opportunity to pose any two questions to the Opposition regarding their solution, as explained in Round 2. 45 seconds will be given to phrase each question. Any of the Round 1 Speakers from the Opposition team can respond to this under 1:30 minutes. Following this, the Opposition can ask two questions to the Proposition on their policy description.

Then, the adjudicator will pose one question to both the teams (Regarding the Solution or the Rationale), which should be answered by the Policy Speaker in less than one minute and thirty seconds.

### EXAMPLE DEBATE FLOW

#### Foundation Statement

Education allows for better decision-making.

#### Motion

This house would require MLAs and MPs to pass a standardised written examination to stand for elections in India.

### Round 1: The Case

#### Proposition Speaker 1:

- Defines key terms in the motion such as ‘standardised written examination.’
- What is the status quo?
- Why is the foundation statement relevant? Why do politicians in particular need to be adept at decision making?
- How would a standardised written examination enhance decision making?

#### Opposition Speaker 1:

- Offers definitional challenges, if applicable.
- Is decision making the only caveat for a competent politician?
- Would standardised written examinations guarantee or even causally lead to the betterment of decision making?
- What are the potential harms and disadvantages of its implementation?

#### Proposition Speaker 2:

- Rebuts arguments brought up by the Opposition Speaker.
- Why should politicians be tested like other professionals such as doctors, lawyers or civil servants?
- How would a written test help build public trust in politicians?
- How would it enhance democracy and transparency of who is governing us?

#### Opposition Speaker 2:

- Rebuts the Proposition’s stance.
- Widens the definition of ‘education.’
- What about the concerns over democratic representation and possible elitism in case of the motion’s implementation?
- How would an examination exacerbate pre-existing systemic biases?

### Round 2: The Evidence

#### Proposition Policy Speaker

- What would a standardised written examination look like in practice?
- What are the metrics the examination would test and how would the candidates be tested? What are some example topics that candidates are required to have knowledge of? What would the format look like– Is it objective or subjective?
- What are the logistics: Who conducts the exam? Is it an autonomous body or a subset of the Election commission?
- Is it frequent and cyclical or one-time only? How is it assessed or graded? Are the results publicly available or does it precede election campaigns significantly? Is the syllabus consistent across the country?

#### Opposition Policy Speaker

- An example for an alternative policy might be a regional public debate on policy matters, aired on accessible mediums such as local newspapers summaries, so that it can penetrate into each constituency.

- Public will be incentivised to watch these on television, radio, or other similar sources before voting, establishing heightened civic participation and political awareness. The regional character of these televised interviews would also make the candidates appear more personable. and would judge knowledge on local affairs and policy concerns.
- There would be no eligibility criteria such as formal education or English language proficiency. Electoral candidates with learning disabilities or limited literacy would also be able to articulate their stance assertively, which is a quality necessary for MPs and MLAs.

### Round 3: The Gavel

**Proposition Question 1:** How does watching debates incentivise or educate the public, especially in areas with low media penetration or digital access? What mechanisms do you have in place to ensure that voter behaviour actually changes?

**Opposition Answer.**

**Proposition Question 2:** Isn't it elitist to assume that rural or illiterate candidates can not pass a governance test even if it is made accessible in their language and format? Would you not admit complicity in a systemic practice of harmful stereotyping?

**Opposition Answer.**

**Opposition Question 1:** Despite our agreement with the foundation statement, we established that decision making can also be derived from other forms of knowing. How would this exam deal with candidates who are illiterate, but have been elected multiple times based on their work on the ground and experience?

**Proposition Answer.**

**Opposition Question 2:** India is a democratic country, as guaranteed by the constitution. It is not technocratic or meritocratic. Legislators represent people, not administer departments. Would this fundamental principle not be threatened under your proposed model?

**Proposition Answer.**

#### **Adjudicator's Question to Proposition:**

What happens when only a small percentage of candidates manage to clear the exam in some constituencies? Do we postpone the elections? Do we leave seats empty? Doesn't this hurt representation? How would this impact affirmative action?

**Proposition's Answer.**

#### **Adjudicator's Question to Opposition:**

How will this live public debate model handle misinformation or populist rhetoric? For example, this will allow candidates to say whatever the public wants to hear, without needing to actually prove their competence in policy knowledge, law or budgeting. In that case, how would it improve decision-making?

**Opposition's Answer.**





## NOTE

- Round 1 and Round 2 serve distinct purposes. If the Policy speaker happens to repeat the 'ideology' in the Policy Round (apart from referring briefly to the arguments for context-setting purposes), they will be marked negatively. In the interest of avoiding redundancy, the reasoning should not, at any cost, be equated to the solution.
- While coming up with policies in Round 2, the following criteria will be considered:
  - How comprehensive is it? Have the pros and cons been adequately considered?
  - How feasible and efficient is it, in terms of context and resources?
  - Does it truly address the problem identified in the foundation statement instead of offering a tangential solution?
  - Is it factually relevant?
  - Is it creative? (more so for Opposition)
- If you happen to push forth a Policy that is not entirely your own and has already been put to motion somewhere in the world, or is in progress, please cite it in your speech. A fully stolen solution would be considered plagiarism and will be marked as unoriginal.
- Since the format does not allow for any rebuttals following the first round, be sure to consider your questions in Round 3 carefully, phrasing them to challenge any loopholes, gaps or limitations in the policy laid out by the other team. Identifying problems with the other team's policy will be marked positively, as will the ability to dissolve these queries efficiently without contradicting the framework presented earlier. Teams will be marked down for not engaging with opposition arguments against their case.

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For further clarifications regarding the format,  
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