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CLAT Reservations 2022: The Only Guide You'll Need

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As an aspiring law student, I remember being extremely confused about the concept of reservations. What does the word 'domicile' mean? How do I prove it? What's a horizontal or a vertical reservation? Do reservations mean I can get away with studying less?

A significant number of you likely seek answers to these questions. Thus, I write this article to save you the hours of research and the numerous people you may have had to contact to understand the reservation system.

First, let's look at what reservations are: Reservations emerged as a system of affirmative action in India that provides historically disadvantaged groups representation in education, employment and politics. Thus, the Consortium offers reservations to the following communities:

- Scheduled Caste (SC)
- Scheduled Tribe (ST)
- Other Backward Classes (OBC)
- Physically Disabled Candidates (PwD)
- State Quota for the candidates in which NLU is located
- NRI/Foreign National candidates
- Candidates belonging to the North-Eastern States
- Kashmiri Migrants

Here is a Quick Guide to CLAT Reservations 2022:

The quantum of seats reserved and the nature of this reservation varies according to the university you are interested in applying to; I thus urge you to look at individual university websites and study their process personally.

Some NLU's offer reservations only to those specific castes that belong to their state. For example, DSNLU or the Damodaran Sanjivayya National Law University Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, offers reservations only to SC's and ST's belonging to Andhra Pradesh. Thus, it would be futile for me to outline a process that varies as per your interest.

Breaking Down Horizontal and Vertical CLAT Reservations 2022:

Now that we have understood the basics, let us break down the difference between horizontal and vertical reservations.

Vertical Reservations allow you to make it to an NLU with a comparatively lower score and rank. For example, an ST student may get into NLSIU Bangalore despite having a rank of 15,000 and a score of 70, where the cut off that year was 120+. An example of vertical reservations is domicile quotas.

The word domicile means you are residing at a particular place. For CLAT, to avail the benefits of a domicile quota, you must prove that you have been a resident of a State for 10-15 years, depending on the NLU.

On the other hand, horizontal reservations are meant to fulfil a particular quota.

To simplify this concept, let's take a student named Jill. She is interested in applying to NALSAR Hyderabad and finds that she is eligible for the women's reservation, although she is part of the general category. Jill does exceptionally well in CLAT and gets a rank of 190.

The general category seats for that year are to ideally close at rank 170. NALSAR Hyderabad has 15 seats horizontally reserved for women. It so happens that out of the students who received ranks higher than Jill, only 14 were women. Now, instead of rank 189, the seat will be given to Jill to effectuate the women's reservation.

Self Checklist for CLAT Reservations 2022:

Ideally, you should have figured out an abstract list of universities you are keen to apply to by the November preceding that year's CLAT. This allows you to obtain documents and ensure that administrative aspects of the exam are sorted out.

People have been disallowed from writing CLAT, and some PwD students have been denied a scribe due to errors in documents. Thus, check and recheck your documents; it would be

extremely unfortunate to miss out on an exceptional college just because you were callous about a piece of paper.

To claim the benefit of reservation, you must produce the relevant certificates as prescribed by the Government of India or the State Government and as required by the respective NLU at the time of admission, as notified by them.

For domicile certificates, approach your school to provide you with your study certificate upon/close to graduating. Then use this to apply for a domicile along with supporting documents, including your Aadhar card, 10th-grade marks card, etc.

This will assist you in obtaining a domicile from your nearest government office. Don’t forget to upload these documents during the counselling process, and regularly follow up to check if there are any updates regarding the reservation quota.

No amount of quota must stop you from putting in the work it takes to make it to an NLU; once you enter law school (with or without reservations), your study material will be identical, and you will be in the same pool of competition as your classmates, so don’t let reservations obstruct you from studying hard and putting in the work.

All the best! We at CLATalogue are rooting for you.

Also, read more advice on CLAT 2022 here.