BLOGS

#MyCLATStory- To Dream is to Dare

Ruchika Mohapatra · 28 Apr 2023

From a small village called Meda ki Dhani, Rajasthan to a member of the HWMC, NLUO, Seema Jharwal's #CLATStory is one that speaks of her strength, resilience, and the ability to adapt in any given situation.



Tell us a bit about yourself.

My name is Seema Jharwal. I hail from Meda ki Dhani (Ajeetgarh), a small village in Rajasthan. I completed my graduation from NLUO in 2021. I am a first-generation lawyer and I'm currently preparing for judicial services.

How did you start your CLAT journey?

I come from a place where people do not know much about exams. Till date, most of the people in my village do not know what CLAT is and are unaware of the fact that there are integrated law courses in our country. I told my father I want to do L.L.B when I was in Class 12th and it was then that he started asking around on how I could take admission in law colleges. One of his friends told him about CLAT so he asked me if I would be interested in taking for exam. I knew nothing about CLAT except that it is a way to obtain a LLB degree. While I knew of my goal, it was my father who made it possible for me to find a way to reach the goal.

His support was not just limited to the application process. My father was the one who got hold of previous year questions and aided my preparation. While I tried to solve a few papers, I didn't have the requisite knowledge at the time to formulate a proper preparation strategy. I couldn't clear the exam in my first attempt primarily because I didn't know how to study for CLAT.

The next year I went to Delhi and took admission in a CLAT coaching centre and started preparing for the exam from the very beginning. I was scared because everything was being taught in English and the people around me were fluent in the language. They appeared smarter than me and it took a toll on my confidence. At times, I was unable to understand what the teachers were talking about but I kept on attending the classes and putting in the efforts from my side.

I started taking weekly tests and revising whatever was being taught in class. My major focus was on solving Logical Reasoning and Maths and I kept on practicing legal reasoning questions on the side to maintain a balance. In the last two months of my CLAT preparation, I started giving daily mock tests. Though initially my speed was very slow, my strategy was to solve the parts which are easier for me first and then go on to other parts.

Writing daily mock papers paid off and I started gaining confidence raised as I started getting good marks. This strategy helped me to get most of the answers right and finish my paper on time. I believe my routine of solving mock test had the most major part in my clearing of the CLAT exam.

How were your initial years in law school?

The first semester in college was very tough for me. Being from a Hindi medium background, it was tough for me to take classes that were mostly conducted in English. I couldn't even understand what the teacher was saying and dejectedly I thought that I'll never be able to do well in such circumstances.

Another issue that I faced was with regards to socializing. It was really difficult for me to make friends in college because most of the people were from totally different backgrounds and it was difficult to find a person with whom I could connect.

Attendance system, exam pattern, moot courts, debate everything seemed like daunting tasks because I felt like a fish out of water. My brother encouraged me to take part in all the activities so that I could learn by doing new things. I started preparing for my first moot court competition but couldn't complete it on time. At the same time I had project submissions going on and did not know how to do research at all. I went to my project partner hoping she would be able to help me out. However, in order to help me, she decided to do the whole project on her own. It was at that time that I felt that I have come to a wrong place. I started questioning my decision and my choice of career.

But there comes dawn after dark and as always my seniors came to rescue. They helped me in my studies, in my projects, in boosting my confidence. After a few months, I was doing moots and debates along with other co-curricular activities. And by second semester, I was aware of the whole system, the exam pattern, the project guidelines etc. After five years of my college, I was proud of my decision of coming to NLU because I learnt a lot of things and made a lot of friends and great memories there.

One lesson this journey taught me was to be patient and give time to things. Nothing is impossible if you keep trying and keep learning.

What motivated you to pursue law as a career?

While I was in middle school, we were taught about the Indian Judiciary. While studying about Indian judiciary, I felt attracted towards it and since then I decided to become a judge. I told my father I want to pursue LLB and ultimately become a judge someday. And that's how I came to choose law as my career.

Tell us a bit about your experience while taking CLAT LLM. How was that experience different from the time you took CLAT UG?

CLAT LLM seemed easier to me as things were not new unlike CLAT UG . Also since my CLAT UG entrance things have changed a lot. Today, we have online resources that enable us to learn a vast amount of information from various sources from the comfort of our homes. iI felt I could crack CLAT PG without taking coaching. I gave CLAT LLM entrance in 2021 and for that I practiced mock tests and revised my notes. This time I cracked the exam in my first attempt so I felt that CLAT LLM is easier to crack because most of the subjects are from your UG course only. I think the fact that you have cracked the exam once does give one a bit more confidence.

What were your top 3 sources of information for CLAT? Did you prepare for CLAT all by yourself?

For CLAT UG I was dependent on my coaching classes completely. For CLAT PG, I took help from the official CLAT consortium website for guidelines, various YouTube videos for context and judged my preparation via online mock test series.

What would you say sets apart your #CLATStory from others?

I believe my story stands out because it is not just my story. It is a story of a girl who comes from a place where not many people dare to dream, of a father who supported the dreams of his daughter and of a brother whose strength made me not give up my dream. I managed to clear all the hurdles by myself and overcame all the anxiety and pressure I had at that time and I realized that all it takes is one person to believe in you for you to succeed.

Any advice you’d like to pass on to law school aspirants and law students?

If you have chosen this field by yourself or on the advice of your friends or your parents, just keep faith and strength. You will have a lot of opportunities in this field and for that, you should never stop learning. Lastly, and most importantly, speak out, voice your opinions, be heard and step out of your shell!

This interview is a part of our series #MyCLATStory where we interview law students and legal professionals.

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