BLOGS

#MyCLATStory-Dreams are Made of Gold

Ruchika Mohapatra · 10 Aug 2023

Radhika Sharma’s #CLATStory begins with a Mother’s dream of obtaining a good education for herself, and breaking social stereotypes, and culminates in a gold medal for best academic performance!

Tell us a bit about yourself.

My name is Radhika Sharma. I am working as an Associate Senior Executive at InfoEdge. I graduated from SOA National Institute of Law, Bhubaneswar in 2019 and completed my LLM in Constitutional and Administrative Law from NLU Odisha in 2020. I am a first-generation lawyer.

How did you start your CLAT journey?

I come from a small town called Brajrajnagar, Odisha. Back in 2013, people weren’t all that aware of Law Schools and Entrance Exams. I was sent to a boarding school named Scindia Kanya Vidyalaya, and I made up my mind to study Science and pursue a career in Medicine. It was during a career counselling session that the spark to pursue law was ignited within me. I couldn’t clear the CLAT UG examination, primarily because I was a PCMB student, and I was really working hard for my board examinations. I was later offered a scholarship for academic performance by my alma mater, and I opted to pursue Law from SOA University.

Then in 2019, I wrote CLAT LLM examination, and I started my preparation during the final year of my graduation. The first thing I did was to memorize the syllabus and procure notes and important books in order to revise for the examination. I also solved all the previous year question papers in a time-bound manner and tried to maintain a score within the expected cut-off. I would utilize all the free periods and focus especially on Jurisprudence and Constitutional Law. The fact that I started preparing in the very beginning of my final year gave me an edge because during the last 2 months, I would utilize my time in solving mock tests and PYQs and analyze my mistakes

and quickly correct them. I obtained AIR 388 in CLAT LLM.

How were your initial years in law school?

I was extremely surprised by my results in first year. I was a Science student and I fared extremely well in BBA subjects. That was quite a shocker for me, and I still wonder if I could have changed my stream from Science to Commerce back in school. My scores in first year gave me the confidence to learn new things and without knowing an iota of procedural law, I jumped into attending moot courts. Even though I lost in the initial moot courts, but being a first year student, I started learning the nuances of pleading.

Though I wasn't great at making friends in law school, but I had excellent professors who became my truest guides and friends. I would spend hours in library discussing with my learned professors on a variety of topics. Later in my second and third year, I started participating in Model United Nations and Parliamentary Debates. I also tried quizzing and was very active in sports and cultural events. I was juggling between academics and extra-curricular activities.

During the fourth and fifth year, I started organizing and hosting events, represent the state in NSS Camps and write academic papers. One of my best memories was to host an event for Late Pandit Birju Maharaj Ji and the world-renowned flutist, Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia Ji. I also attended National Integration Camp at Karnataka and I had the privilege to represent the state of Odisha and win the trophy.



I along with another classmate, graduated with a gold medal for the best academic performance. I topped my batch with a GPA of 9.27 out of 10. There were so many days when I broke down and I wanted to give up but the only two people I would rush to for solace were my Dean, Prof. Prabir Sir and Prof. Amruta Ma'am. They have shaped me into the person that I am today. I survived law school only because of the constant support of my teachers. It was an enriching experience because it completely changed my personality and made me a better person. Those 5 years were worth everything and I always visit my teachers just to relive my college days.

What motivated you to pursue law as a career?

My mother always wanted to study and due to her socio-economic disabilities, she could never pursue her dreams. Coming from a patriarchal society, she wanted me to pursue a career in such field which will give me the means to fight the social taboo and break the stereotypes. She was the first person who suggested the idea of pursuing law.

I had always been inclined towards trying out new things and equip myself with new skills. I worked across multiple domains just to choose what really works for me. I worked as a Research

Assistant across District Courts, Public Sector Undertaking, Private Enterprise and also teach underprivileged children. I also had the privilege to write my master's dissertation under a retired IPS officer. Eventually I found myself inclined towards teaching and research.

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

I took CLAT LLM in 2019. I found it easier than CLAT UG. The reason is the difference between the syllabus as well as the level of understanding as a 12th grader and a law graduate. CLAT LLM is more analytical and conceptual, and I had to revise everything that I had studied in my initial years at law school. The exam is based on legal knowledge whereas CLAT UG is an aptitude test. I was offered WBNUJS but I wanted to get into NLUO. So, I withdrew my candidature from WBNUJS and I joined NLUO.

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

My top three sources of information for CLAT were standard law books, my handwritten notes and previous year question papers. I believe, students can start preparing for CLAT LLM from their fourth or fifth year and with effective revision, this examination can be easily cleared. Students should also keep in touch with the changing patterns of this examination, which happened after my attempt. They should also solve as many mock tests as possible in order to increase their speed and reduce their negative marking.

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

I come from a place where people don't dare to dream and not many people believe in your dream. I am thankful for an amazing family, who gave up their share of comfort for my education and to my school and college teachers who played the most important role in bringing out my true personality. My journey at law school was extremely difficult and I overcame all the obstacles by reminding myself about all the people who believe in my dream. I think it is a combined effort to set apart my story, but I believe there are so many people who are looked down upon and bullied and I hope we never fail to believe in their dreams.

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

My advice to law aspirants- Revise and Practice. Self-study and practicing PYQs is the key to prepare effectively for examinations. Commit mistakes but don't forget to rectify them. Also, surround yourself with people who motivate and support you.

My advice to law students- Enjoy every day of your law school and try as many extra-curricular activities as you can. Trust me, it will really help you in the long run. Please believe in the importance of a sound mental and physical health. Never underestimate the importance of studying, because even the professionals don't. Leverage the power of social media to build connections and gather experience through internships. Respect your elders and always have empathy for people. It will help you become a better person. Don't forget to enjoy and develop a hobby. You will be a different person altogether at the end of this journey. And lastly, listen to your heart and never give up.

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

Click here to submit your #CLATStory