BLOGS

#MyCLATStory- From the Desk of the Editor

Ruchika Mohapatra · 30 Apr 2023

Tell us a bit about yourself.

Hi! My name is Ruchika Mohapatra. I've completed my undergraduate as well as postgraduate degree (Constitutional and Administrative Law) from NLU-Odisha. Currently, I'm working with Lawctopus as the Editorial Head of CLATalogue.

How did you start your CLAT journey?

I hail from a small town in Odisha where pursuing a career in engineering or medicine has always been the norm. When I joined another school after my 10th Board exams, we were put into classes based on our selection of PCM-C or PCM-B. There wasn't a lot of time to think about what I wanted to pursue as a career or what would be more suitable for me based on my interest and aptitude.

After the first term results were declared, I realized that I didn't quite enjoy studying the subjects. It was then that I picked up books on history, sociology, polity and realized that my interest area was different that the subjects that I'd signed up for initially.

Truth be told, it was a blunder on my part. I'd always been inclined towards these subjects since middle school but I guess I wasn't sure about my career options at that point.

One day we had a career counselling session at our school and based on a test and a couple of interactions, the person-in-charge and I narrowed down on a couple of options. Unlike before, I took a lot of time in understanding the various options that I was suggested and took a fairly balanced approach based on research and my understanding to zero in on law as a profession.

I took CLAT the next year and luckily qualified for the college that was my first preference in the first attempt. The decision to choose law as a profession has been rewarding, humbling and a constant roller-coaster; however, it is a decision I haven't regretted for a single day.

How were your initial years in law school?

I think the initial years in law school can teach one a lot about who they are as a person. The first few semesters are overwhelming for a lot of students moving out of their comfort zones for the first time. It was my first time moving out of my city into a new place to study something no one in my family had thought of before! I was afraid of not doing well, of not being able to adjust in a new setting, of not being able to do justice to my decision of pursuing law as a profession.

But over the years, I learnt from the best of teachers, met some remarkable people, found a mentor to look up to and made friends with some amazing people! While the first semester felt like it lasted all about 3 days (in hindsight, it doesn't feel like I spent 6 years there either!), the rest of the semesters were definitely spent in a more structured manner.

There was always some or the other event happening on campus and there were always a thousand ways you could spend your time there. There were definitely days where you didn't want to think of debates and deadlines and felt homesick, but those 5 years of UG remain the best days of my life!

What motivated you to pursue law as a career?

It was a calculated decision based on my aptitude, my inclination towards specific subjects and of course, my interest in learning about the law. I do think one of the major reasons was also the flexibility that comes with choosing law a profession. It opens up several paths for you.

I have friends who graduated with me and went on to teach, join the judicial services, civil services, join contract management firms etc. I also happen to know a few people who took up litigation as a career and a few others who chose to join Tier 1, Tier 2 law firms and others who took up Legal Content writing jobs.

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

My preparation for CLAT UG wasn't all that extensive, I believe. I prepared by taking mocks and finding areas that I needed to work upon more and more. I didn't have a particular strategy except taking as many tests as possible. Taking the mocks at home in an exam-like environment had made it extremely easy for me to take CLAT with thousands of other aspirants. I didn't feel nervous and was able to focus on the sections that I found easier first and subsequently moved on

to sections that I was apprehensive about.

My CLAT UG preparation lasted about a month or two but for CLAT PG, I knew that the stakes were higher. When we're writing CLAT UG, we're all somewhat unsure of what to expect. But CLAT LLM is the exam where we're competing with several other people who've been to 5 years of law school too!

My preparation for CLAT PG was perhaps more structured, for I had my own notes and print-outs of PYQs handy. However, it was also the one exam where I didn't have any anxiety at all. The calmness was a result of the confidence that came with knowing that no matter what, I'll always have my UG degree.

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

I prepared for CLAT UG and PG all by myself. For UG, I referred to PYQs and mock tests extensively. For PG, I referred to my notes, PYQs and several YouTube videos for clarity on areas of law I wasn't clear about.

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

My #CLATStory is one that might resonate with many. But I think what sets it apart is the journey of self-discovery that initiated my venture into law.

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

I think my only advice can be summed up in a few borrowed words- "This too shall pass'. If you're struggling today and are anxious about getting into law school or getting through law school, remember that all of this is transient.

The important point, no matter where you are in life, is to cherish the moments and hope for an even better future!

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

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