BLOGS

#MyCLATStory- Finding Magic in the Mundane

Ruchika Mohapatra · 29 Apr 2023

Avid reader, editor, researcher, and batch topper. Pragya Singh's #CLATStory might appear similar to the story of hundreds if not thousands of aspirants on paper; however, it is also a story of unmatchable grit, patience and hard work that culminated in her obtaining a gold medal for exceptional academic performance during her LLM. Currently, Pragya works as a Research Fellow at Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy. Prior to joining Vidhi, she also worked as a Legal Assistant at the Law and Legislative Department of the Government of Chhattisgarh.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

Hello, my name is Pragya Singh. I graduated from Hidayatullah Law University, Raipur in 2018 with a B.A., LL.B. (Hons.) and finished my LL.M. in Constitutional Law from National Law University Odisha in 2020. I am currently working as a Research Fellow at the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy.

How did you start your CLAT journey?

To be very honest, my law journey started from reading Perry Mason novels. Erle Stanley Gardner in his stories painted such an adventurous picture of a lawyer solving crimes and pleading in the court, that I was hooked. This fascination was formulated into a real-life plan through two seemingly unrelated but practically married subjects [for law] in school: English and Civics. My teachers for both these subjects encouraged me to think about writing an unheard of exam called 'CLAT'.

Hailing from Bhilai, Chhattisgarh, which houses the Bhilai Steel Plant and in turn is naturally filled with engineers, CLAT and law as a profession had no traction in the town. My journey in earnest started after the 12th Board exams. I prepared for roughly 15-30 days by myself. The resources used for this prep were school's GK, Civics, History books, information available on Lawoctopus and study material and mocks that were sent to me by post from the Shriram Law Academy, Chennai.

How were your initial years in law school?

There is a very common theory in law school where seniors warn you as soon as you enter that you must buck up for the first year and the third year. This is because in the first year, you come from a relatively stricter atmosphere of your household to the free atmosphere of a law school, where you have different types of freedoms and vices to choose from. And in the third year, as per our courses in NLUs, pure law subjects start in earnest, which require putting your studying schedule into a higher gear.

True to form, in my first year, I almost flunked 2 subjects out of 3. The freedoms that came with a life sans parental supervision were heady. I remember developing the habit of binge watching programmes for the first time, in my first year. In fact, I spent the rest of the 4 years trying to make up for the "fun" of the 1st. The third year was fine, as law subjects really turned out to be something I enjoyed.

What motivated you to pursue law as a career?

The enjoyment I felt while studying History, Civics and English coupled with the push from my teachers motivated me to pursue law as an undergraduate degree.

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 was a starkly different experience because I knew that I wanted to pursue a specific law subject further. I prepared for CLAT LLM, while working as a Legal Consultant for the State of Chhattisgarh in its Law and Legislative Department. The preparations were done in the hours after work but they were such a joy because it allowed me to go back to the subjects that I had studied and liked during my UG course.

Another aspect that set apart my experience was the fact that I genuinely wanted to pursue a Master's degree from India to further study Constitution Law. This clarity of goal allowed me to stay motivated for the exam and also choose the right college for me with the results.

At NLUO, I had the privilege of studying under some of the stalwarts of Research Methodology and Constitution Law in the country. These teachers put us through a strenuous course structure which required at least 2 hours each day of reading for a subject and also instilled an infallible research ethic in us all.

I am forever grateful for their hard-work and dedication at making the Master's programme worth it at NLUO. My LLM was also benefited from finding like-minded and equally driven classmates, who made the classroom learning experience such that I had never experienced before.

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

Yes, I prepared for both CLAT UG and PG by myself. For UG, my sources were materials from Sriram Law Academy, Lawctopus and School Books. For PG, my sources were again Lawctopus, Universal's guide to LLM Entrance Exam and my UG notes and books.

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

My CLAT story is not any different from the story of hundreds if not thousands of other aspirants. But it is ONE MORE story that tells you that there will be ups and downs, in the preparations, in actually attending the college and then entering the work force, but they will work out for you if you have clear goals and are constantly working towards them. This story is a reminder to all the people who are putting in their best for these exams, that you are bound for success as many people before you have and many people after you will. You are on the right track.

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

There are no shortcuts in education and following this motto has benefited me through both my UG and PG programmes. Successful people are not gifted; they just work hard, then succeed on purpose.

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

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