BLOGS

Palak’s CLAT UG Journey – From Tier 3 NLU to NLSIU Bangalore in Six Months

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I am Palak. I went **from AIR 4015 to category AIR 23** and from barely being allotted a tier 3 NLU to NLSIU in just six months. Like most teenagers, this journey was such a roller coaster, but “the harder the rain, honey, the sweeter the sun”. This is everything I did and learned along the way, and I hope it helps.

What motivated you to pursue law as a career?

My interest in law has both personal and aspirational roots. When I was around 13, my family went through a difficult legal experience that exposed me to how loopholes and procedural delays can be exploited, often leaving people without timely justice.

That experience stayed with me and gradually shaped my desire to understand the law—not just as a career, but as a tool to protect people.

Alongside this, my family had always encouraged me to consider a career in law, so when I began exploring career options seriously, it felt like a natural choice.

What was your first attempt at the CLAT like, and what changes did you make later?

In my first attempt, I lacked proper information about CLAT. Hence, I weighed even top-tier NLUs at the same pedestal as other government and private colleges, which led to a very casual approach—irregular preparation, skipped mocks, and inconsistent practice.

When the admission process began, I truly understood the value of NLUs. Although I was allotted HPNLU Shimla and also had options like Symbiosis, I knew I could do better. This is when my elder sister advised me to take a gap year; though I put her off for around six months, at last I followed her instinct.

Her belief in me and emotional support played a huge role; while I put in the academic work, she handled the psychological part of the journey.

What was your preparation strategy during the drop year?

I took the drop decision in late June. The initial months were focused on clearing backlogs and building a routine. By September, I had a stable schedule, and the focus shifted towards practice and improvement. I gave mocks consistently and analyzed each one in detail.

In the final leg, especially November, I focused heavily on my weaker sections—Analytical Reasoning and Quantitative Aptitude—which earlier consumed disproportionate time. I practiced these daily, revised GK rigorously, and worked on my mindset.

Since I had attempted mocks of varying difficulty, I understood my strengths and weaknesses well; **even with a default plan, I never sacrificed the ability to adapt to the test's requirements.**

What were your top sources of preparation?

First, **reading**. CLAT is a reading-intensive exam, so I relied heavily on newspapers like The Indian Express and platforms like Observer Research Foundation and Aeon Essays to build comprehension and contextual understanding.

Second, **practice and revision**. Giving mocks without analysis is meaningless; improvement comes only when you identify patterns in your mistakes. Focus on your weaker sections ,but do

not forget the basics. In the five months of my drop year, I had revised my GK Notes at least 4 times.

Third, **targeted practice and mentorship**. I relied on a very small circle of mentors and consciously avoided external and unwanted interventions, which helped me stay mentally stable and away from comparisons.

What set you apart on the exam day?

Until the exam day, there was nothing that clearly separated me from the other aspirants. The real difference came during the paper itself. The sudden shift towards Analytical Reasoning and the change in section order took everyone by surprise.

At that moment, I paused, stepped back, recalibrated my strategy, and proceeded calmly. That decision—to breathe, adapt, and not panic—made all the difference. **If I hadn't stepped back for a moment then, I wouldn't be heading to NLSIU today.**

What advice would you give to future CLAT aspirants?

This may sound repetitive, but consistency and mindset are the bridge to turning effort into results. But no one really tells that mindset does not mean taking regular breaks and not exhausting yourself, it also means, and equally importantly so, **cultivating the mindset for the day in advance**.

Know what you want your exam day to be like, not just chronologically but also psychologically.