



JOURNEY TO LAW SCHOOL

IDIA Scholars tell their stories

From the freedom fighters that fought for our nation, to the feminists who fought for universal franchise, some of our greatest leaders have exploited a rare set of tools to fight for a better world. These tools lie in the knowledge of the law. Like our forefathers and foremothers, future generations too will be sure to use the armour of legal education to pave the path to creating more equitable societies. Increasing Diversity by Increasing Access (IDIA) is a student-led movement to make these tools accessible to those who need them to fight the scourge of marginalization.

We proudly present to you in this booklet, some of the faces of the movement. Each of our scholars has embarked upon a unique journey which entails empowerment through legal education, and this booklet aims to give the reader a glimpse into some of their journeys.

This compilation showcases some of the young, promising faces behind the struggle to reshape our future through legal education. Please turn the pages to meet the scholars who have embarked upon the exciting journey to step outside of their communities and have joined the leading law schools of the nation with the hope to make a difference. Try as we may, it remains a daunting task to capture the spirit, tenacity, and leadership qualities of these social transformers. We hope that reading about them will inspire you to spark conversations with them and about their endeavours.

The accounts that follow are written in the scholars' own words, and are reproduced here with minimal editing.

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THE ROAD AHEAD



Arpit is a 1st year B.A. LL.B (Hons) student at Hidayatullah National Law University, who's ready for all the new experiences that law school will throw at him!

I am Arpit Gamit and my journey to one of the best law universities started in the year 2017, when I was in the 12th standard, staying in a hostel named Visamo Kids Foundation, run for underprivileged children in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. I have been staying in this hostel since I was 5 years old. This hostel is run by the Calorex Foundation and it aims to give its children quality education, free of cost till 12th standard in the best schools of Ahmedabad. So, I did my schooling from one of the best ISC board schools - Anand Niketan.

This is where I got to know about IDIA, when the IDIA team from Nirma University came for sensitization, and I was inspired to study law because I had always been interested in politics and was curious about the different laws that are prevailing in society.

After the IDIA team from Gujarat selected me for training, I aimed to go to one of the best law universities in the country. Soon, I started my training at the Nirma University. I faced a lot of difficulties during the training because it was totally different from the studies that I was used to, but soon I was able to catch up with the topics that were being taught.

Transportation was a major problem that I faced during my training because of the hostel rules as we were picked and dropped by the hostel driver, who was very rude to us every time we asked him to drop us at Nirma. But still, I managed to convince him to drop me and my friend to campus where we used to go for training.

Besides training with the IDIA team (who helped me every time, whether it was day or night). I also used to go to a coaching center where other trainees and I were taught how to solve the CLAT paper and how to work on the answers fast without wasting time.

Another problem that I faced was my school examination that took place in the middle of training. At the same time, it was also important for me because it was the exam that I was going to give in the same year as CLAT. As a trainee, I enjoyed a lot with the bhaiyas and didis every time I met them at the training session because we had a great time learning and I had a very good experience.

Soon after getting trained for a year, I was fully prepared for CLAT 2018. Before the exam, I was a little nervous because my AILET paper didn't go as well as my IDIA team and I had expected. I also got a scolding from the IDIA team leader, but I took it in a positive way so that I could do better in CLAT. But at this point of time, I also remembered some inspiring words that a didi from the IDIA team had told me before AILET, and got the confidence to give CLAT 2018 confidently.

When I entered the examination hall, I was trying to recall all the things especially general knowledge. Soon, the examination started and everything became normal with the passage of time. The experience inside the hall was completely different from the normal school exam, as there was complete silence in the hall till the exam was over and I was fully confident that the options that I had marked were right, and it was indeed right as I cracked the CLAT 2018 in my very first attempt.

When the CLAT 2018 results were to be announced, I sat with the phone in my hand, checking the CLAT website all day because I was curious to know about the CLAT result. I was checking the result every hour, but the website mentioned it was to be declared at 8 pm only. When the CLAT results were declared, I was extremely happy as I knew that I was now to be admitted in one of the best law universities in my country. My IDIA team from Gujarat and my parents were very proud of me.

I was soon admitted to one of the best law universities of the country i.e. HNLU in Raipur. In HNLU I seek to make lots of friends besides studying for my B.A. LLB. My expectations from HNLU were completely different from what I saw. The campus over here is so big. The people in the university are completely different than what I had thought because I find all types of people belonging to different cultures. I feel that I am ready for all the new experiences that I am going to have in the next 5 years at HNLU.

AN INSPIRATION IN THE MAKING



Bhawani is a first year student at the NALSAR University of Law. He wants to be a successful corporate lawyer and be an inspiration to others, and wants to empower others through education.

I am Bhawani Singh Rajpurohit, from a small village in Bikaner district of Rajasthan. My family comprises of 9 members, including my grandmother, my parents, three sisters and three brothers with my father as the sole earning member of my family. I am the first in my family to complete secondary education. My father works in a small shop and earns around Rs. 70,000 per annum. I have always been interested in studies and determined to get a good education. In pursuance of that, I appeared for an entrance test for Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya when I was in class 5th and was selected to pursue my further education till 12th standard at JNV Gajner.

When I was in 11th standard, one of my seniors, Anil Bhadu, cracked CLAT and got selected in NLSIU Bengaluru and due to this, I came to know about CLAT and National Law Universities. At that time, I was also thinking about my career options and his selection motivated me to appear for CLAT and hence I explored the scope of studying law.

While exploring the scope in law, I came to know about the power and beauty of the law as a profession. I realized that practicing law is not a work for oneself but rather it is for the cause of society. I chose law, because the nature of work automatically aligns with the interest of the public, even though one may be pursuing it as a career for oneself. After completing my school education, I had to put my dream on hold and started working at a hotel, due to financial difficulties. Yet, I didn't give up my hope and secured a seat in NLU Nagpur after appearing in CLAT 2017. However, financial hardships and high fees at NLUs were obstacles in my path to pursue law as a career and I had to resort to working at the hotel again.

This time, though, I was made aware of IDIA, by my classmate who joined NLU Jodhpur and the senior who had initially triggered my mind to the thought of pursuing law. I contacted IDIA Jodhpur chapter, they selected me as their trainee and provided me help in preparing for CLAT 2018. It was a great experience to be their trainee as their team was very diligent and made me prepare for CLAT wholeheartedly.

Initially, I faced problems in understanding English, but their guidance and efforts made me comfortable in it. Actually, the dedication of IDIA trainers motivated me to do really well. Whenever I had even a small problem regarding my preparation, I was thorough in asking for help from the trainers. Before appearing for CLAT, I had gone through some mocks where my performance was good and therefore, I was comfortable while appearing for law entrance exam but at the same time, I was a little bit nervous because I had to make something out of the opportunity provided to me by IDIA. My preparation was solid enough and after taking the exam, I was pretty sure of getting selected into a top law university. My dream came true when the results were announced. I was very happy and excited to go to NALSAR but my family members were happier than I was.

Through IDIA's support and my hard work and resilience, my dream came true. Since I come from an economically backward family and from an educationally backward area, by becoming an accomplished corporate lawyer, I wish to be an inspiration and empower others through education. I expect NALSAR will help me in bringing the best out of me as a human, citizen and a person. I hoped and later realized, that my university will make me an empowered person. After seeing my seniors who are nice, benevolent and humble, it raises my expectations of becoming a good and helpful person. I wish that after completing my education, I would be a good lawyer and above all, a good person who will be able to help any needy person.

SHINING A LIGHT ON THE FUTURE



Deepak is a first year student at the Institute of Law, Nirma University. He's taken to Nirma and its cosmopolitanism well, and enjoys the opportunity of expanding his horizons.

My name is Deepak Yadav and I am a person from an under privileged class. It would have been difficult for me to reach the position where I am now without the help of IDIA. My uncle took care of me since my childhood because my parents are no longer with me. My uncle is a farmer and the only earning member of the family, so it was difficult for him to send me to an expensive institute to fulfill my mother's dream of seeing me become a judge. They did everything beyond the call of duty and did their best for fulfilling my every need.

My uncle has always supported me and provided all the resources which he could provide to me as his own son. My mother is no more in this world due to an untoward incident which happened when I was only 2 years old and from that point of time, my uncle and my grandfather took my custody.

When I came to know about all this at later stage of life, my aim was clear - I want to join the judiciary and work for people, so that no one suffers from heinous behaviour like my mother did. Regarding my schooling till 5th standard, I studied at a local school, but after that I gave the entrance exam at Jawahar Navodaya Vidhyalaya and got selected. JNV provided me with a platform to enhance my skills and helped me in my overall development, along with my education. It also provided me with a platform to further improve my standard of living. Hostel life at JNV taught me how to handle different situations in different ways. I also learnt how to interact with people of different religions and cultures. I came to know about IDIA from one of my fellow mates who is a student in Nirma university. After getting to know about IDIA, I felt encouraged and motivated that there was a scope for me in the field of law, I could also study with other people.

After researching more about IDIA through the internet, friends and other people, I came to know about the work which has been done by IDIA, an NGO which was established by Dr. Shamnad Basheer, working to make legal education accessible to all aspirants, and I was very happy to know that I was eligible for their scholarship. I contacted Sharmeen Ma'am, director of IDIA, who guided me and introduced me to the IDIA MP Chapter members, who are the students of NLIU Bhopal.

I gave a test and was interviewed for being an IDIA scholar and after qualifying as an IDIA scholar, they helped and guided me in my CLAT preparations. They helped me to get well-versed with the environment and competition which is prevalent in the legal education system, and they taught me how to approach a question and different strategies to tackle them by providing me with the essential material, along with the test series for better practice. What they taught, helped me during my examination- their training taught me how to attempt the paper, what to do when any difficult question came, how to be calm while taking the paper, etc.

Now, talking about the campus expectations, I was really excited when I joined Nirma University. I have observed that people from different regions and cultural backgrounds come to the university and that you can learn a lot from them. The infrastructure that university provides to its students is really amazing. Facilities are provided for all types of different activities such as sports, drama, debate, music, dance, etc. I do have an interest in sports and music and the university provides a good platform to develop, polish and showcase my skills at various events including some at the national and international levels.

After becoming a member of IDIA, I realized that it is a great opportunity for me to prove my worth to them. The help and support that I got from IDIA will definitely open different ways for me to explore. I will be thankful to them for this great opportunity that has been given to me. I will be indebted to them throughout my life for the chance provided by them to forget the past and make a bright future for myself.

WISE BEYOND HIS YEARS



Kailash is a first year student at the National Law University, Delhi. He hails from a small village of Tekra in Rajasthan. He aims to be a good, generous and kind person who treats people with respect notwithstanding their socio-economic status.

Hi! I am Kailash Ram. I come from a small village Tekra of Jodhpur district, Rajasthan. I am very excited to write about “My Journey to Law School”. It’s my utmost pleasure to be an IDIA Scholar. I am from a family where I will be the first to complete graduation (if everything goes fine!). My father is a farmer and mother is a housewife. There are six members in my family. We are four siblings (two sisters, one brother and me). My father could not complete his graduation because of financial problems. In my family, there is no one in government service or in any other field except farming. In fact, there are very few people (maximum 3 or 4) in my community who are in government service.

When I was younger, it was very difficult for my father to provide for my family because he was suffering from a serious disease. Now my father’s annual income is Rs. 90,000. I had my primary education in a government school (up till class 2) and then in a private primary school (up till class 5). Because my father was an educated person, he knew the importance of education.

He sent me to Jodhpur for further schooling. There, I was admitted in a government residential school, with high expectations from my family and relatives. I continued my schooling there up till matriculation. It was the first time when I had come to Jodhpur or any city, so everything was new for me. I studied hard and got 90% marks in my 10th class examinations and this was the first time when I felt that I have the capability to do something big. I studied PCM (Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics) in my 11th and 12th.

I came to know about IDIA when I was in my 10th class from one of my friends, Sita Ram who had informed me about an NGO (IDIA), which was organizing a sensitization and a test in our school. Actually, I was also regularly in touch with Kumar Harsh, who was then a student of NLUJ and used to come to our school to teach English. He told me about IDIA in detail. In my 12th class I appeared for INAT test and I was shortlisted for interview. After the interview, I was selected as an IDIA trainee with the Rajasthan chapter.

I am interested in law, because I feel that although there are six fundamental rights and many other rights in our Constitution, there are many people who are not aware of their rights and in fact they don't know that there is a Constitution of India or that India is a democratic country. I am from such a village where the whole village is influenced and dominated by upper classes/caste people. There are many practices and bad traditions, which are still practiced by people. People of lower caste are discriminated against, by the people of upper caste. Coming from a scheduled caste, I have also faced many problems in my village like, untouchability and other discriminatory practices. I want to be a lawyer because with the knowledge of law, I can easily make people in my village aware about their rights and also about their duties.

In IDIA, we used to have regular classes and extra classes for doubts and queries, taken by the IDIA team (students of NLU Jodhpur). I noticed that they were very dedicated and devoted to their work. So, it's been a very good experience and a pleasure to be their student. I met many good people in the IDIA Rajasthan chapter. They all were very dedicated and generous towards us. Whenever we needed their help, they were always available to help us. In 12th standard, we used to have school classes from 9 am to 4 pm and we used to have coaching from 4 pm to 6 pm. It was very difficult for us to manage time, because the coaching centre was very far from our school and we had to leave our class at 3 pm to catch the bus. Generally, our last period used to have no class but sometimes we had to bunk in the middle of chemistry class.

I worked hard for the entrance exam of 2017 and in May I gave CLAT and AILET both, but I couldn't clear either of the exams. I had to drop a year for appearing in these exams again the next year. From the start, I made a strategy for studying and started my preparation. I worked very hard throughout the year and tried to resolve my doubts through my personal mentor, IDIA team and coaching classes. I finally appeared for AILET and CLAT 2018. It was a very bad experience to write CLAT 2018. When I checked my answer key, I was very shocked to see my marks. I was very nervous and dissatisfied with myself.

But then, I got news from Dharu that I got AIR (All India Rank) 1st in my category. I was very surprised and happy to hear this news. I could not believe that I had scored so well. It has always been my dream and when it was fulfilled, I was very happy and satisfied. In CLAT, I got NLUJ in the first allotment list, but I chose to go to NLUD.

I came here (NLU, Delhi) with high expectations from my parents, relatives and of course, myself too. Being the eldest son, my parents have huge expectations from me, that I will carry the responsibility of my family. I personally want to do all those activities in law school that I somehow couldn't do in my school life or didn't get a chance to do.

I want to get more and more opportunities to learn so many new things. One thing that I expect from myself is that I will become a good person, who is generous and kind towards everyone and one who respects each and every person, putting aside the socio-economic factors of society.

NEVER GIVE UP!



Mahendra is a first year student of law at Institute of Law, Nirma University. He chose to study law so he could educate people about their rights and duties toward society.

I am Mahendra Kumar Jyani, IDIA scholar 2018 of Gujarat Nirma chapter. I hail from a very small village Bajju which is located in Bikaner district of Rajasthan. My father is the sole bread earner in the family working as a teacher in Bajju village itself. I also consider myself as a bread earner of my family because I did my schooling from Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Gajner, Bikaner and it is a government boarding school that provides all basic necessities free of cost to all the students so I never took any monetary support for my education from my parents except my stipend, which was then very low.

I eventually joined the IDIA family. I consider it as a family because a family is one which cooperates and supports its each member at every moment and I found the same in this organisation. When I was preparing for CLAT, IDIA helped me by providing a mentor to guide me in preparation for my exam.

They were very supportive and often asked me how my preparation was going on, what other help I needed in terms of my preparation. It was always like a parent asking their child and caring for their child for their better future. When I was in my class 12th, I met my senior Anil Bhadu, who joined IDIA in 2015. He told me about IDIA but then I had no clarity about choosing my career in law so I forgot about it. After I completed my class 12th standard exams, I had enough time to choose a career. I recalled my school life and my experiences there, to analyse the positive and negative points of choosing law as a career option. Then I thought about a very critical point, which is faced by every person of society – when we see our basic rights violated by authority. I used to play football in my school, but we were not provided with all the things which are essential for a football ground like football poles, net, shoes, kits, etc.

These items were approved by our institution, but they were kept in the sports room and were not given to us, in spite of us having the approval to use them. We were only provided with football and the ground. This led me to think that although we are educated, we are unaware of our rights. We were aware that sports apparatus was present in the school, but was never given to us. No one raised their voices against this because everyone was unaware of their rights. At least we had some education, but still we didn't raise our voices. But what about that section of the society which is deprived of education? How will they know about their rights and know that their rights are being violated? Unfortunately, a huge part of our population comes under this category.

When I asked my parents about choosing my career in law, my parents were not so happy about it. In those days, I received a phone call from my friend who is studying in NLU Jodhpur. He told me about CLAT, NLUs, their fee structure and other things which are related to this profession, and my curiosity was increased to choose law as my career. But, I was demotivated when I heard about the fee structure. My friend asked me to meet a senior [Arvind, another family member of year 2015] and he asked me, "Why don't you apply for this scholarship?" Then, I went to NLU Jodhpur to take the IDIA aptitude test. After the test, I was nervous because of the bugging question in my mind- whether I will be selected or not.

After some days, I received a call from the IDIA Rajasthan chapter team informing me that I was selected for their training program. I was really happy to be selected as a trainee. After that, I burnt the midnight oil for about 8 months to crack CLAT, for many reasons. First, if someone is supporting me, then I have a responsibility towards them to give them the best result and second, is my own career. I got confident after every mock test because I was scoring really well at the time and I expected to get selected in the top 2 or 3 NLUs after studying a lot.

13th of May came and I was in a contradictory situation- in this situation, one side was my confidence that I gained in this period while preparing for CLAT and the other side was my nervousness, which is obvious when you have worked hard for a long time and it is assessed by a 2 hour exam that is unexpected. After taking my test, I was not sure about my score because I had made many minor mistakes in that paper due to nervousness. Because of the speed that I had in that paper, I missed some of the words in many of the questions, but I was really sure that I will get admitted to any of the 19 NLUs. When I got the scorecard, I was shocked & was thinking what led to such an unexpected result. Then, I decided that I will work hard in the law school which I will be allotted through merit list, because one paper can change your way to destiny but cannot change your destiny.

At that time, I was also in contact with the IDIA Rajasthan chapter team leader and she call me and asked, “Will you want to go ILNU?” I said yes without any hesitation because I had heard from many law students that ILNU is a good law school, academically and in terms of extracurricular activities like moot courts, debates etc. Finally, I decided to go to ILNU with the expectation of a good life and a better future. It can be achieved only by hard work, which I will do in the next 5 years to improve my skills in many areas like speaking, persuasion, creative writing skills and, last but not the least, in becoming a good human being so that I can help every person in society who is in need.

DISCOVERY OF A GEM



Najrul studies at the National Law University, Delhi and hopes to be a civil servant.

While preparing for the board exams, students know their target in life, what they want to be or at least what they want to study after class 12th. But I was not sure about my ambition and was confused amongst the many options available after schooling. As a humanities student, there were ample opportunities for me. Unfortunately, I did not find myself fit for those options.

At the time of the result, I was worried about selecting one specific subject and college for my graduation. Many people suggested that I should choose different courses available in different colleges. It was very hard for me to decide which course will really help me to develop my skills and help me find my way.

The Board results of class 12th were released on 28/05/2017. I was the highest scorer in class 12th from Shahid Hemu Kalani Govt. Sarvodaya Bal Vidyalaya. It made me eligible for the “Indira Award” given by the Delhi govt. This was also published by “Mail Today” on 29/05/2017. After 3 days, I received a call from the IDIA Delhi chapter. They invited me to visit the campus of National Law University, Delhi and there I got the opportunity to meet the sensitization team. They informed me about the B.A. LL.B course taught by different NLUs and also informed me about the admission process in these law schools.

There, I got to know about IDIA and its contribution in this field, how it helps underprivileged students in studying law and becoming successful lawyers. It was then, that I decided to prepare for the law entrances. So, I appeared for the INAT and fulfilled all the requirements for the selection. That was a great moment for me. Because I got a goal to get into law school and become a lawyer, I had finally found my ambition. In October, I started my preparation for the law entrances such as, CLAT, AILET etc. I got a team of the best and dedicated teachers to teach me the 5 subjects, (English, mathematics, logical reasoning, legal aptitude and general knowledge).

It was a great experience to learn such things. I thoroughly enjoyed the whole period of preparation. Travelling 5 hours a day to attend classes was a huge challenge for me. But my teachers, mentor and team leaders at IDIA tried to keep me motivated. I didn't have to worry about a scribe for any mock tests. Because my mentor and team leaders always had a scribe for every mock I took. They did not make me feel uncomfortable at any point of time. This is the greatest thing that I experienced.

Even after all this, I was unsure about securing my admission in any of the top NLUs. I had a great difficulty in overcoming various challenges like lack of confidence and communication skills. I had problems understanding the English language, having studied in a Hindi-medium school. It was through the great effort of the teachers, that I gained enough confidence to face these challenges. It played a significant role in improving my communication skills and helped me gain an understanding of English. Everyone was ready to help me at any point of time - that was how hugely supportive the IDIA team was towards me.

At the time of entrances, they guided me about how to face the exams and how to manage time during CLAT, AILET and so on. They were trying to keep me motivated all the time. At the time of the result, it wasn't easy for me to believe that I had got an opportunity to study at the National Law University, Delhi. That was a remarkable moment in my life. In the whole process of admission, the team leaders stood by me and resolved every issue that came up.

I have a huge IDIA family in the university, which is the ideal law school for me. I am receiving help at every stage, such as in academic and residential issues. Now the journey to law school ends here but my journey begins. It's clearer to me now, that I want to be a lawyer. I am still not sure whether I will work as one, because I also want to appear for the UPSC exam. However, I am on the way to discover what I want to do in my life. To serve the society in any way is my ambition.

THE MAKING OF A LEADER



Prakash is an energetic and enthusiastic boy who now studies for the B.A. LL.B (Hons) degree at Hidayatullah National Law University.

I am Prakash Kumar hailing from a village named Khapura in the state of Bihar. I live in a family of six people including me, my brother, my parents and my grandparents. My father is a farmer and farming is the main source of income for my family.

My mother is a homemaker. My brother has studied in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya from class 6th to class 12th being the class topper in both classes 10th and 12th. He is currently pursuing integrated B.Sc. B.Ed. (4 years) from Regional Institute of Education, NCERT College in Bhubaneswar. I have studied in Sainik School, Gopalganj from class 6th to class 12th. I remained the class topper in both class 6th and class 10th with 10 CGPA.

Since the main aim of Sainik schools is to create armed forces officers and Sainik Schools act as feeder institutions for the National

Defence Academy, I too wanted to become an Indian Air Force officer. I opted for Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Biology and English as my main subjects in classes 11th and 12th. I could not perform according to my potential and my expectations in these two classes as I mainly focused on clearing the NDA exam. I cleared UPSC NDA written examination four times, but could not crack SSB (interview).

I play volleyball and basketball and have represented my school a lot of times in volleyball competitions. I have participated and won English Extempore, English Essay-writing and Math Quiz competitions, representing my house in the school. I also represented my house in debate and quiz competitions, but could not win. I have also participated in English and Hindi skit competitions in school. I have also participated in IIT BHU MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2017 and won the best delegate award and St. Paul's National Youth Parliament, 2018, winning honourable mention award.

I also held the position of house vice-captain for a year. I have also got NCC 'A' and 'B' certificates. My hobbies are reading newspapers, interacting with people, cycling, etc. I wish to become a lawyer in the future.

After I passed from my school, I prepared for CLAT 2017 with full dedication since less than 40 days were left. I mainly did self-study with Universal publication book and Pratiyogita Darpan of the last four months. I got AIR 1961 and could have gotten a law school in vacant seats. I had also appeared for BLAT, the equivalent exam to take admission in BHU and I qualified for that. I consulted one of my school senior, Mr. Ashutosh Kashyap, who is at present studying in CNLU, PATNA in his final year and is also IDIA TEAM LEADER regarding all these options. He advised me to take admission in BHU and then prepare for CLAT 2018 as CLAT is full of uncertainties. I took admission in BHU and started my self-study and it is he who introduced me to IDIA knowing my background.

The preparation for CLAT 2018 was full of good and bad experiences, but my focus and determination helped me to keep working hard. I did not join any coaching because I had got AIR 1961 with only 40 days of preparation and I really relied more on self-study than classroom teaching. So, I was sure of getting a good rank with my self-study. In the meanwhile, I kept in touch with Ms. Oyshee Gupta ma'am, the former IDIA BIHAR TEAM LEADER and kept her updated on my performance, mock scores and my preparation. She constantly kept telling me my weaknesses and the ways to overcome them. I also found IDIA mocks and study material worth reading and useful.

My examination experience during CLAT 2018 was really horrible. My exam centre was in Varanasi. This was the worst conducted exam I could ever imagine in my life. When I started the exam, I was unable to click the answer of the first question and was neither able to switch over to the next question or previous question and this continued for more than 10 minutes. After that, my patience wore thin and I got up and told loudly to all the invigilators that time is running and I am unable to do anything. Then, one of them came and switched off the system and I moved to another system where this problem again happened after 15 minutes. Overall, I gave my exam fully on five different computers and three different rooms. In the last five minutes, the same initial problem happened again and I could not do anything but waste those five minutes. In fact, my answer was not submitted because when some seconds were left, the system again hanged and it was seven o'clock at that time. So, invigilators asked me to go and said that it will be submitted automatically.

So, my exam experience was really bad and I could have performed better had I got the time I deserved. Despite that, I had prepared well. So, I had managed to give my exam well. I expected a decent score if not very good and similarly, hoped to get admission in a decent NLU if not the top one.

I got the result as per my performance in exam, although contrary to my preparation and hard work. I made it to NLU ODISHA in all the three lists and finally got HNLU, RAIPUR. Like CLAT 2018, AILET 2018 also proved to be unfortunate for me as I missed NLU DELHI by less than one mark. Still, it was a learning experience giving such tough exams.

I expected the campus to be vibrant, full of energy and active. Initially, I did not find it so good, but as time passed and I made new friends, met youthful seniors and teachers, I have started enjoying this campus life. I go to play volleyball in the evening, although not daily. I have won the challenger round here to participate in IIT BOMBAY PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE 2018 and I have also registered for KIIT MUN 2018 which is one of the largest in Asia!

My short-term aim for the first year is to win at least 10 MUNs or youth parliaments and to win parliamentary debates and moot court competitions from the second year. I feel lucky to participate in IIT BOMBAY PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE 2018 in my first year only.

I am very sure that I shall be able to make an impact in the nation with the support of the IDIA family. Thanks for reading all this.

LESSONS IN DETERMINATION!



Rupa Ram is a 1st Year B.A. LL.B (Hons) student at the National Law University, Jodhpur. He hails from a small village called Sherpura in Rajasthan, and his indomitable spirit will take him a long way.

I am Rupa Ram Nayak, a first year B.A. LL.B. (Hons.) student at National Law University, Jodhpur. I hail from Sherpura, a backward village in Bikaner, Rajasthan. My father is a farmer. We have a small farm near our village, which is the only source of earning for my family. I was selected for the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Bikaner after completing my fifth standard studies from a school in our village.

When I was in the tenth class at Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Bikaner, I read an article about the Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) and a career in the legal field, which inspired me to become a lawyer. However, after twelfth standard, I could not immediately apply for CLAT, since I did not have sufficient money. As I was the first person in my family to have completed school, I decided to appear for CLAT examination and researched on the details of the fee structure of NLUs.

I also requested a senior of mine, Magharam, who is also a student at NLU Jodhpur, for more information. Despite such research, I was disheartened and I had no hope of being able to appear for CLAT because of my family's financial condition. Fortunately, it was at this time that I came across Increasing Diversity by Increasing Access (IDIA) and its scholarship programme. I then contacted IDIA and found a ray of hope to fulfil my dream of becoming a lawyer.

Soon after, IDIA called me to appear for the IDIA National Aptitude Test (INAT). I somehow managed the fare from my village and reached Jodhpur, to appear for the test in NLU Jodhpur. After seeing the campus and lifestyle at NLU Jodhpur, I was inspired and prayed for selection for the IDIA scholarship.

I was then informed that I had been selected for the traineeship. I then came to Jodhpur, and stayed with my friends Mahendra and Bhawani, who were also preparing for CLAT as IDIA trainees. They also helped me a lot. Being an average student, I had many problems and IDIA Rajasthan Chapter team helped me cope with all of them. In fact, when I requested Aiswarya Murali (our Rajasthan chapter team leader) for reading material, she provided me proper material. I then studied hard, going through various CLAT mock tests and solving doubts with IDIA Rajasthan chapter team.

On the day of the CLAT exam, I was a little nervous and my mentor Manuj Mishra's words helped me get through it- 'You have nothing to lose'. I used two hours of the examination with full energy and attempted only those questions which I thought were right. When I finished the exam, I was quite sure that I would be selected and my dreams would come true. After a long wait, I came to know of my results and I had been selected for NLU Jodhpur. I was very happy and I told my family about the result. It was a very special day for me. Now, after joining NLU Jodhpur, it seems like my life has completely changed.

I am going to try my best and utilize this opportunity to shape my career and give back to the society. I am thankful to IDIA for giving me this opportunity to be an IDIA scholar and I will always be ready to help IDIA scholars and many others like me. I believe if you want to empower your country, you must spread awareness among the people about their rights. I want to bring such a change in the lives of peoples around me.

I know that it is going to be a long journey, but an important lesson I have learned to assist me in that journey is that 'nothing is impossible'. It is your sincere efforts that make the impossible, possible.

BATTLING THE UPS AND DOWNS OF LIFE



Sajal is a first year student at the Gujarat National Law University. He hails from Shahdol in Madhya Pradesh and believes that true hope and perseverance can move mountains.

I am Sajal Jain, IDIA scholar & student of Gujarat National Law University, basically from Gidam Dantewada, born & brought up in Beohari District, Shahdol, Madhya Pradesh. I am an accidental lawyer- I decided to pursue law after my father's case, who is missing since 13th September, 2003. My father was a businessman from a well-to-do family, but he has been missing since 2003 after travelling from Shahdol to Dantewada.

My Nanu played the role of my father & also King of Mahua (A flower from which local wine is produced). He basically owned an export/import business and exported approximately 50 Trucks of Mahua daily. I never realized what financial difficulty meant. I got approx. 10000-15000 rupees monthly as pocket money and I never knew how to respect others. I had a lot of ego that I could buy anything with money.

But soon, this ego broke. In 2014, I lost my Nanu. The year 2014 was the worst year of my life- on one side I had the pain of my Nanu's death & on another side, there were family disputes. My mom lived in my Nanu's house, so after his death, the property had to be divided. Nanu gave us a beautiful house in the same town measuring 30 ft. by 90 ft., and from where we get rent of Rs. 4500 which helps us today. We finally decided to leave town and shift to Raipur due to my poor health condition.

In June 2014, we finally shifted to Raipur, but we didn't have any source of income. My mother decided to take tuitions because we didn't have any other option. We shifted to a rented house and she sold her gold, our car and we got approximately Rs. 6,00,000. One trusted relative of ours assured us that he would give us an interest of 1.5% so we decided to give him Rs. 4,50,000.

He gave us Rs. 6780- an amount which was not enough for us. We somehow got Rs. 11,780 from this source and mom taught tuition and earned approximately Rs. 7000 (sometimes it was 6000 because many students left the tuition in between). A few months later, in November, the person whom we gave Rs. 4,50,000 to, became insolvent and it was a huge problem for all my family, so we called many relatives for help but no one helped us. We also lodged a complain with the Police and requested various politicians, but no one helped us because we didn't have proof- no cheque, no agreement.

My mom was totally broken, but we learnt a good lesson in life- don't trust anyone. Many people said that we were foolish to give such an amount without a cheque or an agreement. Everyone started teaching us the law but nobody helped us. I started working part time in a computer shop and earning 100 rupees, sometimes 50 rupees daily, depending upon the work. But our income was not sufficient and we suffered.

But God is always there and I believe in the same. I suffered from continuous vomiting, and this time my grandfather supported us by giving Rs. 1,10,000 for hospital treatment, money for two 'Scooty' scooters and 80000 to buy furniture for the house. I hoped that now he would help me my entire my life, but again we foolishly trusted him. He was just trying to be a kind-hearted person by showing his money power, but I realized that his kind heartedness was fake. When we demanded our rightful share in my father's property, he showed his true colours and said, "I will not give any share in your father's property. If you want, court is open for you."

It was a really hard time for me – I was 15 at the time. I am a religious person. At that time, Acharya Shree Vidyasagar ji, a priest, helped us & we came across Vinod Kumar Jain, a civil contractor & reputed merchant. I discussed our situation and he told me he would help us with a lawyer. He has paid all the lawyer's fees till today and one thing he always said was, "Ye wakt bhi guzar jayga" [tr.- This too shall pass].

On 22/12/2014, my mother and sister finally filed a suit regarding civil death certificate of my father, because a period of more than 7 years had passed. However, things were not easy. I spent a lot of time on my case and I forgot about my studies completely. It was during my 10th standard board exams and I hardly attended 20 classes in the whole year. I didn't even know the chapters of the book, when I started my studies 15 days before the exam. I got 52.5% in 10th, but again I spent all my time on my case. My grandfather & uncle were parties to the case and they showed fake documents in court till 2016.

Finally, I decided to move the High court of Chhattisgarh. Luckily, one of the most reputed lawyers Hamida Siddiqui, agreed to represent my case and we got a favorable order to dispose the case within 4 months. In November 2016, I went to Dantewada court to represent the order of writ petition, but the Judge did not pass judgment in my favour. On that day, I decided to pursue law and become a good lawyer or judge.

I started preparing for CLAT with my 12th standard board exam preparations. I got selected for the National Law University, Odisha and I also scored 68.4 % in my board exams. I was happy as well as sad because we could not afford my legal education. However, my mom told me not to worry about money and finally with help of three Masis (aunts) I got Rs. 181000 for fees. My mom was also quite happy that after 5 years, I would become a judge.

But how wrong was I! My mother accompanied me to NLU Odisha and 2 days after she left, I started my studies. However, the warden called me and told me that I hadn't deposited my fees. I said that I had deposited Rs. 181000, but he said that I had to pay for the mess charges also. I said that this was not told to me at the time of admission, but he told me I had to deposit this fee every year. I went to the registrar's office and she told me the same thing. I did not understand what could I do, so after 14 days, I took a withdrawal. I had requested for a fee waiver, but to no avail. I finally decide to do a BBA from Rite college and I started pursuing the same.

I requested Dr. Shamnad Basheer to help me and he said, "Okay I will help you." But I got busy in my father's case again, and then IDIA Kolkata chapter Arnab Roy sir helped me a lot. He helped me in my family dispute case as well and also connected me to Svetlana ma'am and my INAT test was conducted by Manash sir (Team Leader of IDIA C.G.) Finally, I got selected. After that, the team started teaching me- Rajat sir taught me Reasoning , Tanmay sir taught me G.K, Jyotsana ma'am taught me English, Sakshi ma'am taught me Maths and Kuldeep sir taught me Legal reasoning. With the help of their hard work, I got admitted GNLU. Each and every member is strict as well as friendly.

I want to thank IDIA Founder, Shamnad Basheer sir, Arnab Roy Sir, Svetlana ma'am, Balu Nair sir, CG IDIA team & all the members of IDIA who helped me pursue, once again, the field where I had lost hope. I will do my best and once again, thank you very much.

DISCOVERING LAW SCHOOL



Sandeep is a 1st year BBA LL.B (Hons) student at National Law University, Odisha. He wants to work to make law accessible to all.

I am Sandeep Golani, an NLUO student. I would like to share with you my journey to law school.

As far as my background is concerned, I belong to a lower middle-class family. My father is a retired businessman and my mother is a housewife. My father is a drunkard and that's the only issue which has been a stumbling block for me.

I started the journey of my education in a State board school where, despite the dearth of qualified teachers, gradually I started acing my school examinations and other extra-curricular activities which included dancing, painting, etc. This journey ended after class 10th standard when I recognised and acknowledged the need of studying in a CBSE based school in today's cut-throat competition.

Thus, after some efforts, I got admission in Mithi Gobindram Public School, Bhopal which fulfilled my requirement. At my new school, a phenomenal life experience was waiting for me - whether it be in terms of leadership, oratory skills, or examination. After some practice, I got through them all and succeeded by leaps and bounds when I got 94.80% in my class 12th.

My experience in grade 12th made me incline towards the law. It was the articulation skill and reasonable man concept which fascinated me towards building a career in law. Then I took a drop-year to prepare for the CLAT examination and subsequent to that decision, I joined LegalEdge Tutorials where I met its Director, Mr. Harsh Gagrani, who acted as a catalyst in bridging the gap between me preparing for the CLAT examination and getting selected in National Law University Odisha. It was through him, that I came to know about Increasing Diversity by Increasing Access (IDIA) and

thus felt a sigh of relief, as it was the only opportunity I was seeking. Without IDIA I couldn't even dream of giving a practical shape to my idea of pursuing law as a career.

Then, I cleared the INAT test which IDIA conducts to select its trainees. NLIU, Bhopal IDIA team nurtured and honed my skills for the CLAT examination by clearing my doubts. The team members were compassionate for they also provided me with the required and relevant study material. Though there were some travelling issues and clashes between my coaching timings at LegalEdge Tutorials and NLIU Bhopal IDIA chapter, I used to try my best to make the most of it.

The learning at LegalEdge Tutorials, initially made me knit the dreams of getting selected in the top 3 National Law Universities of India, which every CLAT aspirant dreams of. After giving 20 mocks at the coaching, I started getting depressed, but it was the persistence which made me keep going and keep learning. Slowly yet steadily, there was an improvement in my scores as the exam came near.

Then, after giving a year for CLAT, there was finally the D-day to be encountered. All India Law Entrance Test (AILET) was my first challenge where I gave my best shot. Then finally there was the Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) day, the day being in the top priority in the list of all the days. There was some fear and some confidence which could be experienced in the air on that day. Finally, I got through the 2 most important hours. My exam was not good at my part, in comparison to the hard work of my LegalEdge tutorials' teachers and IDIA trainers.

I was on tenterhooks, waiting for the result of AILET exam to be declared. I was sure that I was going to National Law University Delhi for my law education as I had excelled in the AILET, but contrary to my expectations, I got 178th rank and thus lost the seat. While CLAT result was as per my expectations, I was in a dilemma to take a year drop again or to get admission in the allotted National Law University.

I expected that life in a law university is about mooting and academics, but after landing up at the university I realized it was much more than that. It involved writing research papers, being a member in various committees, excelling in sports and volunteering in national and international level events and conferences and of course a slew of quality books in academics. Now I proudly call myself an NLUO student and look forward to helping students from marginalized backgrounds, by conducting sensitization programmes, so that their bright future can be nurtured with the access that IDIA provides.

HARD WORK PAYS!



Sonia is a 1st Year B.A. LL.B (Hons) student at National Law Institute University, Bhopal. She hopes to use her knowledge of the law to be a responsible citizen and help others.

Hello everyone, I am Sonia Sabu, IDIA scholar from Kerala chapter. I am very glad and delighted to share my story from the hostel rooms of NLIU, Bhopal. I belong to a middle class family, residing in Cochin, Kerala - God's own country'.

My family consists of my father Sabu, mother Shaija, and my younger sister, Sona. Till my 4th grade, I followed the Central Board of Secondary Education and after that, I shifted to the Kerala state board syllabus till my Higher secondary graduation. During my higher secondary education, I chose Bio/maths as my stream. Even though I was a science stream student in higher secondary graduation, I had an inclination towards arts and humanities subjects. Only after my Board exams, I came to know about CLAT and law as a career. On further research, I found out about the prestige and legacy that National Law Universities hold all over the country.

CLAT, as a competitive exam, is the 4th toughest of its kind in India. So I decided to take the challenge of cracking a National level exam and started to dream of the days in one of the top NLUs. I decided to drop one year for CLAT preparation. I searched for CLAT coaching centres all over the country, and finally decided to take the online CLAT coaching package of 'Sriram law Academy', in Chennai, so that I could prepare myself at home and put my own strategies in the preparation. The package consisted of 7 books covering basic syllabus for CLAT and few online mock tests. From the initial days of my preparation itself, I understood the fact that preparation, as well as its timely application was necessary for CLAT. The online examination was aimed at the analysis of knowledge, application, speed and time management. Along with the preparation from books and other sources, the constant practice of doing online tests and its immediate evaluation was necessary.

As I was a science stream student, I was supposed to put much of my efforts for General knowledge preparation and I did the same. Regular notes from newspapers and several online sites providing current affairs updates were very beneficial for that. Apart from the preparation for CLAT, I also dedicated myself to inculcating the values of a legal education. For that I went through several motivational videos of eminent lawyers and of the students who cracked CLAT earlier. This extra research helped me stick to my time table and prepare myself to hold my interest in legal education.

The wide scope of social service and social responsibility that the law offers motivated me for pursuing a legal education. The pride and legacy of the Indian Judiciary instigates those minds that are eager for socially responsible jobs. After an 8 month preparation from August to March in my home, through online coaching, I decided to take a crash course of 1 month. For that I consulted 'Heritage CLAT coaching centre' in Ernakulam, Kerala. During my days in Heritage centre, I came to know about IDIA trust and the scholarship it offers, from my Coaching centre head. My name was given to IDIA chapter of Kerala, in NUALS Kochi. Soon after that, IDIA representatives from NUALS Kochi, contacted my family. They visited my house and took the details for my profile. From that moment till my exam date, IDIA representatives from NUALS provided me necessary help in terms of academics as well as emotional support. I wrote one exam in NUALS as a part of scholarship also.

May 13th was the big day I had been waiting for, for one long year. I was confident as well as nervous in equal measure. I revised my strong sections and dedicated more time for the same while moving closer to exam date. The question paper was not a surprise for me. Most of the sections were in expected manner. I did my best in those 2 hours and left the hall, hoping for the best. As there were some issues regarding the misconduct of CLAT, I was not sure about my rank prediction. As I could manage time well and accuracy was up to my regular performances, I expected a seat in top 5 NLUs.

Exam result came on May 31st. It did not crash my expectations. I was glad and satisfied to obtain an All India rank of 329, with 124.25 marks. I received my rank with utmost happiness and satisfaction. I hoped for getting into one of top 5 NLUs in the allotment list. Paying for my hard work, I got allotted to NLIU Bhopal. In the time being, I was informed of being selected as an IDIA scholar from Kerala Chapter. NLU graduation along with IDIA scholarship was a dream of each law student and I realized that I was one among such 8 fortunate law students in our country.

I reached my allotted college, NLIU Bhopal in June last week. It was a proud moment to be a part of NLIU family. Vast campus, students from different parts of the country, high quality teachers and classrooms, etc. stood as prestige symbols of great NLUs. Student culture and teaching quality were also quite satisfactory.

I am really very thankful to IDIA for making my dreams come true. It is challenging as well as thrilling to be in a competitive atmosphere. But I am equally curious to indulge in the experience that each and every law school offers. I am looking forward to helping other students also, as a part of IDIA cell in our campus, so that I can spread the positive energy that IDIA gave me, to the rest of world. I am hoping that 5 years in this campus will make me fit to accomplish my dreams, as well as provide me the space to help others also, as a lawyer and as a responsible citizen.

BE A PART OF THEIR JOURNEY

Increasingly, legal education and the legal profession have various entry barriers that put a quality legal education out of reach for the vast majority of the country's deserving, but underprivileged students.

With a rare fire raging in their bellies, IDIA Scholars have fought against all odds to secure their hard earned seats in law colleges. Their excellent performance in all aspects of legal education – from topping their batches to participating in various co-curricular activities – is a testament to their perseverance. They deserve all the support in getting the same opportunities as students from more privileged backgrounds who wish to pursue the legal profession.

You can read more about their achievements at
<www.idialaw.com/idia-scholars/idia-champs-achievements>.

For more information, please visit our website <www.idialaw.com>.

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