



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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A LEADER IN THE MAKING



Vaibhavi is a first year B.A. LL.B (Hons.) student at Gujarat National Law University, who's raring to show the world what she can do!

Hello. My name is Vaibhavi Rajendra Pedhavi. I belong to Nandaipada, a small village in the small town of Alibag, which is located on the coastal region of Maharashtra. Alibag is also known as mini Goa for its beauty and clean beaches. My father owns a small electronics store and he also does farming to help the family. My mother is a housewife. My parents were determined to teach their daughters well, no matter how much trouble they would face. Since childhood, I used to read storybooks on great leaders. When I came to know that Lokamanya Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi and many of the leaders were lawyers, I saw law as a profession with great respect. When I was in school, I used to read lot of Marathi books. I was also interested in classical music. I represented my school in many elocution competitions as well.

I also loved to read newspapers during my school years. Since newspapers were not available at my home, I used to go to my uncle's house to read them. By reading books and newspapers, I was gradually becoming aware of the wrongs in society. As well as I understood the gap between urban and rural areas. The concepts of 'India' and 'Bharat' were completely different from one another. In my village, people are struggling for one meal in a day and on the other hand tourists who used to come to visit and enjoy at Alibag used to waste a lot of food even without thinking. These factors motivated me to work towards positive social changes in the society.

When I was in tenth grade, an event happened which completely changed my life. As we are Kolis (fishermen), our main occupation has been fishing since a long time. Even my great-grandfather, grandfather and still my many relatives are doing this business for their livelihood. My uncle was also a fisherman. Yes, I am saying 'was'. In 2016, a tragic accident happened in a boat and he died on the spot on the boat. His son was only 7 years old at that time and suddenly all the responsibilities of his son came to my aunt.

Since no one in our family was aware of the government procedures in such circumstances, we could not approach anywhere. And at this moment I realized the importance of law and of a good education. After scoring good marks in class 10, I decided to study for law entrance examination. I decided to go to Pune as there were more opportunities there and I could learn a lot of things there. Initially, my parents were opposed to my decision because they could not afford my hostel fees and other expenses. But after seeing my sincere desire they managed my fees from somewhere and that decision really changed my life and became the turning point.

The culture was really different there and I had never studied using computers in my whole life before. People used to talk to each other in English. Sometimes I really wondered, how were they able to talk in English! Our village school was totally different from Pune's college .

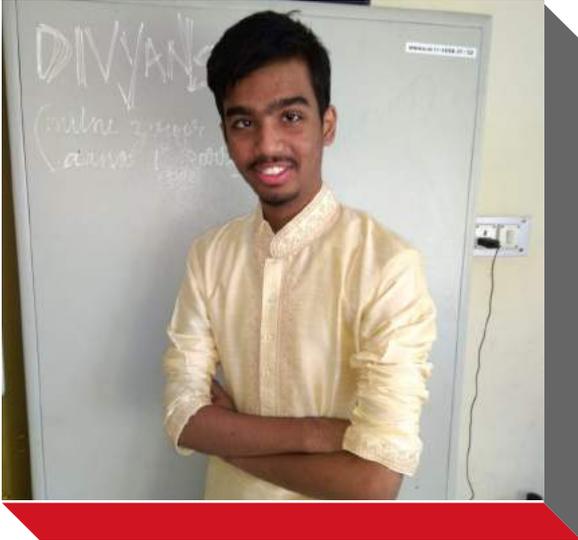
One day, IDIA Pune Chapter conducted a sensitization program in our college. They introduced us to many opportunities available after pursuing law and they conducted an exam through which they were going to select some students who were really interested in law as a career and they were going to sponsor the educational expenses. As I was really interested in law from the beginning, I performed well in the preliminary test and after an interview, I was selected as an IDIA trainee.

All volunteers from the IDIA team really supported me throughout the year. They took my personal classes everyday (apart from Career Launcher classes) and they also conducted mock tests every month. As I had difficulty in understanding legal knowledge in English, Atharv Dada from IDIA used to explain to me in Marathi. He even made a timetable for my daily work. Liji didi, Apoorva didi, Soumyashree didi, Madhura didi and all volunteers really explained to me each and every topic of the syllabus. I really think that I am here only because of these people. I cannot imagine what would have happened without them.

When my CLAT results were declared, I did not even know whether my results were bad or good! But finally Soumyashree Didi called me and said, "Congratulations, Vaibhavi!" I asked her "Marks thik hain kya?" *Are my marks okay?*, and she said , "Yes"! And I felt really very happy because my dream was coming true. I got enrolled in GNLU soon thereafter.

The journey of these 5 years has just begun. The journey which will give me the most memorable 5 years of my life. These years will teach me many new things, both good and bad. But the final decision will be mine - to choose what is good for me. After exploring these five years, I want to work especially for rural people. I want to create opportunities for education in the rural area. I want the villagers to realize that living in rural India can be a better option than moving to urban areas; the only thing here is that you need to provide them with 'a ray of hope' so they can grow by their own will and abilities.

TRY AND TRY AGAIN



Sushanth is a first year student at the WB National University of Juridical Sciences. He wants to be a successful lawyer and hopes to inspire others through his efforts and determination.

I am Sushanth Gajula and I was born in a village in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district. My parents were very happy with my birth. After a few years, they started noticing that I had some trouble in my eyesight and this later got corroborated by my primary school teacher, who told them that your child is looking at the board very closely. My parents then took me to a doctor to know about my ailment soon to realize that God has put me in the most unfortunate of the conditions. After examination, the doctor told my parents that I am visually challenged and he also advised my parents to send me to a blind school.

Thereafter, I had to go to Hyderabad where the blind school was located. My parents were thinking about me and they sought to provide me primary education through which I could sustain myself in the future. Then I got enrolled in the school which was like a second home for me for 11 years.

I was very active in extra curricular activities like debating, mock United Nations, elocution, and I also ended up being a topper in my tenth standard with 9.5 CGPA out of 10. When I was in class 8, I got interested in the things happening in society and I used to get angry to see the slow judicial system in our country. In a way, that changed my life. I got interested to study law in the future. When I was in class 9, I got to know from my seniors about CLAT, who were preparing then for it. I shared my idea of taking CLAT with them since I wanted to pursue legal education as well. But a significant problem arose, i.e., how would I be able to afford the CLAT preparation and how would I be able to bear the expenses of the national law universities. However, then they told me about IDIA, which effectively came to me as a blessing. My father was then working under a private doctor and my sister was also studying, so it was very difficult at that time for my family to fund the expensive education.

In my twelfth standard, IDIA came to my school for sensitization. Thereafter they conducted an INAT test through which they selected me as an IDIA trainee. After that, for one year IDIA trained me with utmost dedication and apart from training they also helped me mentally by giving me confidence that CLAT is achievable.

Soon thereafter dark days of my preparations began, i.e. when I had to attempt the mock tests. I was very disappointed by my performance in mocks. However, the IDIA team was not disappointed, and they told me to try again and again, which I did. IDIA engaged more volunteers during the last few months before the exam and IDIA always expressed their confidence in me and my abilities. I appeared in the exams with full confidence and when the CLAT results came out, I got NUJS, Kolkata.

And this is how my journey started as an IDIA scholar at NUJS Kolkata. Here I realized that IDIA is not just a trust but a family and our well wisher, which takes care of us every time.

EARNEST EFFORTS PAY



Shristi is a first year B.A. LL.B (Hons.) student at the Institute of Law, Nirma University. She is eager to finish her legal studies so she can empower and help those who are less fortunate.

I'm Shristi Singh and I come from Arrah, a town near Patna, Bihar. My father is a home tutor and my mother is a home maker. I was in class 5 when my father decided to enrol me into a good school. I was admitted into D.A.V. and left the vernacular medium school, where I used to study till then.

I got enrolled despite the pressure from our relatives to get only my brother enrolled. My grandmother stood for me at that moment and also came forward to sponsor my school fees. In the school, the one who used to top the class used to get a fee waiver of up to 50 per cent of tuition fee and I managed to get the fee waiver in sixth and seventh standard. In my new school, I also found new interests, and started playing basketball and chess. I played basketball at the state level as well. I never wanted to be a doctor or an engineer, as I wanted to be someone, who could not only be self-empowered but also could contribute in the

empowerment of the society, generally and also help me to bring about positive social changes in the society. Therefore, I started searching for the options and got to know that there is an all India law entrance examination called CLAT and that studying in national law schools also opens up prospects of good jobs. This was very surprising to know, as from the place where I belong we are only aware about struggles of a lawyer to earn a mere sustainable income.

Thereafter, another shocking revelation happened, i.e., how will my father arrange Rs. 3-4 lacs per annum for funding my education in these law universities, when our annual family income was meagre. I started searching for scholarships and found out IDIA and got in touch with regional IDIA chapter. Thereafter, I appeared for the aptitude test called INAT and an interview.

I cleared both and was selected as an IDIA trainee. During the training for the law entrance examinations, I got full support of IDIA, especially by my mentor Vivek sir. Despite his hectic schedule he was 24/7 available for me. He made available plenty of reading material and was available to clear doubts over phone, whenever I needed help. Whenever I was losing faith in myself, Vivek sir was always there to help me regain my confidence.

I got 136.75 in CLAT and got myself enrolled in the Nirma University. Presently, I am a student of first-year B.A. LLB. (Hons.) at Institute of Law, Nirma University, Ahmadabad, where I am getting complete support of IDIA and I am feeling lucky to be part of this cherished family. I will give my 100 percent to uphold the vision of IDIA, along with fulfilling the dreams of my parents. I am thankful to the whole IDIA family as I would have been nothing if IDIA family was not there to motivate me to choose law as a career. And I think that it gave me the right direction to my future otherwise I would also have been the part of the crowd and lost somewhere in that crowd. Finally I would like to thank Ashok sir (IDIA Nirma Chapter) and Vivek sir for their constant support. I really want to thank IDIA for giving me this golden chance of empowering myself.

NEW BEGINNINGS - FROM JASHPUR TO RAIPUR



Shubham is a first year student at the Hidayatullah National Law University. He hopes to become a judge someday. He wants to inspire his community to dream bigger and aim higher. Shubham's efforts will take him a long way.

My name is Shubham Tirkey. I come from a village called Khatanga, Dist. Jashpur, Chhattisgarh, which is a remote area with lack of educational facilities. I did my schooling from Jashpur district of Chhattisgarh, in a school with lack of basic facilities. After completing class 12, my father wanted me to study agriculture. However, one of my uncles suggested me to join a law school because none of my family members belonged to the legal field.

Listening to his advice and after talking to other people about the same, I got interested in field of law. There onwards, I started searching for law colleges in Chhattisgarh and after some research I came across the examination called CLAT. I asked my father to fill the CLAT form in order to take admission in law colleges but my father denied to do the same. He told me that the fees of the CLAT examination and National Law Universities are very high but somehow, I managed to convince him for filling the CLAT form.

In my area, there was a person named Shikhar Shrivastava, who used to work in Jashpur District administration and was an alumnus of HNLU, Raipur. He started a coaching for CLAT with the teachers of government schools for the students who were interested in joining the field of law. Because he was in district administration and school teachers were not so interested in teaching since it was a free service, we were not able to make any progress in our preparation. Thereafter, he contacted IDIA for giving some help to the students of Jashpur.

My experience with IDIA has been very good since they agreed to help us when we needed it the most. They helped us very efficiently to prepare for the law entrance

examinations. And IDIA helped us financially as well. My experience was good while writing the law entrance examination. I was nervous when I first saw the question paper. However, I soon got myself at ease and was able to attempt the questions well.

When the CLAT results were declared, I saw my name in the list and I informed my parents about the same. I saw a lot of happiness on the faces of my family members and I gained a lot of confidence over my achievement and I thought to myself that I am going to do something big in life using this opportunity.

In law school, I want to work towards holistic development of my personality and will seek to grow from my experiences by learning from them.

A BRIGHT FUTURE AWAITS



Sheetal is a first year student of law at the National University of Study and Research in Law. She chose to study law so she could educate people about their rights and duties towards society.

My name is Sheetal Kumari. I come from a tribal community and belong to a lower middle class family. I live in a small village in Kanke, Ranchi. I live with my mother and father and have 2 sisters. I passed my tenth exam from Cambrian Public School and my twelfth from Ursuline Intermediate College, Ranchi.

I come from a community which is socially and economically backward. There is a lack of awareness amongst the community members about the basic rights and duties of the citizens. This is the reason I wanted to pursue legal education so that I can work towards ensuring that all members can exercise their legal rights better by spreading awareness. There are very few girl children in my community who are getting higher education and they are usually married at very early age. I witnessed this kind of situations in my own village where girls are married at a very young age.

Thus, I want to get legal education to fight for their rights. I know that our government provides many facilities for the betterment of our community but very few people get these benefits as they are not aware and also not very educated. So I want to spread awareness and make the people aware of their rights.

My father, Rajan Ram is a security guard in NUSRL, Ranchi and through the students of this college my father got to know about IDIA and he told me about this. Later I used to come to NUSRL as a trainee and many of the students helped me in preparing for CLAT. They used to give me the study material of CLAT free of cost through which I have gained a lot of knowledge about this exam. When exams were coming soon they also sent me to CLAT coaching without any fees which help me a lot in cracking CLAT.

Initially I was very nervous on giving law entrance exam but because of the hard work of my teachers and IDIA trainees, they gave me confidence to crack this. They taught me how to manage time and accuracy in exam and by following their guidance, I cracked the exam and when I received results of the exam I was very happy and satisfied. My parents were also happy with my results. All my relatives came to congratulate me and gave their blessings for my bright and better future. But I was worried about studying in national law university where students come from high class background. Through IDIA I got admission to NUSRL.

When I got admitted in the University I felt very lucky to get this opportunity to study in this college. The college campus is very good and the food is also very tasty. I have made 4-5 friends and they are very helpful in nature. My classmates are also very helpful. Faculty members are also very helpful and cooperative in nature. They help us in developing our overall personality. I am very enthusiastic about the coming five years and I want to get the best education and lots of good experience and opportunities in the coming years. This college has given me excellent facilities and environment to study - exactly what I need to succeed in life.

CHASING STARS



Sartaj studies at the Faculty of Law, Jamia Milia Islamia University, Delhi and hopes to work towards a career in the civil services.

I am Sartaj Hussain and I hail from a small village named Amauli Kalan of Barabanki district of Uttar Pradesh. My father is a tailor and he is the sole bread earner in the family. He moved to Delhi for employment in 2010 and two years later when I was in class 7, I had to leave my studies and I also started working in Delhi.

After working for around 6 months, I realized that I had to continue my studies. I requested my father to enroll me in a school. Thereafter I continued my study but due to weak financial conditions, I also worked as a newspaper vendor during those days. I have completed my schooling from Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidyalaya, Dwarka, New Delhi.

I came to know about IDIA in 2017 when IDIA conducted a sensitization programme in my school. The volunteers of IDIA from National Law University, Delhi told us about the initiative and conducted an entrance exam in the campus of NLU Delhi. They also took my interview and I got selected as an IDIA Trainee. I was very confused about my career option after Class 12. I even thought of joining an acting school after graduation.

I had the wrong image of the law in my mind. But Ayushi Goyal, a volunteer of IDIA from NLU Delhi told me about various opportunities available in law after graduation. She told me about the significance and effectiveness of law as a career in society. She helped me break the wrong image of law in my mind. As an IDIA trainee, we used to have regular classes and extra classes for doubts and queries, as required. IDIA always helped me whenever I needed it. Initially, I faced difficulty in my preparation due to my Hindi medium background, but volunteers worked very hard on me and my English improved a lot in the process. IDIA provided me a mentor for my preparation as well, who helped me a lot in my overall preparation.

IDIA is not just an organization but a family of very kind and humble people. Each and every person helped me a lot in my preparation. I worked hard for CLAT as well as other law entrance exams. IDIA family also worked very hard with me and I finally got selected for B.A.LL.B (Hons.) in Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi.

I was elated on the day of the results. It was a very special moment for me. I belonged to a small village where the Muslim community is very backward and they earn their bread as farmers or as nomads. From around 90 families of my community, merely two or three boys are continuing their study after class 9 and I am amongst one of them. I will always remain thankful to IDIA family which has helped me to achieve this. IDIA not only trained for the competition but also has helped me to become a good human being. IDIA has always treated me like a friend.

Thank you so much, IDIA family. And thanks to Late Prof. Shamnad Basheer for his love and support. His legacy will always remain in my heart and we will work towards taking this initiative further.

koshish bhī kar umiīd bhī rakh rāsta bhī chun
phir is ke baad thodā muqaddar talāsh kar
(NIDA FAZLI)

BUILDING A BETTER WORLD



Piyush is an enthusiastic student at National Law Institute University, Bhopal. He is fascinated with the interconnection of law and society, and his focus and resilience will serve him well at law school.

Hello everyone! I am Piyush Soni. I come from a small town called Ganj Basoda in Vidisha district near Bhopal. My father is a shopkeeper, who runs a small general store, and my mother is a housewife. I live in a joint family where the focus is to earn a decent livelihood rather than studying hard and working on ones dreams.

My schooling took place in my hometown and after fifth standard I gave Navodaya Vidyalaya selection test and after passing it, I got admitted in Navodaya Vidyalaya (it is a boarding school, where your parents are allowed to meet you on specific days) where I studied for 7 years. There I learned a lot of things and became quite self-dependent because you need to do everything by yourself - be it washing clothes to keeping your belongings safe from a very tender age.

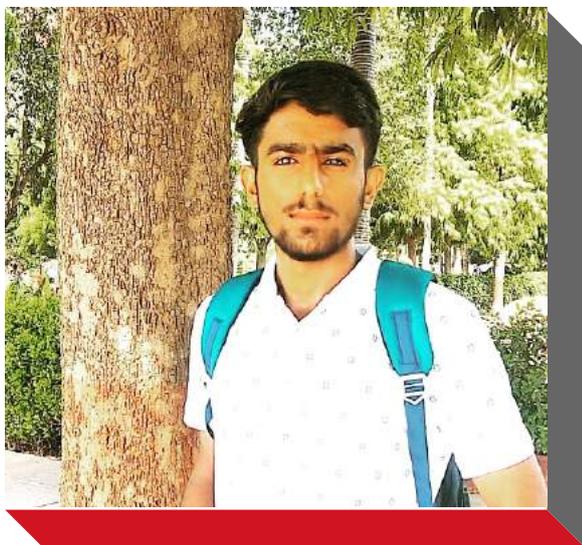
I came to know about various career options, from which I found legal education to be most fascinating. After I completed my twelfth, I decided to take a year off to prepare for the Common Law Admission Test. Here I came to know about IDIA from one of my seniors from Navodaya. As I was already preparing for it, IDIA came to me as a golden opportunity and after the aptitude test, I was selected as one of their trainees. I came at NLIU for training and I was given a perfect training accompanied with comprehensive study material by IDIA members. I'm very grateful to them for such warm behavior that motivated me a lot in my preparation.

As I had invested a whole year in preparing, I had also taken All India test series, where I regularly gave mock tests, and it helped me in analyzing my weaknesses and knowing where I stood along with all other aspirants. I usually got a very good rank in mock tests, so I was pretty sure of getting a good rank in CLAT as well.

After the CLAT 2019, I saw everyone was very happy as this year's CLAT was the easiest one since its inception. I somehow felt that this year the cutoff would be very high and to no surprise, it went the same way. When the result came, I got an AIR 344. I was a bit disappointed as I had expected to be a bit better but since I had got NLIU Bhopal, which happens to be near my home, I somehow managed to make peace with it. I also talked to some of my seniors and our IDIA team leaders, they told me that it's good to get any of the top 5 NLUs in the country.

So, when I entered NLIU, I found the environment to be a bit unfamiliar, but IDIA members and many of my seniors helped me to get through this. At NLIU, there is a trimester system and the schedule is very hectic and things go very fast. So, one needs to be very active and attentive in order to avail the opportunities. I found the students to be very active and good at their communication skills. But nevertheless, I have an inherent character of getting things by working hard for them. So, I have now decided to work even harder in order to perform better at law school. At last, I would like to thank the whole IDIA fraternity for providing me this opportunity to enter into this legal world and I would contribute towards the betterment of the society once I graduate from NLIU.

A SPARK OF LIGHT!



Om Prakash is a first Year B.A. LL.B (Hons.) student at the Institute of Law, Nirma University. A staunch supporter of women's rights, he wants to use his legal knowledge to help women and children.

Hi! I am Om Prakash Choudhary. I come from a small village called Latara in Bali Tehsil of Pali district, Rajasthan. My family consists of 8 members, my grandmother, parents, 4 sisters and myself. My family does farming like most other families in my village. My father has helped me in each and every phase of my life. He is the first graduate person from my village. My father being the eldest amongst his siblings had a lot of family responsibilities growing up. My mother is an amazing homemaker and if she had gotten opportunities in her life, I feel she could have been a known face to many in India.

My story has been one of many twists and turns till now. I got most of my primary education at good schools, thanks to my paternal uncle and my sister for ensuring the same. I never dreamt of pursuing law. Growing up, I was a mischievous guy but was good at heart and always ready to help the needy.

I dreamt of being in the army, police, or in sports while growing up. I played two state level competitions and one national level competition in football. In mid of Class 12 when I was thinking of what I will do in the future, I heard a line by my sister's husband when she was arguing with him on some issue, "what can you do if I leave you?" Maybe he said that casually and without meaning it. However, it had hit me hard. Prior to this incident, the term "women empowerment", was an obscure jargon for me but on that day I understood what it meant. That day, my sister did not have an answer to that question. However, it was enough to raise a lot of questions in my head and I went about finding the answers.

I started first by reading about the situation on the internet and by discussing the same with teachers and friends. And I came to know that a person with knowledge of law has the power to fight when the legal rights of a person have been violated. I also learnt that lawyers have the power to change the perception of the people about their legal problems. I also got to know about various other advantages of pursuing law and therefore I started finding about law courses. In the process, I got information about NLUs, CLAT, AILET, etc. But when I saw the fees of NLUs I got shocked.

I am thankful to Lokender bhaiya, who informed me about IDIA. Thereafter, I started researching on IDIA and got to know about IDIA Rajasthan chapter. I contacted Prakriti ma'am of the IDIA Rajasthan Chapter. She gave me a date for the aptitude exam called INAT. After a short interview and a good score in INAT, I was selected as an IDIA trainee and got trained for one long year for CLAT 2019 and AILET 2019. But unfortunately I was not able to perform well in the mocks and I lost hope of selection. I talked with my mentor Ishita ma'am about my situation; she guided me and boosted me up for impending exams. After a lot of hard work, I got into the Institute of Law Nirma University. Lastly, I would like to say that IDIA is not just an NGO but it is a God-like figure for many families, like ours. Once again thanks a lot to the IDIA family.

TO MANY MORE FIRSTS!



Jitendra is a first year student at the National Law University, Odisha. He is a focused, diligent and conscientious student who wants to work for his community in the future.

Hi, my name is Jitendra Majhi. I am from a tribal village called Renu, which is situated in Gajapati district of Odisha. My mother is a daily labourer and my father is a farmer. Whatever money my mother earns in a month, she uses it for sustaining our family. One of my elder sisters is a teacher in a government school, who also helps us a lot to run the family. During summer vacations, all of us, brothers and sisters, work together to earn some money to help our parents. Our family's financial condition is not good and we belong to a below poverty line family.

I did my schooling from Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS). KISS is situated in Bhubaneswar, where I was getting education and other facilities free of cost. I wanted to pursue legal education, because I feel I can understand our society better through legal education.

Legal education is necessary not only for becoming a good lawyer but also for becoming a well-aware citizen. There is no lawyer in my village or in my gram panchayat. Due to absence of legal experts in our village, people from my village and people from other nearby villages face a lot of problems, whenever they face any legal problems. That is why I decided to become the first lawyer of my village and by doing so I want to lead my community in future. It is for this reason that I chose to pursue a legal education.

I came to know about IDIA when members of the IDIA Odisha Chapter came to our school and introduced us to law as a career option and also informed us about IDIA and the work they do. They conducted a test for selecting IDIA trainees. I was the one who secured the highest marks amongst all students who appeared and was selected as a trainee.

Subsequently, IDIA provided me with some study materials and started to teach me for Common Law Admission Test. They were very friendly to me during my training period. When my class 12 exams were over, they took me to the National Law University Odisha, where they trained me for CLAT and AILET. All IDIA volunteers were very generous and friendly, who never gave me a chance to feel that I come from an underprivileged background. They arranged everything in such a manner which I cannot forget and even now I miss those beautiful moments.

After completing my training, I appeared for the CLAT and AILET, which were my first experience of appearing for competitive exams. I was very nervous about the exams. I was wondering as to how to mark the answer sheet correctly? How to search for my name and room at the centre? But the members of the IDIA were very supportive and made me feel relaxed and confident and I entered the examination hall without any fear. After appearing for the CLAT and AILET, I was very happy about the opportunity which was given to me by IDIA. Due to the opportunity I had been given, I felt slightly different from the others.

When the CLAT result was published I was in my village where network connectivity is a big issue. But I always tried to be in touch with Raju (my social mentor) by climbing the highest point in our village area to catch signals. He informed me about the results but I was unsatisfied with the marks scored. But the IDIA members encouraged me and increased my confidence level. After four lists were published, I got selected for the National Law University Odisha against a vacant seat. Finally, I got admission there and became the first IDIA scholar of the IDIA Odisha Chapter as well as the first student of KISS to crack CLAT and getting admission into a national law university. When my parents got to know about this they cried with joy and advised me to go ahead with my legal education. They also advised me to not disappoint IDIA for the trust and faith reposed in me by them and also to obey them as my second parents. Before joining NLUO, I expected to meet with people from all over India in the university. I also expected that the university will provide me opportunities which I did not get earlier in my life and to hone my talents and skills. I also expected that I will learn different languages like English, Hindi and more, and I will also gain knowledge about different cultures and traditions. I am very happy with the university and all my expectation are actually being met here. And I love this university.

Last but not the least I want to thank that saintly personality, Late Prof. Basheer, who gave me this valuable opportunity. I pray to the God to give his pure soul an eternal peace. I want to thank all the IDIA members as well. I will always be grateful to IDIA for giving me such an opportunity. Thank you all.

DEVELOPING A BETTER PERSPECTIVE



Govind is a first year B.A. LL.B (Hons.) student at the Vivekananda institute of Professional Studies. He believes studying law will give him the much needed perspective to help society.

I am Govind Kumar Pathak and I come from Bihar. I have been living in Delhi since my childhood. We have a family of six members. My father is the sole breadwinner of our family. He is working in private company as a field worker. I have completed my education from Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidhyalaya.

I am interested in legal education because it gives me a different perspective to see the society. It will enable me to develop my own well-informed world view on important matters. I hope, legal education empowers me and enhances my confidence, my thinking capabilities, to such extent so that I can fight for myself and others. There are a lot of people who helped me to choose legal education as my career option and told me about available opportunities in pursuing a legal career.

I came to know about IDIA through the sensitization which was conducted in my school in 2017. The IDIA volunteers came to us and told us about legal education and how IDIA facilitates the same. They told us about the initiative and then conducted INAT and also conducted an interview. After clearing this process, I got selected as an IDIA trainee and I started my preparation for the law entrance exam.

As an IDIA trainee, my experience was very good. The team of IDIA in NLU Delhi took our classes. The way they used to teach us was very interesting and they also took our doubts classes and were always ready to help me whenever I needed. The team of IDIA at NLU, Delhi had put in great efforts during my preparation of Common Law Admission Test. They also assigned me a mentor so that I could easily share my difficulties with her. I felt that I got another family here at IDIA Delhi Chapter during my preparation. All have golden hearts and worked hard to clear my understanding of the subjects.

Finally, I got selected in Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies for pursuing my legal education.

On the day of CLAT results, I was a little disappointed to know my rank, but I collected myself. Now, I am only waiting to get into law school. I am the first person in my family who came in a professional course. In fact, I am the only boy in my family who has continued studying after higher secondary exams.

I am very thankful to IDIA for their constant support. IDIA is doing great work and is trying its best to continue the initiative of Late Prof. Basheer. I will also try my best to take this initiative further.

UNDETERRED



Biswajit is a first Year B.A. LL.B (Hons.) student at WB National University of Juridical Sciences. His resilience and determination are inspiring to everyone around him.

My name is Biswajit Shil and I am studying at the WB National University of Juridical Sciences. I did my schooling from Ramakrishna Mission Blind Boys' Academy. I belong to South Dinajpur district of West Bengal. I belong to a middle-class Bengali family.

My father is a farmer and a small businessman and my mother is a housewife. We are three brothers and one sister. Two of us are visually challenged. From my childhood, I am fighting against my physical disability and because of this, I had to face various kinds of problem in my life. Due to the disability, I also felt sad at times. From the beginning of my educational life, I was in a boarding school. After leaving home, I learned, socializing, how to overcome my disability, how to adjust with the other people and how to present myself in front of the society.

I can recall that I was neglected by some people before starting my education but they also appreciate me at present. Now I feel proud of myself because I am more eligible than many people of the society in spite of being physically disabled.

I am fond of listening to and playing music. I learned to play the violin in my school. I am fond of reading stories and novels as well. The role of IDIA in my life is incomparable and it is like a blessing of God on me. A sensitization programme was conducted by IDIA in our school. I was impressed by law as a meaningful career option and therefore I attended INAT for becoming an IDIA trainee. I did not do well in the first attempt and I was disappointed. I appeared again the second time and I got selected as an IDIA trainee. For preparing for CLAT, IDIA provided me training through admission in a coaching center. The IDIA members of NUJS also guided me with great care. Then I appeared for CLAT and got admission at the WB National University of Juridical Sciences.

After coming to the law school, I faced many kinds of problems. For instance, I come from Bengali medium school and as such, English language is a big issue for me. I do not know English well. For being a good lawyer, writing skills must be good, but I feel that my writing skills are very poor. I am determined to improve the same. My communication skills are not so good, as a result, I feel difficult to participate in the class properly. I cannot complete my everyday lessons in time. I face difficulties in doing my projects work as well. Apart from this, I cannot access the online database independently because I have low knowledge of computers. So, I am unable to do research work properly. As I cannot use hard copy material, I have to take the help of technology. Therefore, I feel I must take computer training.

After the classes, if I feel any difficulties, IDIA volunteers are eager to help me as much as they can. After coming to the law school my confidence level has increased a lot. I hope that I can improve myself and I will be able to reach my goals in life of becoming a good lawyer and most importantly, a good human being.

FREEDOM TO DREAM



Ashok is a first Year B.A. LL.B (Hons.) student at National Law University, Jodhpur. He wants to complete his legal education and work towards making legal aid accessible to all.

I am Ashok Sagar, a student at NLU Jodhpur. My father is a poor farmer and my mother is a housewife. I am a scheduled caste category student and I belong to a below poverty line family. I lived in a very small village called Chirdhani in Jodhpur district of Rajasthan. In my village, there was no access to quality education, no work and no resources for living a good life. Because of dependence on seasonal rain, agriculture is hardly sustainable, but farming is the only work available in my village for earning a living.

Due to the shortage of rain, people work hard during four-five months of agriculture season. It is very difficult to live in such a bad condition. But my parents are so hardworking that they work as labourers in the summer season. I could not understand how could my parents manage the entire expenditure of the family in a little amount of

money which they earn as laborers. I studied in Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Boys Residential School Mandore, Jodhpur. I am a sincere student and my school has supported me a lot to achieve my goals.

When I was in ninth standard, a few students from NLU Jodhpur used to visit our school for teaching us English and other subjects for the law entrance examinations. It is there I came to know about IDIA Charitable Trust the first time. When I was in Class 12, a team of IDIA had come to our school and from them, I got details about IDIA. They conducted an entrance exam in two-phases, first, an aptitude test and then an interview. I qualified in both the phases and became an IDIA trainee thereafter. The IDIA team told us that we are poor, not due to lack of money but because of lack of knowledge. We don't know our rights because we do not know about the law. Today we are independent, democratic, republic, secular, sovereign and socialist because we have our Constitution, i.e. of the people, by the people, for the people.

We have been granted fundamental rights by the Constitution, but rural India is bereft of this knowledge, which leads to corruption, monopoly in villages, casteism, discrimination, etc. The poor people can't raise their voice against these problems because they do not know their rights. They have a lack of knowledge and a lack of financial resources. Which is why I decided to pursue a legal education. I want to make legal aid accessible and in a more easy manner, in the whole of India. I want that every person should have basic knowledge of their rights and law.

When I started thinking about preparing for law entrance examinations, I saw how English was prevalent and the most important component of the examination. But since I come from a Hindi medium background, I felt very discouraged. But thanks to IDIA, it provided me with mentors and trainers. They told me how to read and learn and also how to improve my English. The mentors used to take classes of every subject like Legal Aptitude, Maths, Logical Reasoning, Constitution, General Knowledge, Current Affairs and English. Apart from that they always motivated us to work harder and they were very helpful.

In my school life, I always thought that the poor had no right to dream but when I got in touch with IDIA, I realized that the poor can dream and make them come true. When I first appeared for CLAT I was very happy because I was satisfied with my preparation but I failed. All my dreams were broken. I hated myself and was terrified to see the faces of those who had a lot of expectation from me. However, IDIA gave me another chance and this time I got selected at NLUJ.

Some people told me that college life is a waste of time and that I should study at home and help my family by doing a part-time job. However, after enrolling at IDIA, I understood that college is full of resources and knowledge sharing between the kind-hearted and open-minded persons and there is no casteism in this space but some really co-operative friends, generous teachers, useful internet, a lot of books and a lot of opportunities. I am excited for the coming five years of law school.

LESSONS IN RESILIENCE



Arjun is a first Year B.A. LL.B (Hons.) student at the WB National University of Juridical Sciences. His hardwork is exemplary. He hopes to finish his studies and be a good lawyer.

I am Arjun Ghosh and I hail from a small village called Roshidpur in West Bengal. My father's name is Jiten Ghosh and he is a van driver. My mother's name is Dipali Ghosh and she is a housewife. In my village, there are many people who are engaged in agriculture.

I never thought that I will be a law student at the National University of Juridical Sciences. While growing up, I had a simple dream but IDIA has changed my idea of life. This is a great opportunity in my life which I never expected. Here I am writing about myself and my experience as an IDIA Scholar.

I was born in 1999. Everything was fine in my early life. However, when I was 6, I faced a big problem as I was not able to see with my right eye clearly.

I did not understand what was going on. My father took me to some doctors for diagnosis. They suggested that my father take me for surgery as soon as possible. I was admitted in the hospital and the doctors conducted surgery on my right eye but I could not recover. In fact, I faced the biggest problem. While earlier, I had a little bit of vision in my eyes but post the surgery, I lost total vision in both my eyes forever, due to callousness of the doctor. I had fallen in a dark ocean where the world was very dark. This was the time when I lost everything in my life. I was upset for sometime but I came back very soon to a normal life.

Soon thereafter, I was admitted to my village's school. After five years, my parents heard about Ramakrishna Mission Blind Boys Academy. This is the school where I completed my school life. I also discovered IDIA during my time in school. When I was studying in class tenth, once on a rainy Sunday some of IDIA members and IDIA student volunteers came to my school and introduced us to the idea of a career in law. I listened to them very carefully and it invoked a huge interest in my mind.

On this day, I also got introduced to IDIA Director, Arnab Roy. I told him that I was interested in studying law. He gladly responded in affirmative and requested me to appear for the INAT exam. I cleared the exam and became a part of IDIA thereafter.

According to my view, IDIA is searching for an idea in our society. I feel that IDIA is not just an association but it is my family. IDIA members and volunteers were very helpful. When I was studying in my school, they helped to prepare for the law entrance examinations. After completing my higher secondary examinations, I joined a coaching center for preparing for the Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) with the help of IDIA. Finally, I appeared for the CLAT. But my CLAT results were not so good. I got less marks. I got admitted to Gujarat National Law University. After that, I applied to NUJS in the handicapped quota and got admission. Now I am studying at NUJS and I am very happy. I aspire to be a good lawyer in the future.

FINDING HOME



Akhil is a first Year B.A. LL.B (Hons.) student at the National Law University Odisha. He considers IDIA to be his biggest support system in law school and enjoys his studies.

Hi! My name is Nenevath Akhil and I am from Telangana (Hyderabad). I completed my schooling from Komatireddy Prateek Memorial Junior College, Naglonda with 85.6% marks in my twelfth standard.

My father, Nenevath Laxma, died when I was 2 years old. Ours is a very poor family with an annual income of Rs. 60,000. My ambition was to pursue law in top law universities but my mother could not afford the high fees of the top law schools. I have a cousin in NALSAR University who was aware of my financial background and my interest to pursue law in top law universities. He told me about IDIA and connected me with IDIA NALSAR chapter. IDIA conducted a qualifying test and I cleared it and they also took an interview and thereafter I became an IDIA trainee.

IDIA provided me CLAT coaching in one of the top institutes for CLAT preparation, Career Launcher, Ameerpet (Hyderabad) and they used to also conduct doubts clearing sessions at NALSAR every weekend. IDIA Hyderabad is a very active chapter, they even used to clarify my doubts on phone calls. And then I did the hard work and my level best to crack CLAT.

I cleared CLAT and now I am in National Law University Odisha. I am very happy and want to thank each and everyone of IDIA team members of NALSAR chapter. I want to thank IDIA for giving me this golden opportunity to pursue law in NLUO. As an IDIA Trainee of NALSAR Chapter, I felt that IDIA is like a family, which takes care of us more than our real family members. IDIA always supported me in many ways to crack CLAT. I felt very glad and happy as an IDIA trainee of NALSAR Chapter and IDIA inspired me a lot, and made me believe that students of poor background and government schools can also do well like other students.

Before connecting with IDIA, I was so depressed about what to do next. After joining IDIA, IDIA NALSAR Chapter supported me in such a way that, I was not able to take a step back. My CLAT exam center was in NALSAR and I was so scared before the exam about what was going to happen.

Finally, I took the exam. The exam was quite simple as compared to last year's question paper. And I was so happy that I did well and as a result, I got into NLUO and I am very happy and satisfied with that.

Before coming to college I was scared again about how I am going to cope up with the subjects and with all the colleagues from English medium background. I even told the IDIA Odisha Chapter that I wanted to return to my hometown but the team members encouraged me a lot to stay in NLUO. It has been about two months now since I have been in college and I am very happy, comfortable and doing well in all the things. Once again I would like to thank each and every one of my IDIA family members.



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