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LAW SCHOOLS SPECIAL



RANKING
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INDIA'S BEST LAW SCHOOLS 2021

NLUs and the NEP | The Domicile Debate | The LLM Problem
Short-term Diplomas | Gaining Practical Experience | Law Placements
Legal Writing in Plain English | Careers Beyond Litigation | Study Law Abroad

OFF-BEAT: SISTERHOOD OF LAWYERS

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NLSIU STILL ON TOP

While the top four remain unchanged, GNLU Gandhinagar replaces NLU Jodhpur at t

Rank	Institute	Programme	Student Quality & Diversity (100)
1	National Law School of India University, Bengaluru	5 Yr BA LLB (H.)	97.72
2	National Law University, New Delhi	5 Yr BA LLB (H.)	87.77
3	NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad	5 Yr BA LLB (H.)	84.16
4	Rajiv Gandhi School of Intellectual Property Law, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur	3 Yr LLB (H.)	91.01
5	Gujarat National Law University, Gandhinagar	5 Yr BA/BCom/BBA/BSc/BSW LL.B. (H.)	79.89
6	Faculty of Law, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi	5 Yr BA LLB (H.)	76.29
7	Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Punjab	5 Yr BA LLB (H.)	86.25
8	The West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata	5 Yr BA/BSc LLB (H.)	89.35
9	Faculty of Law, University of Delhi, Delhi	3 Yr LLB	81.65
10	National Law University, Jodhpur	5 Yr BA/BBA LLB (H.)	72.77
11	Chanakya National Law University, Patna	5 Yr BA/BBA LLB (H.)	66.90
12	Department of law, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh	5 Yr BA LLB (H.)	36.08
13	National Law University Odisha	5 Yr BA/BBA LLB (H.)	87.19
14	Faculty of Law, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi	5 Yr BA LLB (H.)	45.20
15	Department of Laws, Panjab University, Chandigarh	3 Yr BA LLB	74.40
16	National Law Institute University, Bhopal	5 Yr BA LLB (H.)	52.47
17	National University of Advanced Legal Studies, Kochi	5 Yr BA LLB (H.)	75.41
18	Department of Law, University of Calcutta, Kolkata	5 Yr BA LLB (H.)	48.75
19	Dr. Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University, Lucknow	5 Yr BA LLB (H.)	62.81
20	Hidayatullah National Law University, Raipur	5 Yr BA LLB (H.)	68.42
21	National Law University and Judicial Academy, Guwahati	5 Yr BA LLB (H.)	71.34
22	Maharashtra National Law University, Nagpur	5 Yr BA LLB (H.)	56.25
23	Maharashtra National Law University, Mumbai	5 Yr BA LLB (H.)	76.69
24	The Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University, Chennai	5 Yr BA/BBA/BCom/BCA LLB (H.)	49.21
25	University School of Law and Legal Studies, New Delhi	5 Yr BA/BBA LLB (H.)	28.71
26	Government Law College, Mumbai	5 Yr BLS LLB (H.)	85.89
27	Department of Law, Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak	5 Yr BA LLB (H.)	19.49
28	National University of Study and Research in Law, Ranchi	5 Yr BA LLB (H.)	43.13
29	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar College of Law, Visakhapatnam	5 Yr LLB	14.38
30	Indian Law Society Law College, Pune	5 Yr BA LLB (H.)	77.64



THE DOMICILE DEBATE

Over the past few years, most states have introduced domicile quotas of varying sizes in NLUs. Students, alumni and former administrators continue to oppose this policy.

by Abhay Anand

The National Law University (NLU) Delhi last year implemented state domicile reservations after much pressure from the state government and resistance from students and alumni. The Karnataka government's attempt to introduce a 25 percent quota for its residents at the National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bengaluru, is pending



in the Supreme Court. Over the past few years, most National Law Universities (NLUs) – old and new – have freshly reserved seats for students from the states in which they are located, or taken steps to expand the quotas.

This hasn't gone smoothly. Students, alumni, former vice-chancellors and some of the best-known figures in legal education have opposed this change

arguing that large quotas based on domicile will diminish the NLUs' "national character". For several institutions, the attempts led to court cases.

In the case of National Law School of India University, Bengaluru, the Karnataka government plans 25 percent reservation while local lawyers demand 50 percent. NALSAR Hyderabad planned to offer 50 percent seats to locals, but

at present around 20 percent seats are being offered. The West Bengal National Law University of Juridical Sciences (WBNUJS) reserved 30 of percent seats for the state last year, and National Law University Odisha, 25 percent. Newer NLUs such as Himachal Pradesh National Law University, Shimla, have had quotas for local students from the start. The 25 percent quota proposed for NLU Jodhpur is yet to be implemented.

State laws, national character

The fight over domicile quotas has its genesis in the way the NLUs came up.

They were never envisioned as state institutions but as national ones – open to students and faculty from across the country. When the Bar Council of India, the regulatory body for legal education, took the initiative of setting up the first, NLSIU Bengaluru, in 1986, the law underpinning it was not framed to be state-centric either. These institutions were created as “national institutions”, intended to engage in “nation-building” from the start.

Late NR Madhava Menon, the founder-director of NLSIU had told *Bar and Bench*: “I am not in favour of it [NLSIU Bengaluru quota] for the simple reason that it was conceived as a national institution. Doing anything to dilute that would not be welcome. Even otherwise, Karnataka students are coming in on merit in adequate numbers. It was not a demand from Karnataka when it was started. If the government wanted, another campus could have been built. But NLSIU, being a model institution for the rest of the country, should remain a national institution.”

However, despite the name, the NLUs have all been established under state laws, on state land and although largely self-financed, some still receive state funds. The state governments provide the initial grant for basic infrastructure and thereafter, provide limited or no funding.

That is at the root of the conflict. Supporters of domicile reservation argue that state quotas help disadvantaged students study in reputed institutions

Domicile Reservation in NLUs

NLU	State Quota (In %)	State Seats	Total Seats
NALSAR, Hyderabad	20	24	120
NLIU, Bhopal	50	51	102
WBNUJS, Kolkata	30	38	127
HNLU, Raipur	50	80	160
GNLU, Gujarat	25	50	198
RGNUL, Punjab	10	18	180
NLU Odisha	25	45	180
NUALS, Kochi	49	29	60
TNNLU, Tiruchirappalli	50	57	114
HPNLU, Shimla	25	30	120
DBRANLU, Sonipat	25	30	120
DNLU, Jabalpur	50	60	120
MNLU, Mumbai	63	63	100
MNLU Aurangabad	62	37	60
MNLU Nagpur	62	74	120
CNLU, Patna	60	66	120
NUSRL Ranchi	50	60	120
RMNLU Lucknow	52	89	169
NLUJAA, Guwahati	48	29	60
DSNLU, Visakhapatnam	55	66	120
NLSIU Bengaluru	25 (Proposed)	(Case in Supreme Court)	
NLU Jodhpur	No state quota	--	--
Maharashtra reservation is as per the official brochure, however, the matter is in court (Maratha Quota)			
With inputs from Shubham Bhakuni			

close to home and they later contribute to the states’ development.

Former NLU administrators disagree. “State quotas will turn NLUs into regional institutions,” said Paramjit Jaswal, former Vice-Chancellor of the Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law (RGNUL), Punjab. “We already have a social reservation system in place for SCs, STs and OBCs.”

Ranbir Singh, former and founding VC of NLU Delhi and former VC of NALSAR University of Law Hyderabad, agreed. “Despite the fact that the NLUs are created by states, they were meant to have a national character. They were envisaged to only

have central reservation and not state reservation so that students from any stream, any part of the country can join. But states started to push for it and now almost all the NLUs have state quotas.”

Seats without support

Many alumni and faculty members associated with National Law Universities are not against the idea of providing seats to students from the state, but oppose reserving large sections of seats. Some also fear that the benefit of state quotas will not reach aspirants in the rural areas who need it most but will be hijacked by the affluent, urban students instead.

“Reservation is meant to target



specific inequities or backwardness and lack of equal opportunity. It doesn't dilute quality. If implemented properly with a clear vision, it is a great tool of affirmative action," said Aman Saxena, NLSIU Bengaluru alumnus and currently, an advocate at the Chhattisgarh High Court. Despite that stand, he's against the state quota at NLSIU. Explaining the opposition, he said: "It is three-fold. First, it is the best law school in the country and it must remain a national institute, its national character ought to be preserved so that every student from all parts of the country gets equal opportunity to study here."

Secondly, opponents argue that the quota is unnecessary at NLSIU Bengaluru and, if implemented, is unlikely to serve the intended purpose. "The specific inequity that the domicile reservation seeks to address is the lack of state representation in the institute and opportunities for its residents," explained Saxena. "While that may be true for some National Law Universities, it is not for NLSIU. Every year, about eight to ten students from Karnataka make it to NLS, which is about 10-15 percent of the seats. A 25 percent reservation would have just pushed in more kids from Bengaluru into law school and not students from remote parts of Karnataka like Dharwad etc."

Finally, the state is demanding too much for the contribution it makes to the institution, he said. "NLS historically has received a very paltry contribution from the state government and is completely self-funded. It receives barely Rs. 2 crore a year in grants from the state government which has now



Aman Saxena,
Alumnus, NLSIU, Bengaluru

Every year, about eight to ten students from Karnataka make it to NLS, which is about 10-15 percent of the seats. A 25 percent reservation would have just pushed in more kids from Bangalore into law school and not students from remote parts of Karnataka like Dharwad etc.

been slashed to only Rs. 50 lakh. With that kind of contribution, the state government really cannot seek additional reservation as it is not backed by the state support."

Law schools in court

In September 2020, the Karnataka High Court struck down the NLSIU Amendment Act 2020 introducing the 25 percent domicile reservation. It was contrary to the parent law and the institute was getting students primarily from the privileged communities in Bengaluru. NLSIU Bengaluru VC declined to comment.

The Calcutta High Court had also issued an interim stay on the 30 percent domicile reservation at WBNUJS, Kolkata, but later allowed it on September 30, 2020. A writ petition has been filed challenging it.

The introduction of state quota in NLU Delhi in May 2020 was also opposed in the court. A group of NLU

Delhi students even sought the Chief Justice of India's (CJI) intervention. "The quota will dilute the quality of these institutions in the long run," said a student who was part of that group and asked not to be named. "We wanted the Chief Justice to save the national character of our university. An NLU stands for high standards of legal education and it is important that it remains accessible to individuals from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, and not merely to those with the good fortune of having lived in a metropolitan city like New Delhi."

Singh said that the Delhi Government wanted 80 percent state quota in NLU Delhi, like in other Delhi Government-run institutions, but NLU Delhi's governing council rejected the proposal every time. "Delhi Government even stopped grants to NLU and the matter also reached court. Later 50 percent reservation was introduced in a phased manner," said Singh.

Saxena argues for a "rational approach". "It provides opportunities for students from states, however, there must be a rational approach," he said. "50 percent reservation straight away dilutes their national character. Certain institutes are of national importance and every student must get an equal opportunity to join them. The domicile quota must be restricted in them. In the rest, it is fair game, however, the quota must be backed with redirecting resources toward the institute by the state." □



Ranbir Singh,
Former VC, NLU Delhi

NLUs were meant to have a national character. They were envisaged to only have central reservation and not state reservation so that students from any stream, any part of the country can join



The National Law School of India University (NLSIU) Bengaluru doesn't need a change in law or court cases to become more diverse, said Vice Chancellor, Sudhir Krishnaswamy. He spoke to *Careers360* about how NLSIU, caught in a court case related to reservation of 25% seats for Karnataka students, is working on a system to make it more diverse; expanding to accommodate more students and courses; exploring collaborations with other state universities; and planning to raise funds from alumni.



'WE MIGHT TAKE A CLUSTER UNIVERSITY APPROACH'

by Abhay Anand

Q. How does NLSIU look at the issue of state quotas in the NLUs? Karnataka Government's attempt to introduce one is stuck in court.

A. The case related to NLSIU is sub-judice so I am not in a position to say anything. However, to

talk about NLUs in general, all the NLUs are different from each other academically, legally and with respect to pedagogy. What they share is a common name. As far as the domicile reservation is concerned, it depends on the state where they are operating, as well as the statutes of that state.

Q. Students and alumni argue that introducing state reservation dilutes the NLUs' national character. Do you agree?

A. I have no doubt about that. But the NLUs were developed on a highly successful model of education. So, there is no surprise that every social group wants to be a part of that success. As

a national institution, we would like to be the most diverse institution we can be by achieving all our educational goals. We don't see any contradiction between the two and we will work very actively to put in place a system that allows for this diverse representation. We are already working on this and we do not need court cases or legislation to push in this direction. In any case, we are committed.

Q. The National Education Policy suggests making all standalone institutions multidisciplinary. Are the NLUs working on this?

A. The NEP 2020 is still a policy and a policy for implementation needs to be operationalised through legislation and executive order. All the NLUs are at different levels but more or less all have multiple disciplines on offer. The multidisciplinaryity of NLSIU Bengaluru is in the fields of social sciences, economics, political science, humanities, etc.

However, looking at it and the direction of the NEP, we will strengthen that and build other competencies, as we are also exploring collaboration with other universities in Karnataka and elsewhere. It is not necessary that we will ourselves offer everything, but we might take a cluster university approach aiming to deliver a wider range of multidisciplinary competencies.

Q. What other measures are NLUs taking to implement the NEP?

A. We have already done some preliminary work in this regard. There are two things here: first is the scale of the university which includes its infrastructure and second is the multi-disciplinary character of the university. Last year we increased our intake from 80 to 120 and this year our governing body will discuss further expansion, which would include the launch of new programmes and further expansion of existing programmes.

Q. What new courses or domains are being considered?

A. It would be too early to name a programme or a domain, as several discussions are underway and we might

The multidisciplinaryity of NLSIU Bangalore is in the field of social sciences, economics, political science, humanities etc. However, looking at that and the direction of NEP, we will strengthen that and build other competencies, as we are also exploring collaborations with other universities in Karnataka and elsewhere

make some announcements in the early part of 2021. In the long run, I think NLUs will have to offer multidisciplinary degrees but initially, we will have to offer strong multidisciplinary law degrees, at greater scale.

We will develop a new programme organically as we will not start offering a new programme in a new field where we do not have competencies or presence.

We will build on our existing domains

The NEP 2020, when it is implemented, will also come with some schemes of financial support which are yet to be announced. We are hopeful we will benefit from that

– law, public policy, social sciences, humanities. If we offer brand new programmes we will collaborate.

Q. Does your institution have enough infrastructure?

A. The NLSIU has enough infrastructure for the existing number of students and probably a little more though we will need more classroom facilities as we go along. But we will need to build residential facilities for which we are at the planning stage.

Q. So, NLSIU has the land, it just needs to create the additional infrastructure?

A. Yes, our expansion plan will be within the space that we have. We might get more space but right now it will be within the existing space.


Q. How is the issue of funding being addressed by your institution?

A. The NLSIU is a self-sustaining institution and its annual expenditure is met by its annual income. We do not receive either state or central government grants. So, as we plan to expand, we will look for more areas to keep the university self-sustaining.

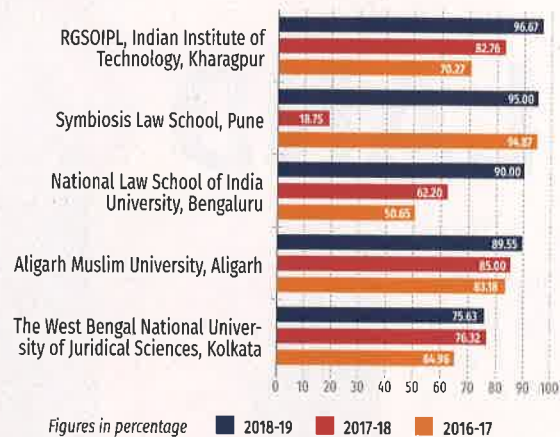
The funding gaps that we have are with respect to the capital expenditure and we will try to raise that either from private philanthropy or from the state government or the union government or any other source that we can.

The NEP 2020, when it is implemented, will also come with some schemes of financial support that are yet to be announced. We are hopeful that we will benefit from that to fill this funding gaps issue.

Q. Are you considering an endowment fund like the one Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi has set up?

A. Recently, we have made a start and we have been able to raise a good amount of money for student scholarships and we are moving in the direction of alumni fundraising in a major way. So, yes we are certainly looking in the direction of generating funding through endowments. 

PLACED IN TOP COLLEGES



Salaries in law

Average salary packages, like the placement figures themselves, change drastically from one year to the next. The Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, ranked fourth in NIRF 2020 and yet, the median salary of its students placed was Rs. 8.25 lakh, about half of the highest median salary in NIRF 2020.

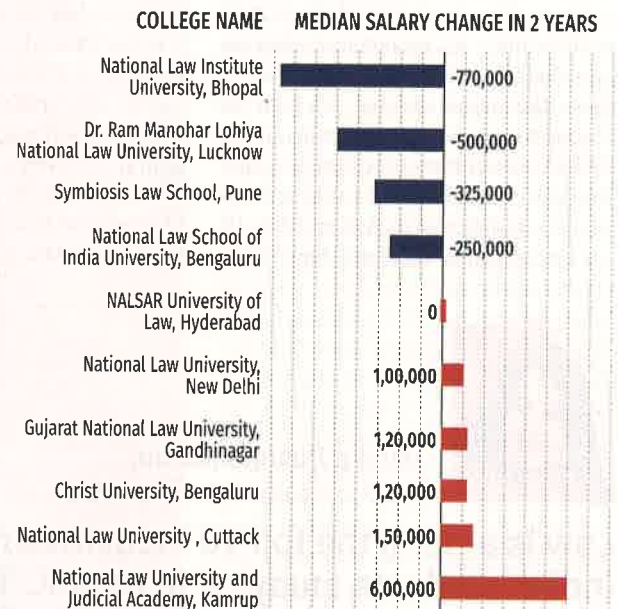
At National Law University Jodhpur, for example, the pay packages offered ranged between Rs. 8 lakh and Rs. 16 lakh per annum. Its website says that international law firms had offered packages between Rs. 28 lakh and Rs. 30 lakh per annum in the previous year. Salaries offered by big corporations have ranged from Rs. 4.5 lakh to Rs. 11 lakh per annum for the previous year.

College	Median salary of placed graduates in 2018-19 (In Rs)
National Law University, New Delhi	16,00,000
The West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata	15,50,000
NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad	15,00,000
National Law University, Jodhpur	14,50,000
National Law School of India University, Bengaluru	12,00,000
Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh	10,20,000
RGSOIPL, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur	8,25,000
Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi	8,00,000
National Law University, Cuttack	7,50,000
Gujarat National Law University, Gandhinagar	7,20,000
Symbiosis Law School, Pune	6,50,000
The Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Patiala	6,50,000

College	Median salary of placed graduates in 2018-19 (In Rs)
National Law University and Judicial Academy, Kamrup	6,00,000
Christ University, Bengaluru	4,70,000
Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology, Bhubaneswar	4,50,000
Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi	4,40,000
Dr. Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University, Lucknow	4,00,000
National Law Institute University, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh	1,00,000

Median salary has declined

Though these are the top law schools in India, there has been a decrease in the median salary their students have been getting over the last two years. Once again, there are massive changes over a very short period of time – the three years from 2016-'17 to 2019-'20.



According to the data shared with NIRF 2020, students of National Law Institute University, Bhopal had been placed with a median salary of Rs 8,70,000 in 2016-2017. But in 2018-'19, the amount dropped to Rs 1 lakh only. Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology, Bhubaneswar, and Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi, have been excluded from the list as the data collected showed zero placement in one of the years. ❏