

# Careers in Law - Dr. C. Raj Kumar (VC, O.P. Jindal Global University)

Apr 24, 2020 by [Manashjyoti #Jindal Global Law School, Sonipat](#)

**Careers in Law** - Given an option between an NLU and a private university which one would you choose? There is a good chance that you will pick an NLU, given they are considered the best law schools and also are cheaper than private colleges. But are they all equally good and does ranking always tell you the whole story, as there can be another side to it. What about the fact that private colleges can be more flexible and some are even trying to give students a world-class ambience to learn the discipline of law.

Also consider this - while [NLSIU Bangalore](#) is the #1 ranked law school in the country as per NIRF ranking, but there are other NLUs that are not that good and don't find a place in the rankings. Then as per QS World University Subject Rankings 2020 in Law, only two Indian colleges are listed in the rankings. They are [Jindal Global Law School](#) (JGLS) in the 101-150 band, and NLSIU Bengaluru which has been ranked in the 151-200 band. So, the debate as to which is the best law school in India is not yet settled.

**Careers360 conducted a live session with Dr. C. Raj Kumar, VC, O.P. Jindal Global University, on April 22 on Facebook and Youtube, to discuss on these interesting topics, as well as on a gamut of other questions posted by students on topics ranging from what it takes to build a global university, internships, different types of exams, scholarships for students, and also the impact of COVID-19, which at the moment has the entire world in its grip, on study abroad prospects. Dr. Raj Kumar also took a lot of questions on the important aspect of careers in law, a major concern among students.**

**Question: Can you tell me the story of O.P. Jindal Global University in terms of how did you imagine that a university in India could be a global university?**

Ans: I had the privilege of studying in two good Indian universities, [Loyola College Madras](#) and [Faculty of Law, Delhi University](#), after that I became a Rhodes Scholar, I went to Oxford and did my Masters in Law. In the year 1998, when I was a student at Oxford, I was hugely inspired by my experience of being a student there. I felt that the kind of institutional imagination of having a world class educational research institution with strong emphasis on faculty, research, publication, knowledge creation, It was so transformative that I maybe think the idea of how Indian higher education would be and is because I am just a graduate student. All I knew was to have studied in two good Indian universities and then after Oxford I went to Harvard Law School, for another Masters in the US.

It was even more inspiring and transformative for various reasons, including its commitment to interdisciplinarity, intellectually vibrant environment, the ecosystem that promotes higher education, and most importantly the impact higher education can have at institution building and nation building. That was when I was even more convinced about the need for doing something for India. After that I became a lawyer in New York, practiced law in New York, and primarily I was running with the dream of wanting to create a university. I spent the next several years practicing law in New York, teaching law in Japan, and then teaching law in Hong Kong, then I wrote a paper entitled “Establishing India’s first Global University”, got to meet with the then Indian Law Minister, who is no more alive, HR Bhardwaj, and he introduced me to Mr. Naveen Jindal, who is a Parliamentarian and industry tycoon and got to meet him again in October 2006 and spent a year essentially persuading him, inspiring his own imagination towards contribution to philanthropy and made him recognize the importance of higher education. In turn I made him make three commitments 1) substantial financial investment for a world-class university, starting with a law school , 2) to do it in a not-for-profit manner, and 3) to let us have the academic freedom and autonomy, institutional independence to build that. He committed to all that in late 2006, and I move from Hong Kong to India in early 2007 and the rest in some ways is history and we spent the next 18 months working on it and by September 2009, we began our first academic session with the first school of the university, Jindal Global Law School, with only 100+ students and nearly 20 faculty members.

**Question: One of the big strengths of Jindal Global University has been the quality of faculty it has managed to attract. Can you give me some kind of a number crunching of what kind of a faculty you have?**

Ans: One of the things about a university is that it can be other organizations media but the most important aspect of a great university is the quality of its faculty. In fact, many years ago the founder of the Nanyang Technological University, which is an amazing university in Singapore, its story is also very compelling barely in three decades it has become one of top 50 in the world, and its founder said there are three things important for a university - first people, second people, and third people. So the idea of universities, organisations, institutions and its transformative impact is possible because of people or faculty in a university. So we recognized that long before we were established and so the idea was to hire the most outstanding team. The second was we wanted to be global; from the day one it was. We decided from early on our faculty will not only be outstanding Indians recruited from India and around the world. So early on, we took a call that nearly 15 to 20 percent of our faculty members year on year will be people from around the world. And I am happy to report that now in the decade as we speak today we have nearly 600 full-time faculty members, and 16 percent of them are non-Indian nationals

recruited from 32 different countries, who are full-time Sonipat resident faculty and that is a very important call we took. The third of course was the kind of people who we wanted to recruit, who not only were inspiring teachers but also were prolific researchers, which connects to the larger aspect that unfortunately has been neglected to a large extent in our country and we need to address that as well. So in some ways the idea was very conscious of creating an institution ecosystem in which the faculty drives the vision of the university through their qualifications, through their experience, through their commitment to teaching, through their prolific publications, and the impact they do in the wider world of academia.

**Question: I understand the global part of it, and it comes at a cost. And you actually have a conflict which many universities face in terms of the kind of quality you want to attract and what you can pay for, and the kind of quality of student you attract who may not be able to afford the fantastic learning process that you set up.. How do you balance these two?**

Ans: It is a great question and I have sleepless nights over it because I come from a middle class family in India. My father is a professor, my mother is a government doctor, and I spent a good part of my life going to institutions which are affordable and are reasonable for middle-class people. When I came to Delhi, I could afford Delhi because it (Delhi University) was a public institution, but staying in Delhi was a big challenge for my parents to afford, even though it is much less expensive; I stayed in [Delhi University](#) hostels. So I spent a good part of my life being there and then I went to Oxford, I got the Rhodes Scholarship, I didn't spend one pound to go there, and then I went to Harvard Law School, again I didn't spend one dollar to go there, because I got 100% scholarship. So, I definitely understand and appreciate and deeply agonize about how do we create an accessible university people can afford. So, one of the things we did, and this is because of the generosity of Naveen Jindal and because the university is a not only a non-for-profit activity, it is a socially contributing initiative. It essentially means that we have tried our best year on year to create opportunities for young people who simply can't afford, to provide them with scholarships so that we can create access and opportunities.

Having said that, I do recognize that every year we lose out on students who otherwise, lets say brilliant and outstanding, simply cannot afford even when we give our scholarships. Their ability to pay is less so this is an area we need to work. I believe in the years to come we plan to expand our scholarship scheme. Right now we don't have any alumni contribution like the older universities. As that happens we do believe we can further

expand the possibility of access.. So that is an area we are working, but we do give a number of scholarships and fellowships to improve access.

**Question: Again I stick to affordability, as it has become a big question. I wish that every student has access to OP Jindal Global University. Is there a textbook case for India where good international quality universities can ensure access to good meritorious students without compromising on the global or quality aspect?**

Ans: One thing we should understand in India is that quality of any kind is expensive. So we need to recognize that there is nothing like quality that can come cheap. What we can discuss or debate is who pays for it. For example, if say an IIT or an IIM or a JNU or the University of Delhi, all of them are great universities, if they have good quality when it comes to teaching and research in terms of their faculty, it is an expensive affair. The only difference is they are public funded institutions where the state subsidises and pumps in huge resources. When it comes to private institutes where, like us, there is zero contribution financially from the state, or all our income right now is coming out of tuition fees and our philanthropic contributions that are made through endowments, then the question that comes is how do we ensure quality in that context.

Of course we have been fortunate that we have been still able to maintain a relatively affordable education level for the kind of quality we are offering. So for example, if I simply look at the cost that is actually incurred for offering education that we are giving when it comes to infrastructure, and faculty salary, and ecosystem, and all the things that we do, I probably have to charge double or maybe even triple of what I am doing. It is another matter that even what we charge now might be expensive, but quality has a price. That is why we have American universities charging you know \$ 75,000 -\$100,000 a year. By the way, these institutions even say these tuition fees that students actually pay are not even going to take care of their faculty salary. It is at best enough to take care of their operations and utilities. They run through endowments, shared partnerships at endowed research centres. So India has a long way to go in this journey. Right now private institutions in India today, without naming them I will say that a large number of them are not necessarily the ones which are committed to not-for-profit and philanthropic ideals of a good institution. And that I believe is going to be the future because that is when we can actually see where quality can be maintained and affordability can be also assured.

If you go in the other direction, which has happened in India, A) quality simply cannot be maintained because it is expensive, and B) affordability will depend upon other grey and other forms of western interests which dominate private higher education.

**Question: From Jindal Globals Perspective what are the kind of scholarships that you have that will help and enable good students to be a part of your institution?**

Ans: We have a very transparent policy regarding scholarships and fellowships. First of all, in our law school it is very transparent; the B-school has its own framework. We give our scholarships on the basis of our entrance exam performance. [LSAT India](#) is the only exam through which we select students and depending upon the performance of the candidate in LSAT India and other things to show, scholarships are given. We don't even count performance in 12th standard for scholarships. So if you are a scholarship aspirant who is watching this show, you need to focus on your LSAT India performance. In fact, the challenge about scholarships is every year they are becoming more competitive. In the first year we had around 100 applications; last year we had about 7000 applications for a few hundred seats. This year we expect about 10,000 applications, and it is going to be competitive. So, the scholarship pool will be based upon your LSAT performance.

**Question: From Akanska Shah, a science student. Is law meant for science students?**

Ans: Thank you Akansha for your question. You know, if you had asked me this question 20 years ago, I would have said it depends, with lots of people coming from different backgrounds, with social sciences dominating it. But now I have news for you. The Indian education system has had a tectonic shift in the last two decades. More and more people, young people today, coming into law are first generation lawyers. Meaning neither their fathers nor their mother have anything to do with law. In fact there are lots of people who don't have their families in the legal profession. In fact in the incoming batch of 5-year integrated, 3-year LLB, and the LLM last year, I did a simple poll and I was stunned to see that over 75% of students who joined the institute, neither of their parents are in the legal profession. It is remarkable and unthinkable a decade ago.

So, to answer your question, absolutely. And today young, more and more people, from science backgrounds are coming into the study of law. And in any case a good law school starts the study of law from where you come in. Meaning that if you have not studied history, sociology, or political sciences before, or for that matter all the knowledge you have gained is useful. I am not even slightly concerned about it (your background). Arguably, the fact that you have studied science may help you in some areas of analytical approach or may help develop your

quantitative skills or maybe useful for you to even pursue some sort of corporate lawyering, where understanding books and accounting principles may be useful. And most importantly, it may also be useful to enter into certain areas of law practice, say intellectual property rights. Knowledge of science in those areas would be actually very useful. So, in a if at all, it is going to be useful, but there is absolutely no downside.

**Question: It is a question from Nidhi and it is for her daughter. The study abroad segment this year is going through a tumultuous phase. Many parents who wanted to send their children abroad are either not wanting to or don't want to or those countries, all closed now. But the dream of studying outside India still remains. And that is where the 2+2, 2+3, 3+2 twinning programs and dual degree programs have. What is your view as far as law is concerned in terms of dual degree programs?**

Ans: First of all I want to say that this post-COVID world has created a new form of challenges for internanization based upon mobility. Mobility of all kinds is going to be affected and not just now but I believe for the next 3-5 years. Not just in terms of access to visas, and with process but the entire thinking and attitude of international universities is also changing as we are seeing today.

I believe this is the time when Indian students are better off to remain in India for a host of reasons. But as far as law is concerned, even before Corona I have always maintained that there is absolutely no question of going abroad for your fundamental basic law study. Not only would you put yourself in a weak situation as far as possible engagement with law in India in the future. Even your ability to be useful and part of a global legal profession, Indian legal education would give you a better understanding in the world than ever before. So, I have always maintained that your first law degree should be in India which can of course be followed by, what all of us didi, which is go abroad, which is also a good time when the world would have recovered.

Remember Corona is only three things. We need to find a cure, which we are nowhere near, second we need to find a vaccine, which we are nowhere near, and third we need to vaccinate 7 billion people, which we are far away from. These there end games are at least a couple of years away, so stay in India and study in India.

**Question: What is a dual-degree program and how does it pan out and benefits of the degree?**

Ans: We are very about internationalisation and we do believe that not only dual-degree programs are one possibility. We have student exchange programs. Not everybody can afford dual-degree programs, which involve payment of tuition fees. We have partnerships with Indian Law School, Arizona Law School, and the dual degree

options are expensive as well and we have to pay them. Although it is subsidized because you do half-time here, half-time there. But a large number of students adopt what is known as short-time programs, offered by Harvard, Columbia, Barkley, many other places around the world. This 3-weeks to a month long programme where they credit and get to put that in transcript. They get knowledge, experience and they gain perspectives.

Of course we also have student exchange programs. Mind it, all these programs for the incoming students in 2020 we are in good shape. The next one year is going to be pretty challenging both in terms of visa regulations, and safety and well-being of students.

Mobility based internalization has to come to a pause for sometime.

**Question: This is a question from Riten Goswami. Is it good to pursue BBA LLB?**

Ans: I want you to think like this. If you join a 5-year integrated law program, it doesn't matter whether you do a BBA LLB, or a BA LLB or [B.Com LLB](#). These are all very artificial distinctions that law schools end up doing, largely because of the regulatory body such as the Bar Council of India (BCI), which has imposed restrictions on the number of sections within a particular nomenclature. You should be thinking that over 90% of the courses in all these three programs you will end up doing the same identical law courses. Marginal distinctions that happen in the first year is in relation to slightly stronger emphasis on social sciences and humanities for [BA LLB](#) and slightly stronger emphasis in the early stages on the non-law component with regard to business, accounting, management, marketing, etc. I would say your ability to pursue whatever dreams and aspirations you have in the legal profession is no way that is reduced by the choice, comfort level. Some people who have done commerce studies in their high school might take up taking [BBA LLB](#), for the same reasons some people may decide that since they have already done that study BA LLB. So it doesn't matter what you choose.

**Question: How does a student in class 12 decide what specialization to choose?**

Ans: Three decades ago, all we had was a LLB program, which is essentially a program where you do an undergraduate degree in any discipline and after which you do a law degree. In the late 80s, University Bengaluru was the first school that started the five year law program, also known as the integrated five year LLB program, which essentially identifies high school students in the lines of medicine and engineering and you enter into the study of law. The biggest challenge for these students is two fold. One is as a high school student, may not know what you want to do. You may like a few things, you may think this is what law is, or this is what cyber law is, but for all you know it is not it. So your ability to have an informed understanding and knowledge and perspectives of what is law is unfortunately limited. So in some way I was to advise a student who is aspiring to do this I will

say think like this. If you are convinced about the facts that you make a commitment towards pursuing a law and law degree and a potentially legal profession in the future, that you have got sufficient information and knowledge and perspective that this is what it is, then you might as well do that law degree because then your chances of being disappointed after a couple of years is much low, although it happens all the time. You are making a five-year commitment, that is not a joke. If for any reason, you don't want to make that commitment, then I am a strong believer that, though our law school has both versions, you must consider doing an undergraduate degree in any discipline and if you retain your interest in law, after those three years of study, you may actually come back to law and do a [3-year LLB](#). There were the two types of scenarios that existed for a potential law aspirant. But this year we have come up with a third alternative, and I am a big proponent of this third alternative.

The third alternative is for those students who know that they want to study law. Who know that their knowledge and understanding of law will be potentially useful but are not yet convinced they want to dedicate their life to legal profession. Right now in India, accepting the one that Jindal Global Law school launched this year which is the first one and only BA honours in legal studies, offered as a 3-year undergraduate program. This is there of course in the US, the USA, Australia and many parts of the world. This is not a law degree that allows the student to practice; it is like law is the new humanities, the new social sciences. You do a bachelor of honors and then you have fairly good understanding of major areas of law, administrative law, trade law, corporate law, financial law. And then you come to do law and become a lawyer. Or you could do a masters degree, an MA or an MBA. You can branch off to a whole new range of options.

**Question: Vivan Surya. If a student gets a seat in an NLU and if he gets a seat in Jindal, how does he go about making a choice?**

Ans: There are 22+ NLUs and it is also important not to categorize the law schools and NLUs together into one basket as each one has its own history, identity, reputation, standing, contribution, etc. If I were you, and I would suggest to my children as well, you need to have a criteria to determine how to select an institution. So, I have a five-point formula that I will apply while determining which institution I would want to send my children to:



### **My five-point formula to select an institute:**

1. Quality and qualification of the faculty members
2. The commitment of the faculty members to contribute towards research and publications. Why it is important is because through this only students have the opportunity to understand the cutting-edge areas of law. Through this only the students can participate in the research centres at law school and university labs. So the second point is the research ecosystem.
3. The state of internationalisation in the law school - Not so relevant 20 years ago, To what extent the university has given students opportunities for international, including dual degree programs, short-term study abroad programs, as well as student exchange programs. The entire gamut of internationalisation.
4. The support system for internships - As India grows, the middle class and upper middle class are seeking a quality education, in a safe and sanguine and protected environment which also maintains good standards of hygiene and living. So quality infrastructure including sports, extra curricular activities, etc.
5. Support system for internship and placements and the wider network the law school has.

I would say you should apply this five-point formula to assess the quality of an institution.

Until a couple of months ago we did have the data to measure the quality of law school in India But on 4th March, QS released the global rankings of law school. They only ranked 300 law schools out of 15,000+ law schools in the world. And out of these 300 law schools, two Indian law schools rode into the QS rankings. They were Jindal Global Law School and National Law School of India University Bangalore.

### **Question: What career path apart from being a lawyer is available for a student after doing a law course?**

Ans: We have some data emerging out of our alumni also. Couple of years ago we did that survey among the alumni after graduating law. I was very surprised. Nearly 20% of our alumni after having studied law moved into other careers; they go ahead and do Masters degree, in business administrators, policy and international relations, they work for NGOs, at think tanks and research institutes, in non-law related aspects they work for the United Nations. They have become entrepreneurs. So in some ways a new-age lawyer is somebody who has got legal qualification. So, it is important to recognize why that is very helpful. First of all understanding law regulations is important for the pursuit of business and other aspects of life. Second, legal knowledge and legal education helps you to develop an analytical mind and that is why people use to study law. Third is it is important to recognize that law plays an important role for understanding the entire framework of business, or regulation or for that matter to build a rule of law society which is critical for progress. And fourth is law helps you to contribute

towards dispute resolution, which I think is an important area people will face in any context. And the fifth I think is law or legal education helps you to hone your skill sets relating to research, communication and ability to articulate and persuade people, that is power of persuasion through effective arguments.

These are skill sets which I believe are relevant for a variety of careers and walks of life. So, law study is not limited to those who want to become practicing lawyers.

**Question: Can you filter it down to the kind of job offers (not as lawyers) that students get after doing a law course?**

Ans: It is a full range of opportunities. When I graduated in law from Delhi University in 1997, most lawyers would enter into litigation, go before and appear in a district court, high court, and later the Supreme Court. And of course the judiciary was also an option. But today a lot of young graduates enter into the corporate legal sector, which is divided into at least two divisions - one is classic law firm work. Graduates work in law firms like Trilegal India, Khaitan & Co., Jay Sagar, etc. Then there are people

There is a new window that has opened. Two decades ago, the large multinational corporations or international corporations hardly had a large in-house counsel team. In fact, most of them would depend on litigating lawyers. But today you have Indian companies, be it Tata, Aditya Birla, etc. they all have teams of lawyers, and these are in-house legal counsel who are advising business heads, coordinating with the law firms, or coordinating with the litigating lawyers, and they form a large constituency which didn't exist a decade ago. So transactional legal practice divided into a path where you work in a corporate law firm, small or big. You also work as a in-house counselling capacity. So, there are three areas - one is litigation, the judiciary and the third one corporate. The fourth is, adopted by a lot of law graduates, to become think tanks.

Research institutions, a set of policy research, legal policy, and they are people who engage in legal research, and potentially would like to have advisory and consultancy types of roles in the field of law and they end up doing that. That is the third major constituency. The fourth is a whole range of non-governmental organizations NGOs, including the field of human rights, gender, or other types of areas, be it domestic or international, where you can think about Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, many other international NGOs, and domestically you can think of any Indian NGOs, who all the time are looking for lawyers. Of course you would be conscious of the fact that income earning capacity if you work in these organizations is very different. The fifth is for you to be taking in terms of intergovernmental organizations and United Nations type organizations. The UN has a large

number of lawyers working in different field offices and different offices in various capacities who use their knowledge of law. It of course has an office of legal affairs, but there are people who work in development side, refugee areas, human rights, humanitarian law, a whole range of things, including in international justice, for example, we have our students doing internships in international criminal tribunal for Rwanda, international criminal tribunal for former Yugoslavia, we have had people who do work in international criminal court. So there is a whole range of possibilities for working in the international justice arena through your legal qualification. Of course, besides these things that I have mentioned, which are more law-focused, you also can work in areas which are where the knowledge of law is useful but you are not necessarily doing law or if you are doing law, it is very specialised. For example, the media is a good area where many many lawyers, you would be surprised to know that there are distinguished journalists who happen to be lawyers. Rajdeep Sardesai is one example. There are many more young journalists who have studied law and have chosen to enter into media work. There are also people who work on public policy related work where they combine the knowledge and interesting work in law and economics, or law in politics. And there are people who work like the Niti Ayog and similarly situated organizations. So, in a way what I am trying to say is, of course academia is one thing. One thing I have also lamented is the best and the brightest of Indian lawyers were not thinking about Academia and that is changing. So that is also a career option which some of you can think of.

**Question: There are multiple law exams that a candidate can take - [CLAT](#), [AILET](#), [SLAT](#), LSAT India, etc. What is the broad understanding you must have to crack a law exam?**

Ans: I have a biased response to it, because our law school only uses [LSAT India](#). But let me tell you the general perspective which I have then come back to the specifics. One is that I have always believed that entrance examinations for admission to law schools should not be testing law, which is one of the problems which I have always felt. CLAT ends up testing law, it should not be testing one's general knowledge because this is not a quiz and it should definitely not be testing one's mathematics, which some of the exams do. The beauty of LSAT India as an exam is there are no questions on mathematics, there are no questions on general knowledge, and there are no questions on law.

**What does LSAT do?**

LSAT tests you on things that they have figured out over the last hundred years as qualities and competencies to be a good lawyer. So there are three things they have figured out: 1) logical reasoning, 2) analytical reasoning, and 3) comprehension. And that is it.

There are the three things that LSAT tests you on. One of the things about LSAT in particular is that it does not expect you to memorize facts, and that is one of the problems of these other exams which you know. LSAT expects you to have an acquired level of intelligence over your high school years which can be translated into your performance in the exam on the basis of some marginal preparation, particularly for the reasoning and comprehension part. The way I recommended people to do is take up past papers of LSAT India; now we have 10 years history and I believe that Pearson Vue or LSAC does produce some guide books which have basically the question bank of the previous years. So as far as the other tests are concerned that is why you have beeline into coaching centres and all kinds of people teaching law and students entering into law schools with a very skewed understanding of what law really is because that what really was taught in their coaching centres. All of these I do believe affect the ability of students to develop a serious knowledge and understanding of law when they join a law school. So I am a big votary of the LSAT. I invite and encourage students to take up the LSAT exam for the sheer joy of taking up an exam.

**Question: Again, this is about internships. Law is one of those options where internships are generally considered compulsory. Can you explain how the internship happens and whether it is compulsory or not?**

Ans: Let me say this. In fact, the tragedy of young people in particular is that everything they like to do they see it to be a bullet point in a CV. So, the problem with the bullet point approach in a CV is that your opportunity to learn gets limited, your opportunity to absorb gets limited, your ability to inspire is almost non-existent. So you have a situation where a lot of people who enter into a 5-year integrated law program, let's say they have 9 semester breaks, both summer and winter if you add, they end up having 10 internships. And some of them end up doing 2-3 internships in one summer break, and two-week each. So you have 20 bullet points of all kinds of fancy names around. Let me tell you this is absolutely useless. So internship obsession is hugely overrated exercise in at least law. Having said that it is absolutely important for you to pursue internships, but I am of the view that no internship should be pursued for ideally less than 2 months, but definitely not less than a month and it should be diversified. For example, if you are a law student, and you want to do internship you should diversify your internship opportunities, from a corporate contract law firm, in-house opportunity to a research institution, thinktank, human rights to a grassroots NGO, to working for a judge, to working as a researcher, and from going to a lower court to a higher court. So the whole idea of internship should be based upon diversity and pluralistic aspects of experience in the legal field which will ultimately help you to make an informed decision as to progress into your final year of your study. So, take internships seriously, but do justice to it.

**Question: Will a law qualification open up work abroad opportunities? So how does that happen, since we study Indian law?**

Ans: To a large extent when you study you do study you study Indian law, but law has also become a much more global discipline in the sense that even when you are studying law of India you will do a lot, at least we do a lot of comparative law studies, look at how different courts decide the same matter. More than that important for you to know is we are part of a common law jurisdiction. This means we are also part of at least 70+ countries which follow a similar legal system and clearly the US, UK, and Canada, these are all countries that have larger common law traditions. And because of which the principles of law including the broader adjudicatory processes associated with law, the strength of the legal system impacting the dispute resolution mechanism have a lot of similarities. So even when you study law related to India, those experiences will resonate with what happens in other parts of the world as well. Having said that the point that I think what you say is very important, that is why global education is important because today we are living in an interdependent world. In an interdependent world geography has become history and the opportunity for young law students to understand both domestic law, international law, and need to be a part of a seamless embedded institutional experience. And that is why global legal education is so central because we need to prepare our young students in law to have them a more transnational approach to practice of law. To have a focus on what we call global lawyering which they can traverse across jurisdictions with the principles of law, knowledge of law, applying across different jurisdictions, particularly when the world of business has already done that. We have Indian companies acquiring companies in the US and the UK, you have multinational US and European companies coming to India, operating business and you just show for example, a Chinese bank acquired a certain stake in HDFC, which happened a week ago. And now I believe the government of India is imposing certain restrictions on foreign acquisition. Now this is all law, I mean the heart of it is how do you regulate global businesses and to what extent your regulatory law, your securities law, your corporate law, your financial law, your trade law, your investment law, your IP law, regulates the conduct of business that is what global lawyering is all about.

**Question: Is law a great career to have at middle-age, when someone is 45-50 and he wants to pursue law and become a lawyer?**

Ans: So the empirical evidence to this shows absolutely. All they have to do is anyday go to the High Court or the Supreme Court. It is one of those timeless, ageless professions and careers. There is a famous quote by Justice Holmes who said "The life of law is not logic, but experience." So the possibility of having a vast experience in an another career and coming into law, law accepts that, embraces it and celebrates it, because opportunity is

immense for those people who do that. And clearly, I remember, the BCI sometime ago put an age restriction about people pursuing law and I think after a while they realised that it was not a wise thing to do, besides it attracting constitutional situations when it comes to imposing age-based restrictions. So I strongly support the idea of people who have had other careers before and are coming into law, that will actually enrich the legal profession quite significantly.

**Questions: Is it necessary to live on campus in that case?**

Ans: That is a very difficult question, because not only the campus part of it, it is also connected to part-time and professional studies. Right now the legal regulations in relation to this are more restrictive and I think there is a case for developing a new imagination for people who want to pursue careers in law outside the campus setting. And of course, we have our 3-year LLB program, expects the students to live on campus but I do believe that there is a very powerful case for people who are coming from other professions. Now where the complexity comes is even if, let's say, now that we are an institute of eminence, arguably we could have a presence in Delhi. We could offer let's say a 3-year LLB program in Delhi itself. But the question is are these people, can we allow part-time, non-serious type people coming in and going out type of a study, or even if it is non-residential, they end up doing serious study of law. Now my experience from the past is when we created more flexibility for law, like some of the other disciplines, there were non-serious people coming in, which lowered the quality and standard of the legal education and the legal profession.

But if serious kinds of people come into law, we need to create an opportunity for them.

**Question: How does one go about deciding specialisation in LLM program? Also, is it good to do LLM from a foreign university?**

Ans: The answer to the first question is it depends from individual to individual. The specialisation in LLM is a very important decision because it depends upon what your interests are, when you did your law degree, where your liking was, and what your future plans are. What you like and what you want to do, both are important. And law schools offer a number of specialisations, in corporate law, trade law, financial law, investment law, IP, etc. These are all residential programs. We also offer LLM non-residential programs in Environmental Law, Energy and Climate Change. This year we are starting India's first online LLM program in corporate and financial law. So that is a very important initiative to take LLM into an online platform, particularly for professionals students who may be from different parts of India, who may be working in the legal sector or not, who should of course

have a law degree, but are keen to pursue a specialized area of knowledge. And for that purpose we are launching the LLM online in corporate and finance law.

To answer the question about going abroad, absolutely if you have it and can afford it, or if you get a scholarship, and if you choose a good institution and they selected you, it is a good case for going abroad. But mind it, going abroad is not about studying LLM, it is about the experience of living and being part of a society. One of the reasons I have openly said is allow the world three to five years to fully recover from the experience, because right now most countries in the world are not prepared to give you the kind of experience you ought to have when you are pursuing an international education.

**Question: My son has completed his 10th in CBSE this year. He is interested in pursuing law. He plans to study commerce and then study law two years hence. Kindly advice.**

Ans: I also did my commerce stream after 10th and did B.Com, and then did law. So, even if he chooses 3- or 5-year, commerce stream is as good as any other stream to pursue law. The only thing I would say is that the knowledge of accountancy and economics will hold him in good stead if he decides in the future to specialize in the field of corporate law and areas surrounding corporate and financial trade. In fact many lawyers are usually weak in those areas if they have not done some prior studies or unless they don't use the opportunity to relearn themselves. So, your son is very well suited to pursue the study of law. Just encourage him in what he is doing and to do it well.

**Question: What is the scope of Masters of Business Laws vs LLM.**

Ans: First of all you should know the eligibility required for these two degrees are different. So, the Masters of Business Law (MBL) was essentially a course intended for non-law people to do a masters degree to enable them to gain some knowledge and understanding of the study of business law. As far as LLM is concerned, the eligibility requirement at least in India is to have a LLB degree. So they are not comparable in that sense. So, if you are a lawyer, as in you have a law degree already, then it would be very unique to have a compelling reason why you won't do a LLM as opposed to an MBL, because you are eligible to do it and there are good opportunities out there. If you are a non-law person, and you are aspiring to study and learn law, then you unfortunately cannot do LLM. Then your best choice is to do an MBL program. Although I must say there are not any good MBL programs. It is one of those tragedies that we have not been able to develop good MBL programs, largely because of the fact that it is neither accepted by the law people nor the non-law people. So it is a kind of an orphaned program; there is a case of reimagining it in India.

**Question: After LLB, is it important that you work for some years then do LLM, or do you do LLM straight away?**

Ans: There is no fixed rule for that. Everything depends on your personal situation, different types of people are there. For example, if there are people who have a very clear understanding of what they want to do, why they want to do this, this is their pathway. There is no need for work experience unlike in business schools, law schools don't require that. For the MBA program, many of the good business schools expect two-three years of work experience. Good law schools, top law schools don't require that. But if you are unsure what you want to specialize in or what you want to learn in the LLM program, you are unsure of your own future standing in whatever areas of, lets say, interests you might have. Then I would strongly recommend that you engage in any practice of law for two years, develop some thinking and perspectives about what is it that you want to do. And then consider going for an LLM.

**Question: If I want to serve the society, should I do a LLB and be a lawyer or should I pursue civil services?**

Ans: It all depends on your own personal aptitude and interests. There are a lot of people who believe that the most important way to serve the society is to work for the government. If that is your thinking then civil services is a good idea and law could be a paper in your civil services exam. Law will always help you if you are a civil servant because your entire life you are going to implement law, enforce law, administer law, help draft legislation, involve in executive powers, so you are basically involved with law all throughout your life.

But this argument about preserving society is not only the responsibility of the government. There are numerous ways through which you can serve society and I would like to believe that being in academia or for that matter being in media or being in litigation, being a judge, the whole gamut of aspects of law including being a corporate lawyer, so long as you are you are honest and sincere and practice law in an ethical manner and advice your corporate clients the the rights thing and not to lie, cheat and all of that, you are contributing to society in making a difference. So I personally don't think serving society to be the test. You can serve society in numerous ways but a personal interest and aptitude and inclination are very important.

**Question: I have done two years of my B.Tech, but now want to do law. Is it possible?**

Ans: See, first of all I want you to know law does provide pathway, but not like the way you are thinking where you cut short your degree and jump into an existing 5-year law program. There are only two ways you can do this. First, if you decide to cut short your degree, there are people who have done that, and joined our institute and other institutions as well. You will inevitably end up losing those two years, but no big deal, you end up



joining a 5-year law program and study law and become a lawyer. But if you can and if you are feeling so miserable, if you can finish your engineering, we every year admit a few engineers

and of course there are a few doctors as well. After your engineering you can join a 3-year LLB program. So the possibility to transfer into law exists and is now very common among people who have done various degrees, including a full range of STEM and medicine, and of course humanities and social sciences; all of them have pathways in law.

**Question: Let's assume that a university where the candidate is doing B.Tech also offers B.Tech LLB also. Can the candidate switch to the B.Tech LLB program after, say, two years of B.Tech?**

Ans: Such a possibility can exist in the future. Let me be candid with you. We have consistently maintained that transfer of students from one institution to another potentially creates issues of transparency and integrity and possible lack of uniform and measurable standards. And in that process we will end up making judgments about institutions that this particular student who studied in this university is better situated than some other. I will be candid. Every year we get requests from students from several NLUs after one year of study, sometimes after two years of study, they would like to join Jindal. And unfortunately they would have to lose that one or two years, and they have done, to come to our five-year program. So because of the fear of possible issues of potential backdoor entry to our institution, we have consistently maintained that transfer of students from institutions is not possible.

**Question: What are the humanitarian career options if you were to do law?**

Ans: We are proud of the fact that many of not just our students, but law graduates across law schools, NLUs, NLU Delhi, there are people who even today despite there are lots of allurements, end up taking public service type work. One of the things you should be prepared for is a life of posterity, not going to make a lot of money. But maybe you will be impacting and changing lives in ways that most other lawyers can't and wouldn't. So the point here is if you have some financial security provided at the family level, you are slightly better off. But there are people who have done that even without it. So the point here is it is important for you to have zeal, commitment and dedication, and ability to accept a fair amount of hardship along the way. It is also speaking truth to power could invite resistance which means that there will be occasions when you will be preparing yourselves to face challenges from other powerful and influential vested interests in society. And you need to internally prepare yourself and remain strong even in the face of such adversities. So, there is a tremendous scope for people to enter into the world of public service and we only hope that more and more people do it because

there is so much injustice in society that you need enough committed lawyers who can stand up for these people and defend their interests.

**Question: How important is communication skills to be a lawyer? And how do you acquire those skills?**

Ans: It is very important skill, but I also want to say that it is an acquirable skill. One of my inspiring figures is Shashi Tharoor, and all of us who hear him feel inspired about his own ability to communicate and impact the audience that he speaks to. So in some way, it is an acquirable skill. And I also want to say that some people are more privileged than others when it comes to school education, social upbringing, you know. For example, at our home I didn't speak English. We spoke my own language, which is Tamil and there are people who had better opportunities to learn the language and use it more effectively. So the starting point may be different, and there are people who may be differently situated when they enter a law school, but as I said, through hard work, through a lot of reading, writing and hearing and speaking, you can actually build that skill. It is one of that skill sets which can be acquired and developed and actually one can attain a high level of proficiency even in your five years of law education program. So I actually don't want to be, let's say, feel perturbed by the fact that your current abilities to communicate effectively is not as good as the people who you may hear. But then you can acquire that skill by hard work in all those areas. Actually believe it or not reading and writing helps you to speak better. So both they are all connected.

**Question: When you do a specialisation like cyber security, is the expertise only through litigation or is there a place where you can actually go and practice it?**

Ans: I would say that first of all if you are an aspiring law student, it is important for you to have the foundational set of courses in all major areas of law, and cyber law is not one. Because to understand cyber law, you should have an understanding of tout law, and you should possibly have an understanding of constitutional law, administrative law, and even international law. So it is very important for you not to get carried away by these specialisations, but to see them as opportunities to specialise after you have acquired your strength and depth in the foundational areas of law. Having said that today with artificial intelligence and robotics and machine learning, there is enormous growth and development of both information technology law and the possibility of cyber law becoming even playing a significant role.

Today we are having this conversation over zoom, but you know that zoom itself has been questioned all over the world. In fact both the US government and the government of India in many ways has stopped people using zoom from making official communication. And that raises issues relating to cyber attacks and privacy and ethics

and all those things that are relevant. So in a way, it is a great opportunity but it is a specialised area and till you attain a certain degree of maturity and evolution in your own legal profession, cyber law cannot be the only area of practice that you want to have in the future.

**Question: Closing comments from you to the students who are law aspirants and want to pursue a career in law?**

Ans: I have always believed that one can change the world through law and my own experience is that I have been deeply inspired by our Indian freedom movement, illustrious lawyers led by Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, B. R. Ambedkar, Rajendra Prasad, all of them were lawyers and they led the freedom movement. Contemporary society has seen the importance of law and the role of lawyers. Lawyers are leading the effort to contribute towards institutional and social change and social engineering. And at various levels, law and lawyers have an opportunity to make an impact. So I believe that you couldn't have thought of a better career opportunity that is not only going to be building the future of India and the world, but also help us build a society that is based upon the rule of law and that will value access to justice so that we will create a progressive humanity and that is why law and lawyers have a very big role. I also believe that the future of law is very strong, because we are increasingly aspiring to build a society where everybody will respect the law. However high you are, however powerful you are, however rich you are, the law is above you and that rhetoric of law is to be made a reality and that is possible only by young people like you who will join the legal education and in the future lead the profession.

---

---