

The Elusive Island of Excellence

A study on student demographics, accessibility and inclusivity at
National Law School 2015-16

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Foreword by Prof. Marc Galanter¹

The inscrutable future of the Indian legal profession

There are many ways in which the various legal professions throughout the world seem to be moving in the same direction. Above all they are (with few exceptions) larger, and decidedly more female, and they are growing faster than the populations of their respective countries.² Lawyer numbers seem to be increasing faster than litigation (at least litigation in “judicial” rather than administrative forums); lawyers, at least some of them, are practicing in larger units; hierarchy is accentuated, in the profession as a whole and within these units; lawyers and firms are more mobile and connected over greater geographic reach; increasingly their services are supplied to corporate or artificial persons rather than natural persons. These commonalities may induce a sense that we are witnessing a movement of convergence, from different starting points, to a single global model.

As a caution against too ready acceptance of this convergence story, I remind myself of some earlier expectations about the future of a legal profession. In mid-20th century America the profession was seen as a declining sector, falling behind as everything else grew. Observers failed to anticipate the tremendous wave of legalization that tripled the size of the American profession and multiplied the portion of GDP spent on legal matters. Again, twenty years ago the air was filled with predictions that American law firms would merge with other business services in multi-disciplinary practices. It hasn’t happened yet.

No observers of the Indian profession in the 1980s, when the National Law School of India arrived, predicted the present configuration of the legal scene. I feel confident in predicting that the profile of legal practice thirty-some years from now, when this year’s graduates are respected seniors, will be strikingly different than it is today. Do we have any clue of what changes we might expect?

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² Marc Galanter, *More Lawyers than People: The Global Multiplication of Legal Professionals*, in Scott Cummings, ed., *THE PARADOX OF PROFESSIONALISM: LAWYERS AND THE POSSIBILITY OF JUSTICE*, pp. 68-89 (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

This remarkable study, *The Elusive Island of Excellence*, gives us some tantalizing and very fragmentary hints of that future. It offers a picture of one stream of those who, we can be confident, will populate a portion of the profession's top layer. But just what the shape of that layer will be and how it will be related to the other sectors of the profession remains unknown and unknowable. The history of NLSIU itself, promoted in the 1980s to bolster the bar's public interest sector, impels us to modesty in predicting the course of institutional development. The emergence of the present phalanx of "national law schools" was not the outcome of anyone's plan.

But our inability to know the future does not mean that it is futile to pursue knowledge of the present. Making effective policy about the legal profession – like effective planning for the weather-- depends on relentless and critical deployment of our inevitably partial knowledge. It is not rare that very smart people pursue cherished illusions with only cursory commitment to developing relevant knowledge. Consider for example how sophisticated Ford Foundation planners' efforts in the 1950s and 1960s to import the "case method" of legal education floundered.³ Or consider the successive Canute-like "plans" for managing the caseload of India's courts.⁴

We know less than we think we know about the legal profession and the practice of law in India. In this setting of fragmentary and cloudy knowledge we can appreciate this latest remarkable achievement emanating from the NLSIU. The present study, so far as I am aware, is the first comprehensive demographic portrait of the student body of a law school in India. Not only does it provide a detailed portrait of an important institution, but it is richly suggestive of many important questions about the current legal scene in India and elsewhere as well. For example

- it portrays some of the ways that privilege reproduces itself in a meritocratic setting
- it makes visible strains of class and gender competition within the emergent legal elites
- it documents the turn of ambition from advocacy to law firms and in-house practice.
- it poses the question of whether the striking shift of career preferences toward law firms reflects an ongoing generational shift, changes in the make-up of the student body, or the socialization taking place in law school.

³ Jayanth K. Krishnan, *Professor Kingsfield Goes to Delhi: American Academics, the Ford Foundation, and the Development of Legal Education in India*, 46 AMERICAN JOURNAL OF LEGAL HISTORY, 447 (2004).

⁴ Marc Galanter, *From Bhopal to Saha: The Elusive Promise of Effective Legal Remedy*, 5 JOURNAL OF INDIAN LAW AND SOCIETY, 139,152-53 (2014).

The idea of a national “model” law school had been around for at least a quarter of a century before NLSIU was established.⁵ It arrived fortuitously just as India changed course from relative isolation to a “liberalization” that multiplied economic flows to and from the world outside. The new school and its companions flourished in an environment marked by striking changes in the landscape of legal practice.

Although some sectors of law practice in India have drawn closer to counterparts in the richer common law countries, that does not mean that India is destined to duplicate the patterns that prevail in the UK or US or Australia today, patterns that reflect the distinctive institutional legacy and political economy of each of these places. These patterns are themselves changing and will no doubt be decidedly different in thirty years, when the students of today are senior presences on India’s legal scene.

We simply don’t know what the world of law practice – in India or in the rich countries of the West – will be like thirty years from now. Indeed, observers of the American and British professions anticipate fundamental change in the business model of law firms and in the way in which legal services will be delivered in those countries. The trans-kinship⁶ merit-based promotion-to-partnership firm that has been the industry standard for organizing the production of legal services is changing into something else — but no one knows quite what.⁷ Although star advocates still dominate the public stage,⁸ the large firm is growing rapidly in India, at the same

⁵ G.S. Sharma, *Some Thoughts on a National Law School for India*, 3 JAIPUR LAW JOURNAL 256 (1963); Report of the Committee on the Reorganization of Legal Education in the University of Delhi (1964). For a critical assessment of such proposals, see S.P. Sathe, *Is a National Law School Necessary?*, 9(39) ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL WEEKLY 1643-45 (1974). On the long pre-history of legal education reform, see Krishnan, *supra* note 3.

⁶ On the transition from the familial to meritocratic forms, see Galanter and Palay, *op cit.*, chap. 2; Marc Galanter and Simon Roberts, *From kinship to magic circle: the London commercial law firms in the 20th century*, 15 INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION, 143-77 (2008).

⁷ Richard Susskind, *THE END OF LAWYERS* (2008); Marc Galanter and William Henderson, *The Elastic Tournament: A Second Transformation of the Big Law Firm*, 60 STANFORD LAW REVIEW 1867-1929 (2008); Larry Ribstein, *The Death of Big Law*, 749 WISCONSIN LAW REVIEW 749 (2010); Bernard A. Burk and David McGowen, *Big But Brittle: Economic Perspectives on the Future of the Law Firm in the New Economy*, 1 COLUMBIA BUSINESS LAW REVIEW (2011); Richard Susskind, *TOMORROW’S LAWYERS: AN INTRODUCTION TO YOUR FUTURE* (2013); William Henderson, *From Big Law to Lean Law*, 3 INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF LAW AND ECONOMICS (2013); William Henderson and Evan Parker-Stephen, *The Diamond Law Firm: A New Model or the Pyramid Unravelling?* (Managing Partner Forum, White Paper, Dec. 12, 2013)

⁸ On the classic shape of law practice in India, see Galanter, *The Study of the Indian Legal Profession*, 3 LAW & SOCIETY REVIEW, pp. 2001-18 (1968-69); Samuel Schmitthener, *A Sketch of the Development of the Legal Profession in India*, 3 LAW & SOCIETY REVIEW, pp. 337-82 (1968-69); Charles Morrison, *Social Organization at the District*

time that it is undergoing dramatic changes in the US and Britain and displaying strikingly new forms in China.⁹

The future of the elite sectors of the Indian profession, in which today's NLS graduates will be located-- established firms, in-house, start-up firms, the emergent layer of prestigious and proficient advocates¹⁰ -- is not predictable. Not only is each of these sectors developing along its own path, but they are inextricably bound to the numerically dominant, politically potent, and dubiously performing sector of the profession consisting of individual litigators. In light of the great tenacity of institutions—in this case the local court community of individual practitioners, a steep hierarchy with its leading lawyers—it would be a brave and foolhardy observer who would venture to predict what the Indian profession will look like in that day when today's NLSIU students are part of the senior elite of the profession.

We know there will be change in the sector that services businesses and governments—possibly the long-postponed arrival of foreign firms— but it is more difficult to imagine what will be the response to the immense challenge of providing access and legal services to the poor and unrepresented. Of course that challenge is not one that can be addressed by lawyers alone, since the long-standing and persistent patterns of delay/arrears—two sides of the same problem—reflect the deficit of judicial resources¹¹ as well as the hierarchical structure of the profession.

Courts: Colleague Relationships Among Indian Lawyers, 3 LAW & SOCIETY REVIEW, pp. 251-68 (1968-69); Charles Morrison, *Clerks and Clients: Para-Professional Roles and Cultural Identities in Indian Litigation*, 9 LAW & SOCIETY REVIEW pp. 39-62 (1974); Charles Morrison, *Kinship in Professional Relations: A Study of North Indian District Court Lawyers*, 14 COMPARATIVE STUDIES IN SOCIETY AND HISTORY, pp. 100-125 (1972); Robert Kidder, *Formal Litigation and Professional Insecurity: Legal Entrepreneurship in South India*, 9 LAW & SOCIETY REVIEW, pp. 11-37 (1974); J.S.Gandhi, LAWYERS AND TOUTS: A STUDY IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION (Hindustan Publishing Co., 1982); J.S.Gandhi SOCIOLOGY OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION: LAW AND LEGAL SYSTEM: THE INDIAN SETTING (Delhi, Gian Publishing House, 1987), Hans Nagpaul, *The Legal Profession in Indian Society: A Case Study of Lawyers at a Local Level in North India*, 22 INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF LAW, pp. 59-76 (1994); T.K. Oommen, *The Legal Profession in India: Some Sociological Perspectives*, 10 INDIAN BAR REVIEW, pp. 1 (1983); N.R. Madhava Menon, S. Rama Rao and V Sudarsen, *Legal Profession in Tamil Nadu: A Sociological Survey*, in N. R. Madhava Menon, THE LEGAL PROFESSION: A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF THE TAMIL NADU BAR, (New Delhi: Bar Council of India, 1984) .

A very useful history of the pre-Independence period is Pande Nawal Kishore Sahay, *A Short History of the Indian Bar* (Patna, 1931)

⁹ Sida Liu, *Big and Innovative? The Future of Law Firms (Not Only the American Ones)*, JOTWELL (Oct. 2, 2012) available at <http://legalprof.jotwell.com/big-and-innovative-the-future-of-law-firms-not-only-the-american-ones> (documenting emergence of large firms with strikingly different patterns of growth and collaboration).

¹⁰ Marc Galanter and Nick Robinson, *India's Grand Advocates: A Legal Elite Flourishing in the Era of Globalization*, 20(3) INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION, pp. 241-65 (2013).

¹¹ Cf. Moog's characterization of India's lower courts as "permanently failing organizations" that succeed in maintaining themselves while perpetuating practices that frustrate their ostensible goal of prompt and effective dispute

This study is not only an important addition to the small number of empirical studies of legal education in India.¹² It reminds us of how much we don't know and like all good research it piques our curiosity. How do these findings about the student side relate to matters of faculty, curriculum, pedagogy, and intellectual content? And what difference does it make? Are NLS grads actually doing things differently than graduates of the earlier or other law schools? The authors provide us with a rich example of inquiry that, if cumulatively developed, could enable us to comprehend the dynamic changes taking place in India's legal world. Such knowledge might even inform policy about legal education and the legal profession as they lean in to an unknown future.

resolution and vindication of rights., Robert S. Moog, *Whose Interests are Supreme? Organizational Politics in the Civil Courts in India* (Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 1997) Moog takes the notion of permanently failing organizations from Marshall Meyer and Lynne Zucker, *Permanently Failing Organizations* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1989)

For a recent assessment of the problems of these courts, see Krishnan, Jayanth K. and Kavadi, Shirish Naresh and Girach, Azima and Khupkar, Dhanaji and Kokal, Kalindi and Mazumdar, Satyajeet and Nupur, Ms. and Panday, Gayatri and Sen, Aatreyee and Sodhi, Aqseer and Shukla, Bharati Takale, *Grappling at the Grassroots: Access to Justice in India's Lower Tier* 27 HARVARD HUMAN RIGHTS JOURNAL (2014) available at <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2297152>.

¹² E.g., Russell B. Sunshine and Arthur L. Berney, *Basic Legal Education in India: An Empirical Study of the Student Perspective at Three law Colleges*, 12(39) JOURNAL OF INDIAN LAW INSTITUTE (1970); T. Bastedo, *Law Colleges and Law Students in Bihar*, 3 LAW & SOCIETY REVIEW, pp. 269-293 (1968-69).

Executive Summary

The NLS Diversity Census 2015-16, an independent initiative by students, began out of curiosity to understand the demographics, accessibility and inclusivity at NLS. Data was collected regarding the social and economic background of students and performance factors such as CGPA, participation in activities such as moots, debates and committees and future plans. The report that follows highlights the student demographics of the five undergraduate batches (Batch of 2016 to Batch of 2020) and the effect that the socio-economic background of students has on their performance in NLS.

COVERAGE OF THE CENSUS

- 389 out of 397 students in current five batches were covered during data collection, i.e., 97.9% of students were covered. Additionally 8 students who had joined NLS prior to 2011 were also covered.
- 3 students were unavailable for data collection and 5 abstained from filling the questionnaire citing privacy concerns.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- **Gender:** 185 students identified themselves as female (46.6%) and 212 identified themselves as male (53.4%).
- **Religion:** Hindus constitute 81.86% of the student population. Muslims who are more than 14% of the national population, constitute not even 1% of the student body. There are only 3 Muslim students in NLS. Amongst total CLAT aspirants, Muslim students are hardly 2.75%.
- On the other hand, Jains being the smallest minority in the country (0.37%), are the second-largest religious group in NLS (5.04%). Composition of Sikhs, Christians and Buddhists is nearly twice their national composition.
- **Caste:** About 59% of NLS is composed of upper caste students, 2.3% OBCs, 14.9% SC and 7.1% STs. 10.7% reported themselves as not having a caste, while 6% reported themselves as not being aware of their caste.

- **Sexuality:** 11 students identified themselves as being queer, while 4 stated that they are unsure about their sexual orientation. Rest (96.2%) identified themselves as straight.
- **Home town/Village:** Highest number identified Bangalore (29) as their hometown followed by Lucknow (28) and New Delhi (24). Highest number identified Uttar Pradesh as their home-state followed by Maharashtra and Karnataka.
- The number of students coming from Tier 1 cities has been consistently falling over the batches, with the batch of 2016 having 45.21% students from tier 1 cities, compared to batch of 2020 having about 28%. There has been a corresponding increase in students coming from tier 2, 3 and 4 cities. Overall, 34% come from tier 1 cities, 42.93% from tier 2. Only 5% come from tier 4 places.
- **Financial:** Almost 54% of students have an annual family income of above 12 lakhs. Less than 7% have annual family income below 3 lakhs.
- While most income groups have representation of men and women proportional to their populations, with women having an overall higher average income, amongst those earning below 3 lakh in income, the number of males is nearly double the number of females.
- **Schooling:** Only 13 out of 397 students did their high schooling from non-English medium schools.
- **Family Education History:** 26% of the students came from families where more than 3 generations before them were college graduates. 77.8% had at least one person from their grandparents' generation who had been to college. A mere 6 students are first generation college goers in their families.

CASTE

- While the average income among Brahmins, other upper castes and no caste students is between 20.8-21.5 lakh per annum, it falls to Rs. 12.5 lakhs in the case of SCs and to Rs. 15.8 lakhs in the case of STs.
- 90% of upper caste students have both parents having an undergraduate degree. The distribution is more varied in the case of SC/ST students.
- 34.2% of Brahmin students have had more than three generations of graduates in their families. In comparison, only 15-17% of SC/ST students come from a similar background. 38 students or 43.18% of students from SC/ST background are the first generation in their

families to go to college. The overall percentage of students who are first generation graduates is 22.67% - nearly half of that in case of SC/ST students.

- Across caste groups, the proportion of females coming from tier 1 and 2 cities are higher, males from smaller towns are much more likely than females to qualify for admission in NLS.

DIVERSITY AT NLS

- The female-to-male sex ratio has fallen over the five batches. The senior-most batch has 52% females compared to the junior-most batch having 39% females.
- 17.8% of the students (i.e., 71 students) in NLS at present are from Tier 3 & 4 towns. From forming only 13.6% of batch strength in the senior-most batch, their share has nearly doubled (23.1%) in the junior-most batch.
- 22.7% of students from Tier 4 towns fall within the lowest income bracket, as compared to just 6.6% of the total population. Likewise, the share of students with above Rs. 36 lakhs per annum family income is nearly double amongst those from Tier 1 cities (28.2%) of their share in total population (14%).
- Based on one's annual expenditure on schooling and the category of high school attended, only 77 students were identified as not having received quality schooling (categorised on basis of annual high school fees and self-perception of school type) when compared to their peers. 201 students were identified as having received quality schooling.
- The gender distribution is skewed amongst those who had not received quality schooling (77)- with 49 of them being Males and 28 being females .The distribution is almost equal in the other group (201) with females (104), being marginally more than males (97).
- Aside from a correlation with caste, the educational history of a family has a relationship with family income. 36.4% (32) of 1st and 2nd generation college-goers belong to income groups which earn less than Rs. 6 lakhs per annum. Whereas nearly 75% (67) of students who have more than three generations of graduates, come from families which earn more than Rs. 12 lakhs per annum.
- There has been a steady increase in students coming from the below Rs. 3 lakhs per annum income group. In the senior-most batch there is just one such student, whereas the junior

most batch has 11. Likewise the population of those coming from the above 36 lakhs income group has also declined steadily.

- More than 50% of the NLS population classified their school as ‘Reputed Private’ or ‘Elite’ schools. Almost 60% of the students paid more than Rs. 30,000 per annum for their secondary school education.
- Less than 10% of students at NLS are first or second generation learners, with a majority of such learners coming from non-English medium schools. The connection between income and schooling is also evident, with students from higher income families attending better schools and gaining admission in NLS in larger numbers.

PERFORMANCE IN LAW SCHOOL

- Overall average CGPA of four batches excluding first years is 4.7 out of 7.00.
- All 29 students with CGPA above 6.00 did their schooling from tier 1 or tier 2 cities, or abroad. 21 amongst them are women. Their average family annual income too is around Rs. 29.3 lakhs- much above the overall average of Rs. 21 lakhs and nearly double of those with CGPA between 3.00-3.49 whose average family income is Rs. 15.5 lakhs per annum.
- 50% of SC and 65% of ST students have CGPAs below 4.00, compared to less than 20% amongst Upper Caste Hindus.
- And similarly, while nearly half of Upper Caste Hindus have CGPAs greater than 5.00, less than 10% SCs fall in that bracket.
- 1/4th of the students have neither debated nor mooted, not even within NLS. A little over half have never debated and 36% have never mooted. But there are 66 (21.5%) students who have represented the institution in both moot and debates competitions (at national and international levels).
- More than half of those who have never debated nor mooted are women. 28% of them are SC and 14% of them are ST. Notably, the average annual income amongst this segment (Rs. 16.3 lakhs) is far below the overall average of Rs. 21 lakhs per annum.
- The students who have represented in both moots and debates mostly have done their schooling in big cities (Tier 1 or 2) or abroad. There are only 3 SC and 1 ST student among this group. Their average income is higher than the rest of the student population.

- The students who represented NLS in international rounds of both moots and debates have an average annual income of Rs 28.7 lakh per annum which is higher than the average for the total population which stands at Rs 21 lakh per annum.
- Amongst the 29 people in the lowest CGPA bracket-3.00-3.49, 31% are SC and 27.6% is ST. There are 17 males and 12 females. 35% of them come from small cities and towns (Tier 3 and 4), compared to 16.6% in the overall population. The proportion of first or second generation college goers who are also from SC/ST background in this CGPA bracket is three times of their proportion in total population

SCHOLARSHIP POLICY

- Only 18 students (apart from Aditya Birla Scholars) reported that they are recipients of financial aid/scholarship. However, there has been a steep rise in the number of applicants following the introduction of the scholarship policy in 2015. While only 10-15 students usually applied earlier, 41 students applied after the new policy was announced.
- Aditya Birla Scholarship which doesn't take into account need or financial position of the student has 13 recipients at NLS. Out of them, 11 come from families with more than Rs. 12 lakhs annual income and all of them come from big cities. None of them belong to families with less than Rs. 6 lakhs annual income nor are from SC, ST or OBC backgrounds.

PARTICIPATION IN STUDENT BODIES

- A total of 270 students, or 68% of the student body said that they have been part of an Activity Based Committees (ABCs) at some point of time in Law School, while 27% of the students said that they have been part of a Hostel Committee. 69% of the students have never applied for a hostel committee as compared to a mere 32% who have never applied for an ABC.
- Above an income level of 6 lakh per annum, every income group seems to show a positive correlation between income with participation in ABCs. Those from below 6 lakh per annum income groups show much less participation in ABCs than their peers. 79% of those from above 36 lakhs income bracket have been part of ABCs, compared to just 15% in the below 3 lakh per annum group.

- Students from small places and those who attended government schools are much less likely to participate in committees than their peers. Hostel committees, however, show a greater participation of students from non-Tier-1 cities than from their peers.
- The rejection rate among SC/ST applicants for committees is much higher. While around 12% of General Category students said that they have never been in a committee despite applying, 24% of SC and 16% of ST students said the same.

REPRESENTATIVES

- Convenors and Joint-Convenors of ABCs and Journal have in almost all cases been upper caste students. Amongst 60 convenors and joint-convenors of ABCs, only 3 belong to SC/ST backgrounds. None from SC/ST background has ever headed a Journal at NLS. Those from big city backgrounds are much more likely to have become convenors. On other hand, hostel committees whose heads are generally appointed by administration, showed no such trends.
- Class and Library representatives also seem to be more represented by students from relatively wealthier and affluent socio-economic background. They have better average CGPAs and have participated more in moots and debates than the rest of the student population.

FUTURE PLANS AND OPTIONS

- A law firm/consultancy job is the most preferred career choice. Among the 146 people in the college who picked this option, slightly more than 60% were women. CGPA has a direct correlation with future plans. Only 9% of the students with CGPA below 3.5 prefer law firm job as career option, compared to more than 50% amongst students with CGPA over 5.00.
- The percentage of students from tier 1 and 2 cities who prefer law firm jobs is almost double the corresponding number from tier 3 and 4 cities. Civil services is the dominant choice as future option amongst the latter group.
- Only 27% of Scheduled Caste respondents and 14% of Scheduled Tribe respondents chose Law Firms as their preferred option. For both these groups, the most popular career choice

is joining the Civil Services. Civil services are also the most preferred option amongst the below 3 lakhs per annum income group among general category students as well.

- Overall, 18% of students want to litigate. 11.9% of women and 22.6% of men preferred this option, clearly indicating a gender divide.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS AT NLS

- We recorded 95 responses in a survey on Institutional Peer-to-Peer support systems at NLS with representation across batches and CGPA groups.
- The survey indicated that students with lower CGPAs generally found the student run Academic Support Programme to be less effective as compared to their peers with higher CGPAs. The survey indicated that a large proportion of students felt that ASP must not restrict their activities to a few sessions right before the exam and must provide more continuous and individualised support to students who may be struggling with their academics.
- The survey also revealed that several students did not share a significant relationship with the mentors allotted to them. Quite a few reported as never having met their mentors. Although great effort has been put into choosing the right mentors for students based on their background and interests, there is currently no proper system of feedback which allows for better monitoring of the effectiveness of the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Due to increasing diversity among incoming batches every year the students no longer come from homogenous backgrounds. The need for introduction of a mandatory English language skill-building course in the first year must be considered as it is imperative to make NLS into an equalising platform. The same would also be in compliance with BCI requirements.
- 2) Mandatory representation of differently abled students in hostel committees must be considered to counter their negligible representation in all student bodies and it would help draw attention to the infrastructural needs.

- 3) The Academic Support Programme committee must consider expanding its current functioning and reverting back to its original mandate to provide more individualised attention to students who require extra assistance with their academics.
- 4) Evolving a mechanism for regular evaluation of whether appointed mentors have been beneficial to the first year students alongwith taking inputs from the faculty regarding which students specifically need focused mentoring should be looked into.
- 5) The financial assistance policy must for debates and moots should espouse and reflect the need based principle. Administration should ensure that such policy is adopted and followed. Establishment of permanent corpus for financial assistance on lines of scholarship fund, as envisaged by 2015 scholarship policy, should be considered as well.
- 6) The current Scholarship Policy must retain its focus on only need based scholarships. Active efforts must be taken to increase the corpus fund by approaching alumni and like-minded institutions to contribute to the same.
- 7) The examination rules disqualify a student who has ever appeared for a repeat examination from being eligible to receive gold medal at convocation. This policy is clearly unjust as it discriminates against and demoralises those students who may have initially performed badly, but improve in academic performance over years. Instead of absolute bar against appearing for repeat examinations, a reasonable cap should be considered.
- 8) First years are selected by student committees in the first trimester itself. This leads to students who had better schooling and in turn better opportunities making it to committees in disproportionately high numbers. Shifting the selection process to later in the academic year ought to be considered, as it would help provide opportunities to everyone to show their interest and work for the committees of their choice.

1. Introduction

1.1. History of NLS:

National Law School of India University was established through the National Law School of India University Act, 1986, an Act passed by the Karnataka Legislature. It is widely regarded as the top law school in India.¹³ Admissions to the University were initially conducted through an all India entrance exam of the University itself. In the year 2008, the Common Law Admission Test was introduced with admissions to most National Law Universities being secured through the all India Exam.¹⁴ NLSIU was the first of the many National Law Universities that are being established today. It ushered in a new model of legal education that was a marked shift from the poor quality of legal teaching and law schools that had been prevalent till then.

The rise of NLSIU and the other NLUs today needs to be understood in the context of the changing economic climate of India in the early 1990s. There have broadly been three phases of reforms in legal education in India. The first phase which began in the 1950s and lasted till the mid-1960s introduced nationally relevant content and the idea of professionalism in legal education. However, the quality of education was poor and law schools few in number.

The Second Phase of reform began with the adoption of the Advocates Act, 1961 and the establishment of the Bar Council of India which was entrusted with the task of promoting legal education in India. This phase saw an emphasis on curriculum development and a focus on upgrading the quality of teachers. This phase also saw wider discourse and self-reflection on the nature of legal education in India which facilitated the initiation of the third phase which began in the mid-1970s and ended with the establishment of the National Law School. The period was dominated by socialist agendas that were dominant at the time. The National Law School was thus created with the idea of using the law as a tool of social development.¹⁵

¹³ See, Aravind Gowda, *No Challenge to this Law*, INDIA TODAY (19 June 2015), available at <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/best-college-law-nlsiu-institute/1/445562.html> (Last visited on: 28 February 2016)

¹⁴ See *Common Law Admission Test on May 11*, THE HINDU (15 January 2008), available at <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-educationplus/common-law-admission-test-on-may-11/article1438438.ece> (Last visited on: 28 February 2016).

¹⁵ Interview with Prof. Madhava Menon, (NLSIU, Bangalore, 21 December 2015).

It was a few years before the liberalisation reforms were initiated that the Bar Council of India approached Professor Madhava Menon, with the vision to establish a premier law University on a new model, which had been lacking in the country thus far. The original vision behind the creation of the National Law School was for the school to produce a small group of highly trained law graduates that would further go on to litigate, enter the civil service, judiciary etc. A focus on social development mandated an inter-disciplinary approach which led to the creation of a five year B.A.,LL.B. program.¹⁶

For the first six years since the inception of the institution, NLSIU remained closed to corporates and firms with none being allowed to conduct recruitments in the campus. The students however, conducted placements independently outside the campus without institutional support. Ultimately, the University relented and allowed campus placements to be conducted. The Bar Council and the Judiciary in the initial years expressed disappointment at the turn the law school had taken with graduates of the school increasingly choosing corporate jobs over litigation.¹⁷ The model was however, largely considered a success with the National Academy of Legal Studies and Research (NALSAR) being established in Hyderabad in 1998 within 10 years of the establishment of NLSIU.¹⁸ Subsequently more than 17 National Law Universities have been established in different parts of India.¹⁹

In 1993 the University itself had begun on a task of self-reflection, with several initiatives being taken up for academic reform by the faculty and administration. In 1996, an expert panel was constituted consisting of Prof. Marc Galanter, Prof Savitri Goonesekere and Prof William Twining, to study the working of the University and suggest reforms.²⁰ The period that followed this, under Prof Mohan Gopal's vice-chancellorship in the early 2000s, saw heightened discussion

¹⁶ Jayanth K. Krishnan, *Professor Kingsfield Goes to Delhi: American Academics, the Ford Foundation, and the Development of Legal Education in India*, 46(4) THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF LEGAL HISTORY 447 (October, 2005).

¹⁷ Interview with Prof. Madhava Menon, (NLSIU, 21 December 2015).

¹⁸ Created by the National Academy of Legal Studies and Research Universities Act, 1998.

¹⁹ <http://www.barcouncilofindia.org/about/legal-education/national-law-universities-2/> (Last visited on: 28 February 2016).

²⁰ Report of the Expert Panel on the National Law School of India University (1996) [unpublished, archived at the National Law School of India University].

on academic reforms and the release of a vision statement suggesting a way forward for the University.²¹

While in its early years, most students had parents in the legal profession, the increasing success of the school and perhaps the job security offered by corporate jobs began to attract students from varied backgrounds. The culture and education at the University has also been impacted by the increasing popularity of corporate law. Today parents of only about 27 students (6.8%) presently at NLS are in legal profession. Along with popularity, another factor which is noted to have had considerable impact was changes in fee structure. The first increase in fees was vehemently opposed by the student body, however due to financial crunch, NLS had to implement it. There were times when faculty were going home on half-pay and Madhava Menon, fearing closure of university, had to write to parents of students to contribute financially. Until 1999, NLS had a sliding scale fee structure in place, a student was charged fees as per the paying capacity of parents. It ranged from Rs. 5000 per annum to Rs. 25,000.²² . During the early 2000s two students, Mr Rohit De and Mr. Sandipto Dasgupta, conducted a study similar to this one. Although the data collected could not be digitized and computed, their inputs help to trace the changing demographics of that period. There was an upsurge in students from upper-middle class and northern states and Hindi started to become increasingly common in the campus.²³

Later, when CLAT was introduced in 2008, student demographics changed even more. The high proportion of students from metro cities began to decline as more and more students from other cities and towns started to gain admission in NLS.²⁴ English usage, which had hitherto been dominant, paved way for greater use of Hindi in casual conversations. These changes in last few years have been reflected in our study as well.

²¹ Prof. Mohan Gopal, *New Vision for Legal Education in the Emerging Global Scenario* [Unpublished, archived at the National Law School of India University]

²² Interview with Prof. Madhava Menon, (NLSIU, Bangalore, 21 December 2015).

Interview with Prof. Sarasu Thomas, batch of 1995 (NLSIU, Bangalore, 15 December 2015).

Email interview with Dr. Shammad Basheer, batch of 1999 (16 February 2016).

²³ Email Interview with Prof. Rohit De, batch of 2005, (29 December 2015).

²⁴ Email Interview with Sakshi, batch of 2014, (2 December 2015).

Email Interview with Divy Tripathi, batch of 2015, (30 November 2015).

These casual observations and opinions, made by alumni and faculty, are shared by authors of this study. Logically, the growing popularity of NLS and legal education in general coupled with the exponential growth in CLAT-takers should result in a demographic that is very different than the exclusive demographic that existed in the 90's and early 2000s. We felt that this assumption deserves to be tested empirically.

1.2. Conceptualising and executing Diversity Census 2015-16:

I (Chirayu Jain, batch of 2017) started working on this project in June 2015, and readied the first draft of the questionnaire by 19th July 2015 which carried the title “Caste Census of National Law School”. Around this time, I was joined by my two immediate seniors (Spadika Jayaraj and Tanmay Dangi, batch of 2016).

We sent across the questionnaire for review to several professors and researchers at the Centre for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policies, NLSIU (CSSEIP) and Increasing Diversity by Increasing Access (IDIA). Several rounds of modifications followed. We conducted two pilot rounds-and based on the responses, final alterations were made and the questionnaire was finalised on 20th August.²⁵ Thereafter we recruited 14 volunteers (including Harjas Singh, batch of 2020) from different batches and, between 27th August and 19th September we finished the data collection process covering 397 students in total.

During data collection, each volunteer was assigned roughly twenty individuals from whom he/she had to get data entered into a Google Form version of the questionnaire. Precaution was taken to ensure that volunteers were assigned individuals belonging to different batches in order to prevent any scepticism or hesitation on part of the individuals. In most cases, volunteers were assigned individuals of the same sex as them, so that the data collection process could be carried out inside respective hostels with ease. Each volunteer went up to each and every individual and got them to fill in the data in the Google Form opened in volunteer's laptop. This way, it was possible to ensure that every student who was willing filled in the form and there were no duplications. Few fifth

²⁵ See Appendix 1 for the copy of the questionnaire.

year students who were undergoing an exchange program at universities abroad at the time, were briefed about the project and were sent the link to Google Form via email.

While data was being collected, the spreadsheet where all the data was recorded was accessible only to Chirayu Jain and Spadika Jayaraj. It was taken down from the internet as soon as the data collection process was over. Volunteers were occasionally contacted by the abovementioned to seek clarifications from the individuals, as and when we spotted discrepancies in data. Finally once the data collection process was completed on 19th September, volunteers were given lists of clarifications needed following which they reached out to the assigned individuals and got back by first week of October 2015.

Thereafter on the basis of participation in data collection process and prior field work experience, the team to co-author the final report was formed on 4th November 2015 consisting of Chirayu Jain, Spadika Jayaraj, Sanjana Muraleedharan and Harjas Singh.

The data which we ended up collecting was a huge minefield. Since none of us had prior knowledge of statistics, we approached researchers at CSSEIP and Vivek Raj Anand (postgraduate student of public policy, batch of 2017) for assistance. CSSEIP graciously organised a few classes in descriptive statistics for us, and around same time, we began the process of sorting the data. With the help of Prof. Jayaram, we finalised the structure of the report as follows:

Part A: Looking at the question of accessibility to NLS by understanding and analysing background factors and demographics of students

Part B: Examining inclusivity within NLS, how background impacts performance, participation and future options.

Aside from working on data interpretation and writing the report, between November and February 2016, we conducted interviews with 29 students from diverse backgrounds, convenors and joint convenors of student committees, past and present faculty and alumni. With the help of Vani Sharma (batch of 2019) and Abhishek Kumar (batch of 2020), we conducted two additional surveys regarding Academic Support Programme and other support mechanisms at NLS, and

perceptions amongst students regarding influence of background on performance and participation.²⁶ We received 95 and 81 responses respectively for both the surveys, across batches.

To see if NLS was unique unto itself, or if the student demographics here were symptomatic of larger trends in legal education, we tried to conduct similar diversity surveys in other five-year law colleges as well. We managed to get 912 responses from 16 such colleges, mostly NLUs. Unfortunately, barring a few of these colleges, we were unable to get data that was equitably represented across batches and admission categories.

We presented some of our findings on the Inaugural NLS Alumni Day held on 9th January 2016. It helped to put us in touch with Harish Narasappa from batch of 1996, who also heads Daksh India. He assisted us by cross-checking our data analysis and inferences in the report.

The first full draft of the report was completed on 16th February 2016. The report was finally reviewed by several people (*See Acknowledgements*).

1.3. Summary description of data:

Out of 411 students who joined from 2011 onwards, fourteen had already left college by the time Diversity Census 2015-16 was being undertaken. Three were not available during the relevant time, and five abstained from participating citing privacy concerns. We were therefore able to collect data of 389 individuals who joined from 2011 onwards and thus managed to record data of 97.9% students belonging to present five batches at NLS (Batch of 2016-Batch of 2020). Further we managed to record data of eight students who joined NLS prior to 2011, thus bringing up the total number of responses to 397.

Year of joining:	Original Strength:	No. of students who have dropped out:	Total Covered:
2011	86	8	73
2012	80	1	77
2013	83	2	80
2014	80	3	77
2015	82	0	82
Before 2011*	-	-	8
Total:	411	14	397

²⁶ See Appendix 2 & 3 for the print copy of questionnaire.

Table 1-1: Distribution of respondents as per the year of joining NLS

**These students joined NLS prior to 2011 and continue to remain students at NLS as they have courses they have not yet cleared. While in total we were able to identify 17 such students who had joined prior to 2011 but due to inability to meet academic requirements, they are still part of student body. We were able to cover eight belonging to this group in the Census.*

As per the Prospectus of NLS, the college admits 80 students every year to its undergraduate program. Out of those 80 seats, 5 are reserved for Foreign Nationals, 12 for Scheduled Castes, 6 for Scheduled Tribe, 2 for Persons with Disabilities and 55 for General. However as it could be observed in Table 1-1, in three out of five admission years, the total number of students enrolled exceeded 80. This is because the Karnataka High Court has till date been unable to pass the final orders regarding the PILs filed seeking reservation for students with Karnataka domicile.²⁷

Table 1-2 shows distribution of students who had got admission as per various categories.²⁸ It also indicates how a disproportionately large percentage of SC/ST students (6.12%) tend to drop-out compared to students from General Category (1.05%).²⁹

Admission Category:	Those who were covered in the census:	Those who have left college:	Those who abstained/ could not be reached:
Foreign Nationals	21	4	0
General	279	3	5
Persons with Disabilities	7	1	1
Scheduled Castes	59	4	2
Scheduled Tribes	31	2	0

Table 1-2: Distribution as per admission category

²⁷ *NLSIU Told to Consider Domicile-Based Reservation*, THE HINDU (9 October 2011) available at <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-karnataka/nlsiu-told-to-consider-domicilebased-reservation/article2522311.ece> (Last visited on: 5 March 2016).

²⁸ Interestingly, the table indicates how students from foreign national, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes background are much more likely to drop out than the general category students.

²⁹ Percentage of drop-outs amongst Foreign Nationals is highest at 16%. Amongst PWDs it is 11.1%

PART A-

ACCESSIBILITY

2. Student Demographics

2.1. Social Background:

Amongst 397 of respondents, 185 identified themselves as females (46.6%) and 212 identified themselves as males (53.4%). Options were not given for this question, respondents were free to write any response. None identified as others or third gender.

The next question which we asked was ‘What is your family religion?’ As expected Hindus formed the majority-being more than 80% of the total population. However, the next biggest group was of Jains followed by Christians, Sikhs and Buddhists. This trend is visible across all law schools, with Hindus forming more than 80% of the batches which joined all other law schools (NALSAR, NLU-D, NUJS, NLU-J and RMLNLU) in 2013-14. All the law schools combined had more than 87% Hindu students joining their ranks that year.³⁰

Religious group:	National Census 2011:	NLS Diversity Census 2015-16:
Hinduism	79.80%	325 (81.86%)
Islam	14.23%	3 (0.76%)
Christianity	2.30%	17 (4.28%)
Sikhism	1.72%	15 (3.78%)
Buddhists	0.70%	11 (2.77%)
Jainism	0.37%	20 (5.04%)
Mixed*	-	4 (1.01%)

Table 2-1: Percentage-wise break of major religious groups

**Mixed refers to those students who declared that multiple religions are followed in their family.*

If we look at these numbers in comparison with the figures released as per National Census 2011 (Table 2-1), it shows a grim picture of social realities. Muslims who are more than 14% of the total population of the country, comprise less than 1% of the student body. Conversely, Jains, despite being the smallest minority in the country, are the second-biggest religious group in NLS. The percentage of Hindus corresponds roughly to the national percentage, but for Christians, Sikhs and Buddhists it is at least double the national composition. Jains or Christians form the second largest

³⁰ IDIA, *IDIA Diversity Survey 2013-14: Top 5 NLU Summary* (2015), available at http://idialaw.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Top5_Summary.pdf (Last visited on: 12 January 2016).

Also see IDIA, *IDIA Diversity Survey 2013-14: Other 4 Premier NLU Summary* (2015), available at http://idialaw.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Not5_Summary.pdf (Last visited on: 12 January 2016).

religious group in all other law schools as well. The minuscule representation of the Muslim community is also evident across most of the other NLUs, their population being a mere 2.3% amongst the batch which joined in 2013-14. This percentage comes down to 1.6% if NUALS is excluded. The listing of Muslims as a Socially and Economically Backward Class in Kerala might be the reason behind the substantial representation of students from the community at NUALS.

Caste:	Number of students:
Total	397
Brahmins	105 (26.5%)
Other Upper Castes	129 (32.5%)
Other Backward Castes	9 (2.3%)
Scheduled Castes	59 (14.9%)
Scheduled Tribes	28 (7.1%)
No Caste	43 (10.7%)
Don't Know	24 (6%)

Table 2-2: Distribution as per caste groups

For the question ‘What is your caste/sect/tribe?’ we got 110 different answers. 50 said that they did not know the answer to this question. Interestingly out of those 50, 24 belonged to those who got admission through general category, 22 from SCs and 4 from STs categories. If we presume that all those 24 in the ‘General’ Category belong to non-SC/ST social groups, it shows that upper castes students are either much more likely to be aware of their caste or they are less reluctant to reveal their caste identity-only 7.8% stated that they did not know their caste, compared to 37.2% of scheduled castes students.

We categorised caste data into seven main groups- Other Backward Castes, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Brahmins, Other Upper Castes and None. Identification of SCs and STs was relatively simple, it was stated in response to ‘How did you procure admission to NLS?’.³¹ Only a single student who got admission through general category identified himself as ‘SC/ST’. To identify OBCs, we went through the lists of OBCs as notified by the home states of each respective student. Other castes have been categorised as Other Upper Castes. All the other remaining-religions who did not identify themselves as SCs and STs have been categorised as ‘None’.

³¹ However it ought to be noted that 4 students who got admitted through SC/ST admission category, identified themselves as upper castes. This has been looked into more detail in Section 3.3. For purposes of analysis in this report, unless specifically said otherwise, they have been classified as Brahmins and Other Upper Castes respectively.

As demonstrated by Figure 2-2, this question has given quite interesting results. 105 identified themselves as Brahmins, making them the largest caste group. At least 58.9% of the NLS student body comprises of upper-caste Hindus. If we presume that all those who answered as “Don’t Know” in the General category are Upper Caste, the number goes up to 65%.

About 11 persons identified themselves as queer while another 4 stated that they are unsure about their sexual orientation. This means that about 4% of students identify themselves as sexual minorities. There are twelve students who are differently abled. Amongst them seven are visually impaired while five are physically-handicapped. Seven of them have taken admission under Persons with Disabilities (PWD) category, three through general and two through SC categories.

2.2. Regional Background:

We asked the respondents which place they identified as their home town/village. They identified 134 different locations as their home towns/villages. Highest number identified Bengaluru as their home town (29), followed by Lucknow (28), New Delhi (24), Mumbai (23), Bhopal (16), Jaipur (16), Kolkata (16), Chandigarh (10), Kanpur (10) and Kathmandu (10).

Table 2-3 shows the distribution of students as per their home state. The highest number identified Uttar Pradesh as their home state and their proportion within the student body (16.16%) is quite similar to Uttar Pradesh’s representation within the national population (16.50%). It is followed by Maharashtra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Delhi. While the proportions for Maharashtra and Rajasthan are roughly similar to their shares in national population, the proportion of students from Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi is disproportionately higher, Especially in case of Delhi. While Delhi’s share in the national population is not even 1.5%, its share within NLS’s student body is more than 6%. Top 5 NLUs show similar trends-students from Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Delhi form a major chunk. Students who joined in the year 2013-14 other 4 NLUs are largely from the state the NLU is located in, as there is a substantial domicile quota in each of these NLUs.³²

³² IDIA, *IDIA Diversity Survey 2013-14: Other 4 Premier NLU Summary* (2015), available at http://idialaw.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Not5_Summary.pdf (Last visited on: 12 January 2016).

More interesting is that there is not a single student from five states- namely Goa, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Sikkim. However it also ought to be noted that their share in the national population is only 0.81% as per 2011 Census.

States & Union Territories	No. of students	Percentage of total student body	National share in total population
<i>Andaman & Nicobar Islands</i>	0	0.00%	0.03%
Andhra Pradesh*	6	1.52%	6.99%
Arunachal Pradesh	2	0.51%	0.11%
Assam	5	1.26%	2.58%
Bihar	7	1.77%	8.60%
Chandigarh	9	2.27%	0.09%
Chhattisgarh	4	1.01%	2.11%
<i>Dadra and Nagar Haveli</i>	0	0.00%	0.03%
<i>Daman and Diu</i>	0	0.00%	0.02%
Delhi	24	6.06%	1.39%
<i>Goa</i>	0	0.00%	0.12%
Gujarat	4	1.01%	4.99%
Haryana	15	3.79%	2.09%
Himachal Pradesh	5	1.26%	0.57%
Jammu & Kashmir	1	0.25%	1.04%
Jharkhand	6	1.52%	2.72%
Karnataka	37	9.34%	5.05%
Kerala	16	4.03%	2.76%
<i>Lakshadweep</i>	0	0.00%	0.01%
Madhya Pradesh	36	9.09%	6.00%
Maharashtra	40	10.10%	9.28%
Manipur	2	0.51%	0.24%
<i>Meghalaya</i>	0	0.00%	0.25%
<i>Mizoram</i>	0	0.00%	0.09%
Nagaland	1	0.25%	0.16%
Orissa	4	1.01%	3.47%
Puducherry	0	0.00%	0.10%
Punjab	11	2.78%	2.29%
Rajasthan	29	7.32%	5.66%
<i>Sikkim</i>	0	0.00%	0.05%
Tamil Nadu	13	3.28%	5.96%
Telangana*	8	2.02%	6.99%
<i>Tripura</i>	0	0.00%	0.30%
Uttar Pradesh	64	16.16%	16.50%
Uttarakhand	9	2.27%	0.83%
West Bengal	22	5.56%	7.54%

Table 2-3: States identified as home states

**Telangana and Andhra Pradesh had not been bifurcated at the time national census 2011 was conducted. The number of students who hail from the region are 14, who form 3.54% of the student body's population. This is nearly half of their share in national population (6.99%).*

Type of Home town/ village	Year of Joining					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Tier 1	33 (45.21%)	30 (38.96%)	24 (30%)	23 (29.87%)	23 (28.04%)	133 (34.19%)
Tier 2	26 (35.61%)	30 (38.96%)	36 (45%)	39 (50.65%)	36 (43.90%)	167 (42.93%)
Tier 3	9 (12.32%)	10 (12.99%)	11 (13.75%)	11 (14.28%)	11 (13.41%)	50 (12.85%)
Tier 4	1 (1.36%)	3 (3.89%)	5 (6.25%)	3 (3.89%)	8 (9.75%)	21 (5.39%)
Not Applicable	4 (5.47%)	4 (5.19%)	4 (5%)	1 (1.30%)	4 (4.87%)	18 (4.63%)

Table 2-4: Distribution of type of home town/village across batches

Table 2-4 shows an interesting trend over the batches. The classification of home towns/villages as Tiers 1 and 2 is based on the classification used by the Ministry of Finance in deciding House Rent Allowance. Tier 3 is classified as those towns and villages whose population is above 1,00,000, as per the list released by the Census of India, 2011. Tier 4 is the residual category of towns and villages which do not fall into any of the above categories.

The number of students who expressed Tier 1 cities as their hometown has dropped over years, with a corresponding increase in students whose hometowns are Tier 2-4 cities and towns. In the batch which joined NLS in 2011, (the current 5th year batch at NLS), almost 50% expressed their hometown to be a Tier 1 City. In the junior-most batch, it is around 30%. This indicates that with every incoming batch, the diversity in hometowns in NLS is increasing. While it surely seems a reason to celebrate, precaution must be taken in interpreting this data since several students belonging to Batch of 2016 have dropped out of college. It is quite possible that they majorly belonged to other Tiers than Tier 1. However if we look at the table from the batch which joined in 2012 onwards, from which there has been only one drop-out, the trends confirm that over the years NLS has been becoming more diverse.

2.3. Financial Background:

Given annual fees of roughly about Rs. 1.7 lakhs, it is but natural that majority of the students at NLS would be from economically well-off families. To ascertain the number, we asked the respondents to specify in which bracket their annual family income fell in.

Income Brackets	Number of students	Percentage of students
Above 36,00,000	59	14.86%
12,00,001-36,00,000	155	39.04%
6,00,001-12,00,000	108	27.20%
3,00,001-6,00,000	49	12.34%
Below 3,00,000	26	6.55%

Table 2-5: Annual family income of students

From Table 2-5 it is quite evident that a majority of the students come from economically well-off families. A little more than half come from families with incomes more than Rs. 1 lakh a month, and another 27.20% come from fairly high income backgrounds. Only 6.5% come from low income backgrounds (below Rs. 3 lakhs).

A comparison of this with family income of students belonging to the other NLUs reveals a startling trend. While only 10% of the students who joined in 2013-14 in the top 5 NLUs belong to families with incomes less than Rs. 3 lakhs, 30% of the students of the other 4 NLUs are composed of such background. Further, while 31.27% of the students in the Top 5 NLUs belonged to families whose annual income is more than Rs. 15 lakh an annum, this number falls to a mere 10% for the other 4 NLUs.³³ This suggests that there is a correlation between affluence within class composition and school rank, which might need further study.

Although Income analysis is essential, there are several problems with relying on self-identified income: for various reasons, students may under or over-report their parental income. In other cases, students may simply not be aware of their parental income. Further, annual parental income may not be indicative of financial well-being, considering factors such as number of siblings, debt,

³³ IDIA, *IDIA Diversity Survey 2013-14: Top 5 NLU Summary* (2015), available at http://idialaw.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Top5_Summary.pdf (Last visited on: 12 January 2016).

Also see IDIA, *IDIA Diversity Survey 2013-14: Other 4 Premier NLU Summary* (2015), available at http://idialaw.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Not5_Summary.pdf (Last visited on: 12 January 2016).

family wealth, etc. Therefore as a countercheck to this question, we also asked three questions testing the expenditure of students:

1. How much do you spend monthly while at NLS?
2. What was the cost of your laptop when you purchased it?
3. What was the cost of your mobile when you purchased it?

Expenditure Brackets	No. of students	Percentage of students
Above 15,000	26	6.55%
10,001-15,000	53	13.35%
6001-10,000	126	31.74%
3001-6000	135	34.01%
1001-3000	49	12.34%
Below 1000	8	2.02%

Table 2-6: Monthly Expenditure at NLS

Nearly 51% spend more than Rs. 200 a day. Their share in the population roughly equal to those who declared their family income as more than Rs. 12 lakhs per annum. Table 2-6 shows expenditure incurred by students on laptops and mobile phones.

Laptop:		Mobile Phone:	
Price Brackets:	No. of Students:	Price Bracket:	No. of Students:
Above 65,001	57 (14.36%)	Above 20,000	115 (28.97%)
45,001-65,000	119 (29.97%)	10,001-20,000	130 (32.75%)
20,001-45,000	197 (49.62%)	3001-10,000	130 (32.75%)
Below 20,000	8 (2.02%)	Below 3000	12 (3.02%)
Did not purchase (Received as part of assistance/ award/ scholarship)	16 (4.03%)	Did not purchase (Received as part of assistance/ award/ scholarship)	10 (2.52%)

Table 2-7: Break-up of expenditure on laptops and mobile phones

2.4. Linguistic Background:

Majority of the students, nearly 57% are bilingual with another 29% who are trilingual. Thirty-two stated that they are fluent (both oral and written fluency) in four languages and seven stated they are fluent in five. Only sixteen stated they are fluent in one language. Amongst those sixteen, four are fluent only in Hindi and rest are fluent only in English. Overall, while 393 stated that they are fluent in English, 351 are fluent in Hindi.

Speakers of sixteen out of the twenty-two scheduled languages are part of NLS student body. Other Scheduled languages-Bodo, Dogri, Kashmiri, Konkani, Meitei and Santhali do not have a single speaker. It ought to be noted that these languages, along with Sanskrit and Nepali, have less than 1 crore speakers in India as per 2011 Census. The high number of Nepali speakers among law students could be explained by the fact that considerable number of foreign students come from Nepal, while in case of Sanskrit many students would have learnt it at the school level. Similar is the explanation for foreign languages like French, German, Japanese, Spanish and Portuguese, they are taught as third languages in schools. Other foreign languages like Arabic, Dzongkha, Sinhalese, Turkish and Mauritian Creole find mention since there are students who grew up abroad where these languages are spoken. The over-representation of Hindi (almost 90%, as opposed 40% in India) is interesting and can be partially explained by a nation-wide practice of Hindi being taught as a second-language in Schools. Another explanation is that a disproportionate majority of students hail from northern states. In the past decade there has been an increase in the number of students from north India at NLS.³⁴

Scheduled Languages		Other languages and Dialects		Foreign Languages	
Hindi	351 (88.41%)	English	393 (98.99%)	French	15 (3.78%)
Kannada	30 (7.56%)	Marwari	4 (1.01%)	Arabic	2 (0.50%)
Punjabi	24 (6.05%)	Rajasthani	4 (1.01%)	German	2 (0.50%)
Bengali	21 (5.29%)	Bhojpuri	2 (0.50%)	Japanese	2 (0.50%)
Marathi	21 (5.29%)	Pahadi	1 (0.25%)	Mauritian Creole	2 (0.50%)
Tamil	17 (4.28%)	Simte (Manipur)	1 (0.25%)	Sinhalese	2 (0.50%)
Malayalam	15 (3.78%)	Adi (Arunachal Pradesh)	1 (0.25%)	Spanish	2 (0.50%)
Telugu	14 (3.53%)	Kuki (Manipur)	1 (0.25%)	Dzongkha	1 (0.25%)
Nepali	15 (3.78%)	Monpa(Arunachal Pradesh)	1 (0.25%)	Portuguese	1 (0.25%)
Gujarati	8 (2.02%)	Tangsa (Arunachal Pradesh)	1 (0.25%)	Turkish	1 (0.25%)
Oriya	6 (1.51%)	Tibetan	1 (0.25%)		
Assamese	5 (1.26%)				
Sindhi	3 (0.75%)				
Sanskrit	3 (0.75%)				
Maithili	2 (0.50%)				
Urdu	2 (0.50%)				

Table 2-8: List of languages with no. of speakers

³⁴ Email Interview with Prof. Rohit De, batch of 2005, (29 December 2015).
Interview with Prof. V.S.Elizabeth (November, 2015).

As expected, nearly 96.75% attended English-medium high schools. Only 11 responded that they attended Hindi medium schools, while only 2 said their medium of education was Telugu. No student is from any other vernacular-medium school. This figure is not surprising as one of the major factor in this skewed representation is perhaps the pattern of the entrance exam-CLAT itself. The exam is conducted only in English and 20% of the total marks distribution is allocated to testing how well-versed the applicant is in English language. Whether this leads to a bias or is a necessary requirement shall be discussed later in the report. However, what is important to note right now is that 1.25% of the students (2013-14 joining batch) in the top 5 NLUs were from Non-English schools. Interestingly this number triples to around 3.7% in the other 4 NLUs. But to put this in context, not more than 15% of the students attended English medium schools in the country.³⁵

But it is not just an English education that helps students clear CLAT, the data also shows that most students at NLS have *parents* who are fluent in English.

English Fluency – Mother	5	-	-	1 (0.25%)	1 (0.25%)	11 (2.77%)	149 (37.53%)
	4	-	-	1 (0.25%)	7 (1.76%)	47 (11.84%)	30 (7.56%)
	3	-	1 (0.25%)	1 (0.25%)	14 (3.53%)	42 (10.58%)	17 (4.28%)
	2	1 (0.25%)	2 (0.50%)	11 (2.77%)	10 (2.52%)	12 (3.02%)	-
	1	1 (0.25%)	6 (1.51%)	8 (2.02%)	5 (1.26%)	2 (0.50%)	3 (0.76%)
	0	6 (1.51%)	3 (0.76%)	3 (0.76%)	1 (0.25%)	-	1 (0.25%)
	Scale	0	1	2	3	4	5
	English fluency – Father						

Table 2-9: Co-relation between perceived fluency levels of mother and father

³⁵ IDIA, *IDIA Diversity Survey 2013-14: Top 5 NLU Summary* (2015), available at http://idialaw.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Top5_Summary.pdf (Last visited on: 12 January 2016).

Also see Rema Nagarjan, *Number of children studying in English doubles in five years*, *TIMES OF INDIA* (28 September 2015) available at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Number-of-children-studying-in-English-doubles-in-5-years/articleshow/49131447.cms> (Last visited on 21 March 2016).

We asked the respondents to rank their parents' fluency (both oral and written) on a scale of 0-10, with 10 being highest. These two questions are perception-based questions, and thus have obvious problems associated with them. For better representation, the scale has been converted to 0-5 in Table 2-9. The matrix which gets formed has been colour-coded: Dark-grey (304 respondents, 76.5%) representing those whose both parents are highly fluent in English, light-grey (63, 15.8%) representing those who perceive their parents to be fluency to be average and lighter-grey (30, 7.5%) representing those who perceive their parents as not being fluent in English.

Students were asked separate questions on their own fluency-how well do they think they are fluent in spoken English and in written English? Unsurprisingly, most students rank themselves as highly fluent in both written and spoken English.

Scale (5 being most fluent):	Spoken English:	Written English:
0	0	0
1	1	0
2	5	3
3	17	12
4	104	93
5	270	289

Table 2-10: Perception of self-fluency in English

2.5. Schooling Background:

This high fluency in English could attributed to schooling background of students. As seen through Figure 2-1 nearly half of the students did their schooling from Tier 1 cities, with another 40% having done it from Tier 2 cities. 96.75% had attended English-medium schools. In addition to these questions we asked the respondents to specify their yearly high school fees and how they would categorise their school as-Government, Private, Missionary, Reputed Private or Elite.

Annual High School fees:	Number of Students:
More than 1,00,000	52 (13.10%)
30,001-1,00,000	181 (45.59%)
5,001-30,000	135 (34.01%)
Less than 5,000	29 (7.30%)

Table 2-11: High School fees break-up

School Categorisation:	Number of Students:
Elite	36 (9.07%)
Missionary	24 (6.05%)
Reputed Private	205 (51.64%)
Private	97 (24.43%)
Government	35 (8.82%)

Table 2-12: High schools category wise break-up

As evident from Table 2-11, a considerable number spent a high amount as annual fees for high schooling. While initially we gave only Elite, Reputed Private, Private and Government as options, a lot of respondents chose to fill in convents and missionary schools as the answer. Hence, we categorised them separately as ‘Missionary’ schools (Table 2-12). To explain we gave the help-text as: *“To clarify, schools such as DPS, DAV would fall under 'Reputed Private' category, schools such as Woodstock, Mayo would fall under 'Elite' category. If your school was a Missionary one/run by Trusts or NGOs, kindly specify that in 'Others'.”*

School category/Fees	Below 5000	5001-30,000	30,001-1,00,000	More than 1,00,000
Elite	-	4	11	21
Missionary	2	14	6	2
Reputed Private	4	63	114	24
Private	6	41	45	5
Government	17	13	5	-

Table 2-13: Co-relation between school categories and annual fees

Problems with seeking such categorisation based on perceptions is evident; students’ perception of their own school will not fall under a single unified standard. We have categorised certain schools (highlighted in Table 2-13) as ‘Quality Schools’ based on relationship between the type of school and the school fees in an attempt to offset the obvious problems with self-categorisation of schools. Hence, for instance, not all ‘Reputed Private’ schools have been categorised as ‘Quality Schools’. The category of those who received ‘Quality Schooling’ will be referred to frequently in further Chapters.

2.6. Family Background:

The final category of background questions which we asked, and perhaps the most important ones, pertained to family background. We collected data regarding education qualifications and occupation of parents and generations of college graduates in their families.

Education Qualification - Mother	Doctoral (Ph.D.)	-	-	-	-	7 (1.76%)	18 (4.53%)	9 (2.27%)
	Post-graduate	-	-	1 (0.25%)	1 (0.25%)	40 (10.08%)	143 (36.02%)	12 (3.02%)
	Under-graduate	-	1 (0.25%)	2 (0.50%)	4 (1.01%)	59 (14.86%)	63 (15.87%)	2 (0.50%)
	12th Standard	-	-	1 (0.25%)	4 (1.01%)	12 (3.02%)	3 (0.76%)	-
	10th Standard	-	-	-	1 (0.25%)	5 (1.26%)	1 (0.25%)	-
	Below 10th Standard	-	-	-	-	3 (0.76%)	1 (0.25%)	-
	None	1 (0.25%)	2 (0.50%)	-	-	1 (0.25%)	-	-
		None	Below 10th Standard	10th Standard	12th Standard	Under-graduate	Post-graduate	Doctoral (Ph.D.)
Education Qualification - Father								

Table 2-14: Education qualifications of parents

As Table 2-14 shows, both parents of 388 (97.7%) students are matriculates with 353 (88.9%) having completed at least an undergraduate course. Amongst those with both parents possessing college degrees, 191 (48%) have parents who are both Post-graduates or Ph.Ds. Being from a well-educated family has its obvious benefits, it would be worthy to see what degree of impact it has upon one's performance in academics.

Equally influencing perhaps, or even more, is parents' occupation. The data we received for this question was quite challenging to sort and classify-for mother's occupation we received about 65 different types of responses and for father's occupation we got 48 different types of responses. The most common response for mother's occupation by far is Homemaker (164), followed by- School teachers (56) and Doctors (42). Amongst fathers, most common profession is Business (63), Government service (62), Civil service (46), Engineers (36) and Doctors (32). Only fathers of two respondents are School Teachers and none are Homemakers. In contrast, mothers of only nine respondents are involved in business, 12 are in government service and only 3 are civil servants. About 27 students have at least one parent in legal profession-this number is far below what was expected.

Generations of graduates - Mother's side	More than 3	-	4 (1.01%)	16 (4.03%)	60 (15.11%)
	2-3	1 (0.25%)	46 (11.59%)	144 (36.27%)	20 (5.04%)
	1	2 (0.50%)	71 (17.88%)	14 (3.53%)	3 (0.76%)
	None	6 (1.51%)	9 (2.27%)	1 (0.25%)	-
		None	1	2-3	More than 3
Generations of Graduates – Father's side					

Table 2-15: Generations of college-goers in the family

The final question which we asked was ‘how many generations before you have been to college?’ The results indicate, that 103 students (26%) had more than three generations who had been to college. 309 (77.8%) had at least someone in their grandparents’ generation having gone to college. To put these numbers into context- In 1950, the Gross Enrolment Ratio in India (which is the ratio of persons enrolled in higher education to persons in the age group 18-23) was a mere 0.7.³⁶ This means that 77.8% of students in NLS are from families which belonged to the privileged 0.7% who went to college in the 1950’s. Hence, it is safe to say that the overwhelming majority of students in NLS belong to families that have been educationally privileged for generations.

³⁶ Ministry of Human Resource Development (Government of India), *Educational Statistics at a glance* (2014) available at http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics/EAG2014.pdf (Last visited on: 29 February 2016).

3. Reservations: Policies and Realities

No discussion about demographics is complete without discussing caste. Figuring out the caste break-up was actually the initial motivation behind this study. In fact, the first working title of this study was '*Caste Census of National Law School*'. While the scope of this study has broadened beyond caste, the results on the question of caste remain interesting, as exhibited in table 2-2. Similarly, with the disproportionately high number of Jains and other religious minorities, and shamefully low number of Muslims-the religious distribution as exhibited in table 2-1 is not any less remarkable. Despite this low representation of Muslims being a common story in all higher education institutions, the state continues to shy away from designing affirmative action policies based on religion.

3.1. History of Reservation:

In India, affirmative action policies were first put in place during the colonial era for government jobs, political representation and scholarships. While reservations in the legislature has been in existence since beginning of 20th century, the Communal Award of 1933 extended reservations to educational institutions in British India. This system of reservations in legislatures continued post-independence. The reservations in educational institutions then based on the Communal Award of 1933 were declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in *State of Madras v. Srimathi Champakam* AIR 1951 SC 226. This led to the insertion of Art. 15(4) via first amendment to the Constitution and thus allowed the state to make provisions for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. This insertion was in line with Art. 46 which contained a directive to provide special considerations for members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Thus this paved way for both central and state governments to provide for reservations for SCs and STs in educational institutions.

Regarding the other socially and educationally backward classes- the central government initiated the first steps in 1953 when it appointed Kalelkar Commission to identify such communities. The Kalelkar Commission identified 2399 castes as 'backward castes' (which formed almost 40% of the total population). This Commission went as far as suggesting all that all women should be considered as belonging to 'backward' class, that there should be near 70% reservation in

educational institutions and recommended 25-40% reservations in central government jobs depending upon type of job.

While the central government did not act on the recommendations of Kalelkar Commission due to certain credible reasons like allegedly faulty methodology, by the mid-1970s states like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka had instituted reservations for OBCs as well. In this backdrop, the Moraji Desai government appointed the Mandal Commission in 1978 to re-examine into the situation of OBCs. The Mandal Commission identified 3743 castes or 52% of the population as socially and educationally backward. Amongst several far-reaching recommendations like reservations in both private and public sectors, it wanted to recommend a 52% reservation for OBCs in addition to the existing 22.5% reservation for SCs and STs. However since the Supreme Court had already placed a bar of maximum 50% reservations in central government institutions (*M R Balaji v. State of Mysore* AIR 1963 SC 649), the Mandal Commission therefore recommended 27% reservation for OBCs.

The Mandal Report was shelved until 1990, when the central government announced that it would implement certain recommendations of the Mandal Commission. It opened a Pandora's box of protests and politicising of the caste issue. In 1992, the Supreme Court in *Indira Sawhney v. Union of India* AIR 1993 SC 477, upheld the constitutionality of OBC reservations and issued a host of other orders like necessary exclusion of 'creamy layer', restriction of reservation to under 50% and it declared reservations for economically poor amongst forward castes as invalid.

Thus today, in all central government colleges- the 22.5% reservations system (15% for SCs and 7.5% for STs) has been implemented without fail. Reservations for OBCs does not exist in these institutions. In state government institutions, the proportion of seats reserved for SC/STs depends upon their respective proportions in state populations. After the Mandal Commission, many states also implemented the 27 per cent reservations for OBCs to varying degrees in state-controlled colleges.

In August 2005, the Supreme Court held that the state could not impose reservations in privately-funded colleges and minority institutions (*P.A. Inamdar v. State of Maharashtra* AIR 2005 SC 3226). This decision led to the passage of the 93rd Amendment, which by insertion of Art. 15(5) gave the State the power to institute affirmative action policies in *all* educational institutions. Once the constitutional hurdle was cleared, amidst a lot of criticism and equivalent jubilation, the UPA-

The government moved to introduce 27% reservations for OBCs in all central universities. These included IITs, IIMs and AIIMS by increasing the total intake proportionally by up to 54%. However succumbing to pressure from allies like Ram Vilas Paswan and Lalu Prasad Yadav, the government did not bar creamy-layer amongst OBCs from availing the reservations at these institutions. While this law-Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Act, 2006 was upheld by constitutional bench in *Ashok Kumar Thakur v. Union of India* (2008) 6 SCC 1, the Court however laid down that the creamy layer amongst OBCs must be excluded. Later in 2011, UP High Court ruled that despite Art. 15(5), the government cannot impose obligations of reservation upon private educational institutions like Jindal Global Law School.

The findings of Socio-Economic Caste Census (2011) which was undertaken by UPA-II have still not been made public. One of the key objectives of sanctioning this Census was to ascertain the actual caste composition, which so far has been estimated only on basis of sampling and guesswork in independent India. The reservations policy beneficiaries so far, remain determined on these probable figures which the Socio-Economic Caste Census (2011) sought to replace for good.

3.2. Reservations in NLUs:

NLUs are not central universities, but state universities. None of the law universities has been declared as an 'institute of national importance' by UGC, AICTE and Ministry of Human Resources Development. As a result, reservation policies in each law university has been determined by state governments as they deemed necessary. While NLS out of 80 seats for B.A.,LL.B. (Hons.) reserves-12 seats for SCs (15%), 6 seats for STs (7.5%), 2 seats for Persons with Disabilities (3%) and 5 seats for Foreign Nationals, other NLUs and five-year law colleges have different admission policies in place.

NUJS-Kolkata, NLU-Delhi, NLU-Jodhpur and NLU-Odisha are the only other NLUs which do not have any state domicile based reservations system apart from NLS. NALSAR is the only Tier-1 NLU which provides for 20% state domicile reservation. By Tier-1 we refer to NLS, NALSAR, NUJS and NLU-Delhi. None of them provide for reservation for OBCs. Interesting to note, that NALSAR which until 2014 had 30% horizontal reservation for women, decided to discontinue with the same in 2015. This is probably explained by the fact that since women anyway form near 50% of student bodies in NLUs, such reservation is not particularly needed.

Other NLUs, apart from NLU-Jodhpur and NLU-Odisha have implemented affirmative action in varying degrees and forms. Depending upon the local requirements and considerations, NLIU-Bhopal and HNLU-Raipur provide for considerable reservation for state-domiciled STs. Whereas RMLNLU-Lucknow and CNLU-Patna provide for state-domicile reservation only for SCs, STs, EBCs, BCs and OBCs. That is, in these two colleges no state-domicile reservation exists for general category, but only through all India merit could one get in general categories through both colleges.

NUALS-Kochi does the opposite-it does not provide for anyone from outside Kerala to get in through SC, ST and OBC seats-they are all reserved only for socially and economically backward classes of Kerala. NUALS provides for an elaborate explanation on how it intends to implement its affirmative action policy. It provides for making SC/ST seats inter-changeable. Where there are not enough candidates to be found for seats reserved for Backward and Other Backward Classes/Socially and Educationally Backward Classes, such seats are then opened up to be filled through the State merit quota. Whereas the seats un-availed by the SC/ST candidates are provided to be filled by Other Eligible Communities (OEC) candidates.

Including NUJS-Kolkata, several other NLUs provide for supernumerary seats for NRI/NRI-sponsored students-which is in addition to Foreign National quotas in several colleges. These students need not write CLAT, but they are instead evaluated on their results in the Class XII Board Exams and in many cases-through interviews. NLUs are inclined to provide for these seats since the fees applicable to these students is much higher than what is paid by other students.³⁷

There is a host of reservations provided by different NLUs in different proportions for Kashmiri Migrants, North-East and Jammu & Kashmir residents, descendants of freedom fighters and children of deceased defence personnel etc. They are often supernumerary seats or are horizontally reserved. The only common affirmative action policy adopted uniformly by all NLUs is 3% horizontal reservation for Persons With Disabilities (PWDs). Interestingly, none of the NLUs have sports quota applicable-other than very recently set-up NLUs-Tamil Nadu National Law School

³⁷ For instance, in 2015, the semester tuition fee in National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata for NRI/NRI Sponsored students is \$4320, which converts to roughly Rs.2.9 lakhs at a conversion rate of Rs. 67 to 1 USD. The tuition fee for other students is Rs. 73,200.

and Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University-Vishakhapatnam which do provide for the same.

3.3. Castes in NLS:

Whereas NLS provides for affirmative action for PWDs as well, in this section we shall focus only upon caste and religious background of students.

Among the 105 Brahmins who are the biggest caste group in NLS by far, majority identified themselves as just Brahmins. Certain respondents identified themselves as Bhumihars (6), Maithil Brahmins (2) and Vaishnavas (2). Others identified are-Brahmin Chettri, Iyengar, Kashmiri Pandit, Deshasta Brahmin, Kulin Brahmin, Madwa Brahmin, Saryuparin and Tamil Brahmin.

Yadavs (4) and Jats (7) depending upon the home state-have been categorised as either Other Upper Castes or Other Backward Castes. The categorisation was based on whether the particular caste fell under the list of OBCs, as notified by the home state of the student but not by looking whether the said student would have been eligible for OBC reservations. Thus while we identified two Yadavs and one Jat as OBC, others in respective caste groups have been classified as Other Upper Castes. Other castes which have been categorised as OBCs are: Kurmi (1), Somvanshi (1), Lingayat (1), Kunbhi (1) and Gudia (1).

Four identified themselves as belonging to Arora caste, while another six identified themselves as Khatriis-of which Arora is a sub-caste. Similarly 12 identified themselves as Rajputs, and another 19 identified themselves as Kshatriyas. Classified together, we could identify 43 respondents as belonging to Kshatriya castes.

Eight identified themselves as Nairs, 30 identified themselves as belonging to north Indian baniya castes and another 12 identified themselves as Kayasthas. Six identified themselves as Marwaris and five as Sindhis. For sake of clarity, further analysis shall be done by classifying them along with Kshatriyas, Bishnoi (1), Kaikolar (1), Patidar (1), Chettiar (2) etc. as Other Upper Castes.

Looking at Scheduled Castes (59), majority of them identified themselves as Hindus (51), while few identified as Sikhs (4), Buddhists (3) and Christian (1). Almost half (24) were unsure about their caste. Amongst others, prominent castes are- Adi Karnataka (3), Chamar (3), Kori (3) and

Mahar (3). Other caste groups which are represented at NLS include: Barwar, Bovi, Burman, Chambar, Dhanak, Dhobi, Jatav, Kami, Khatik, Meghwal, Mochi, Pallan and Velan castes.

Similarly majority of Scheduled Tribes (28) identify themselves as Hindus (16), followed by Christians (7) and Buddhists (4). Meenas (6) are the most prominent group within STs. Another prominent tribe is Oraons (3). Only four not knowing their tribe-all of them belonging to south India. There are also Rajputs (3) and Brahmin (1) who either got admission through Scheduled Tribe category or have at least been accorded the status of Scheduled Tribe (for the purposes of case analysis, they have been categorised as Other Upper Castes and Brahmin respectively).

The north-eastern tribes which find representation are: Bhutia, Gorkhali, Monpa, Simte, Sumi, Tangsa, Thadau Kuki, Mishing and Rabha. None of them have more than one student here. Other tribes which find representation include: Lahauli, Bhilala, Jauhari Shauka, Nayaka and Yerukula.

Coming to religion, all three Muslims identified themselves as Sunnis. Amongst Jains (20), twelve identified themselves as Digambars and seven identified themselves as Shwetambars.

There are 11 Buddhist students. Amongst them three also identify as SCs, four as STs and another three were admitted as Foreign National students. Thus only one Buddhist student belongs to general category. Amongst the 17 Christian students, seven also identify as STs and one identifies as SC. All who declared their sect stated that they were Catholics (9), with two amongst them identifying themselves as Syro-Malabar Roman Catholics. Amongst Sikhs (15), five identified as Scheduled Castes, of whom some belonged to Mazbi, Ramdasia and Ravidasi sects, and three identified themselves as upper-castes (1-Jat, 2-Khatris). Others were unaware about their caste or sect.

For purposes of this report, all Buddhist, Christian and Sikh students who identified themselves as also SCs and STs have been classified as SCs and STs. Upper-caste Sikh students have been included in 'Other Upper Castes' category. Only the ones who did not identify themselves as either SC, ST or any other caste group, have been classified as 'None/ No Caste', along with Muslims and Jains (See Table 2-2). But where the religious background is analysed, they have all been counted as and included in their respective religious groupings and not as Hindus.

Those Hindus who were unaware of their caste identity and got admission through general category (24) have been classified separately as we cannot conclusively determine whether they are upper caste. Hence, a separate classification was warranted.

3.4. Gender and Social Background:

Amongst 397 of respondents, 185 identified themselves as females (46.6%) and 212 identified themselves as males (53.4%). So ideally amongst each caste and religious group, the proportion should be similar. The proportions for Brahmins corresponds to the overall proportion. The sex ratio is skewed in favour of males amongst OBCs, SCs and No Caste categories. However amongst Other Upper Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the ratio is skewed in favour of females.

Caste:	Males:	Females:
Total (397)	212 (53.4%)	185 (46.6%)
Brahmins (105)	56 (53.3%)	49 (46.7%)
Other Upper Castes (129)	60 (46.5%)	69 (53.5%)
Other Backward Castes (9)	6 (66.6%)	3 (33.3%)
Scheduled Castes (59)	36 (61%)	23 (39%)
Scheduled Tribes (28)	13 (46.4%)	15 (53.6%)
No Caste (43)	25 (58.1%)	18 (41.8%)
Don't Know (24)	16 (66.6%)	8 (33.3%)
Religion:	Males:	Females:
Hindus (325)	170 (52.3%)	155 (47.7%)
Atheists (2)	2 (100%)	-
Buddhists (11)	4 (36.4%)	7 (63.6%)
Christians (17)	9 (52.9%)	8 (47.1%)
Muslims (3)	3 (100%)	-
Jains (20)	12 (60%)	8 (40%)
Sikhs (15)	10 (66.6%)	5 (33.3%)
Mixed (4)	2 (50%)	2 (50%)

Table 3-1: Gender-wise break up of each caste

But if we look at other religious groups, the distribution is most skewed towards males amongst Sikhs, then followed by Jains and there is almost equal distribution amongst Christians. There are more Buddhist females than males. While equal number identified as having more than one family religion or 'mixed', no female identified herself as belonging to Muslim or atheistic family.

In Figure 3-1, we look at the intersection between caste and annual family income. The most prominent finding being that amongst those who are completely unaware about their caste background, more than 80% belong to high income group (Above Rs. 12 lakhs per annum). Their average annual income is also highest at Rs. 24.3 lakhs per annum. One of the criterion for accessing OBC reservation is that a person belonging to such caste, should have annual income under Rs. 6 lakh per annum. At NLS only 1 student would have qualified for such reservation.

There is considerable variation in average annual incomes along caste lines. While it is between Rs. 20.8-21.5 lakhs for Brahmins, other upper castes and no caste groups; it falls to Rs. 12.5 lakhs in the case of SCs and to Rs. 15.8 lakhs in the case of STs.



Figure 3-1: Annual Family Income and Caste

Similar analysis for religious groups is done in Figure 3-2. The overall average annual income of students at NLS is Rs. 19.6 lakhs. Hindus have nearly identical average income level, whereas other religious groups except for Jains have lower than overall average. While Jains at NLS have an average income of Rs. 21.5 lakhs, Buddhists have lowest incomes averaged at Rs. 13 lakhs per annum. The data for other groups such as Islam, Atheist and Mixed represents a very small sample size from which it is not possible to draw any conclusions regarding this.

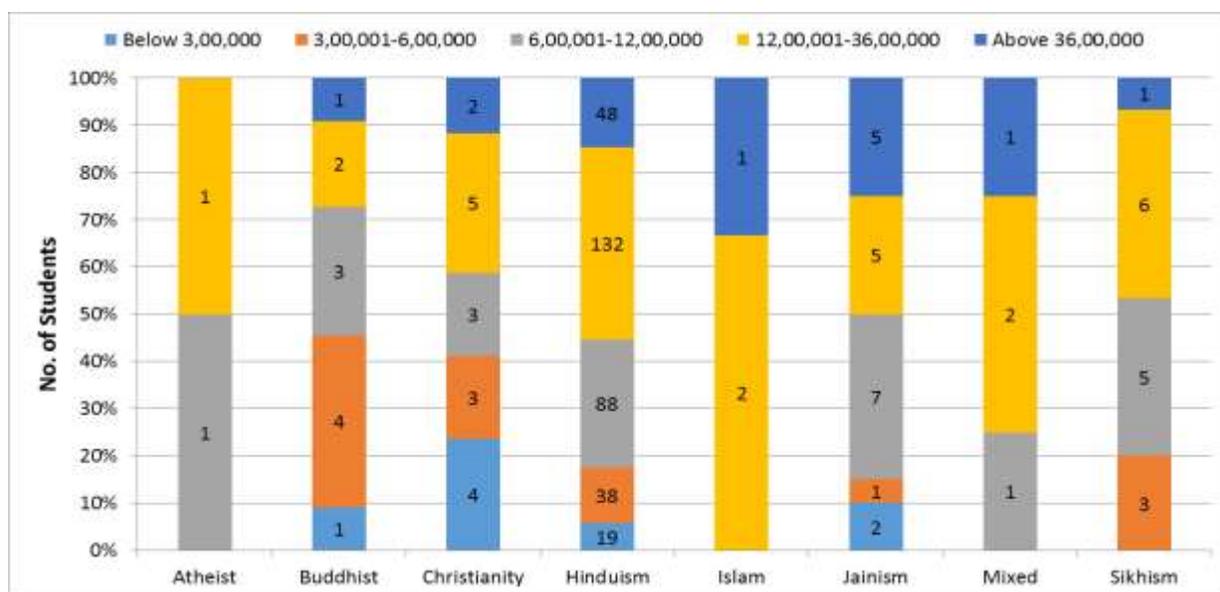


Figure 3-2: Annual Family Income and Religion

It ought to be noted that overall (397), there is almost equal distribution of income levels across gender- all income levels above Rs. 3 lakhs have a distribution of 46-54% between females and males which is proportionate to the overall sex ratio of NLS. Average annual income for females is marginally higher than those of males (Table 3-2). However in the below Rs. 3 lakhs bracket, the number of males (17) is nearly double of number of females (9). Thus validating the view that where resources are limited, families prefer to invest in male children's education over female.

Average Annual Income (Religion):	Males	Females
Total	Rs. 19,48,584	Rs. 19,74,324
Buddhists	Rs. 4,87,500	Rs. 17,57,143
Christians	Rs. 20,50,000	Rs. 9,75,000
Hindus	Rs. 19,65,000	Rs. 20,14,839
Jains	Rs. 19,50,000	Rs. 24,56,250
Sikhs	Rs. 15,15,000	Rs. 19,80,000
Average Annual Income (Caste):	Males	Females
Brahmins	Rs. 22,17,857	Rs. 20,63,265
Other Upper Castes	Rs. 19,85,000	Rs. 21,73,913
Scheduled Castes	Rs. 13,70,833	Rs. 10,69,565
Scheduled Tribes	Rs. 14,88,461	Rs. 16,70,000
No Caste	Rs. 21,18,000	Rs. 21,25,000

Table 3-2: Average annual income of caste and religious groups, gender-wise.

Across all religious groups except for Christians, females visibly belong to more prosperous households. However the difference is not as stark amongst caste groups.

Average Annual High School Fees (Religion):	Males	Females
Buddhists	Rs. 58750.00	Rs. 53571.43
Christians	Rs. 31666.67	Rs. 61875.00
Hindus	Rs. 49911.76	Rs. 57854.84
Jains	Rs. 51041.67	Rs. 50000.00
Sikhs	Rs. 31750.00	Rs. 93000.00
Average Annual High School Fees (Religion):	Males	Females
Brahmins	Rs. 52321.43	Rs. 62244.90
Other Upper Castes	Rs. 44833.33	Rs. 57644.93
Scheduled Castes	Rs. 42152.78	Rs. 55217.39
Scheduled Tribes	Rs. 46730.77	Rs. 52166.67
No Caste	Rs. 43100.00	Rs. 57777.78

Table 3-3: Average annual high school fees of caste and religious groups, gender-wise

Across all caste groups it is clearly visible through Table 3-3 that the higher fees was paid by females in each group than males. And while keeping gender aside, it is evident that Brahmins and Other Upper Castes overall spent more on their high schooling than SCs, STs and No Castes. While at least 60% of Brahmins and Other Upper Castes spent more than Rs. 30,000 per year, only 50% of SCs, STs and No Castes spent as much. And whereas nearly 10% of SCs and STs each spent less than Rs. 5000 on high school education, the corresponding percentage for Brahmins and Other Upper Castes is 7-8%. Only 4.5% of No Castes category spent less than Rs. 5000.

Even amongst religious groups, Hindus, Christians and Sikhs females invested considerably more on their high schooling than males. Only Buddhists are the anomaly in this trend.

A 1964 study on Social and Economic Factors in Literacy and Education in Rural India by PC Joshi, the first General Secretary of the Communist Party of India showed similar results.³⁸ While the overall literacy levels were very low, there was higher literacy levels among upper castes, and females in higher income groups tended to be more likely to be educated. The proportion of educated females was also highest among the upper castes and lowest among the lower castes.

³⁸ P C Joshi and M R Rao, *Social and Economic Factors in Literacy and Education in Rural India*, THE ECONOMIC WEEKLY, pp. 21 (4 January 1964) available at http://www.epw.in/system/files/pdf/1964_16/1/social_and_economic_factors_in_literacy_and_education_in_rural_india.pdf (Last visited on: 1 March 2016).

More than fifty years hence, it is disappointing that caste, economic well-being and gender intersect on similar lines in the field of education.

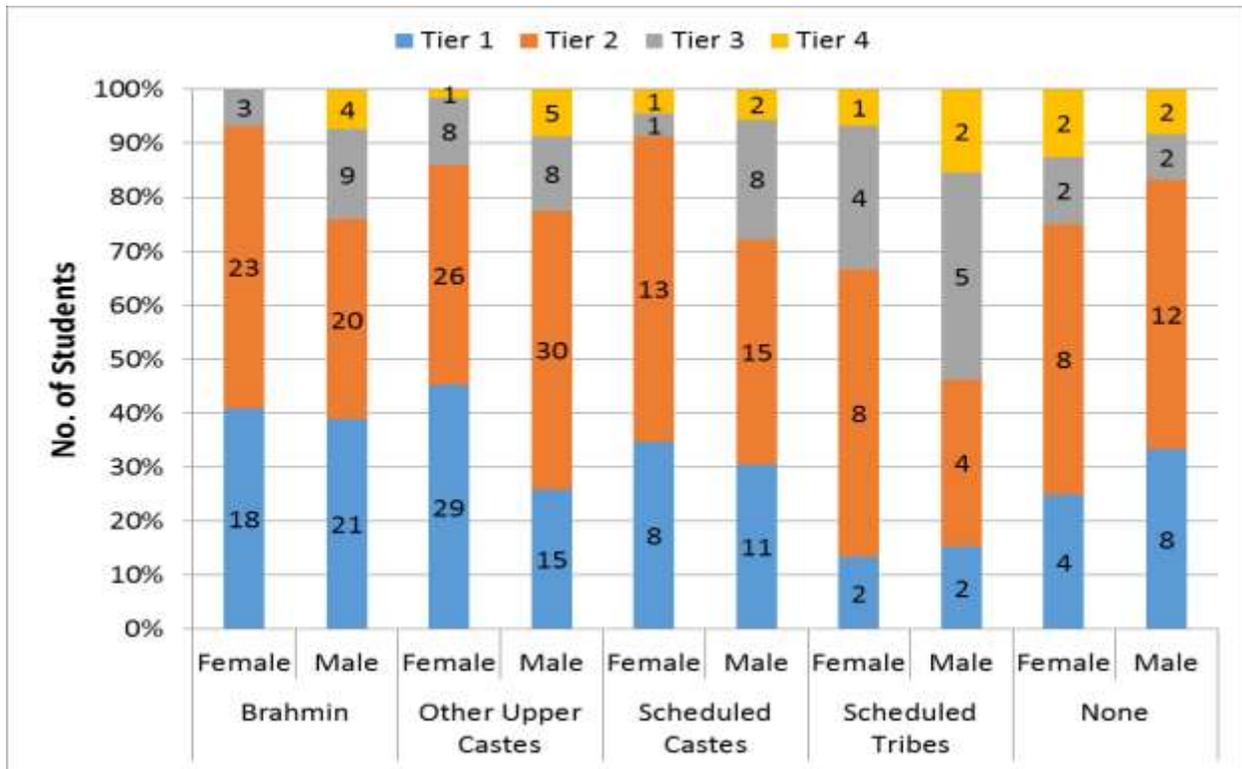


Figure 3-3: Distribution of hometown/village across caste and gender

From Figure 3-3, it is observed that across caste groups, the proportion of females coming from Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities is higher than males from almost each group. Males from smaller towns and villages are more likely to get into NLS. This trend is confirmed amongst all religion groups as well, as evident from Figure 3-4. Other than for STs, 30-40% of students amongst each caste group come from Tier-1 cities. Majority of ST students instead come from Tier-2 cities (38.71%) followed by Tier-3 towns (35.48%). Another interesting observation in Figure 3-6 is that none of the Buddhist students at NLS have Tier 1 city as their home town. Amongst the caste groups, as expected, majority of each belong to Tier-2 cities.

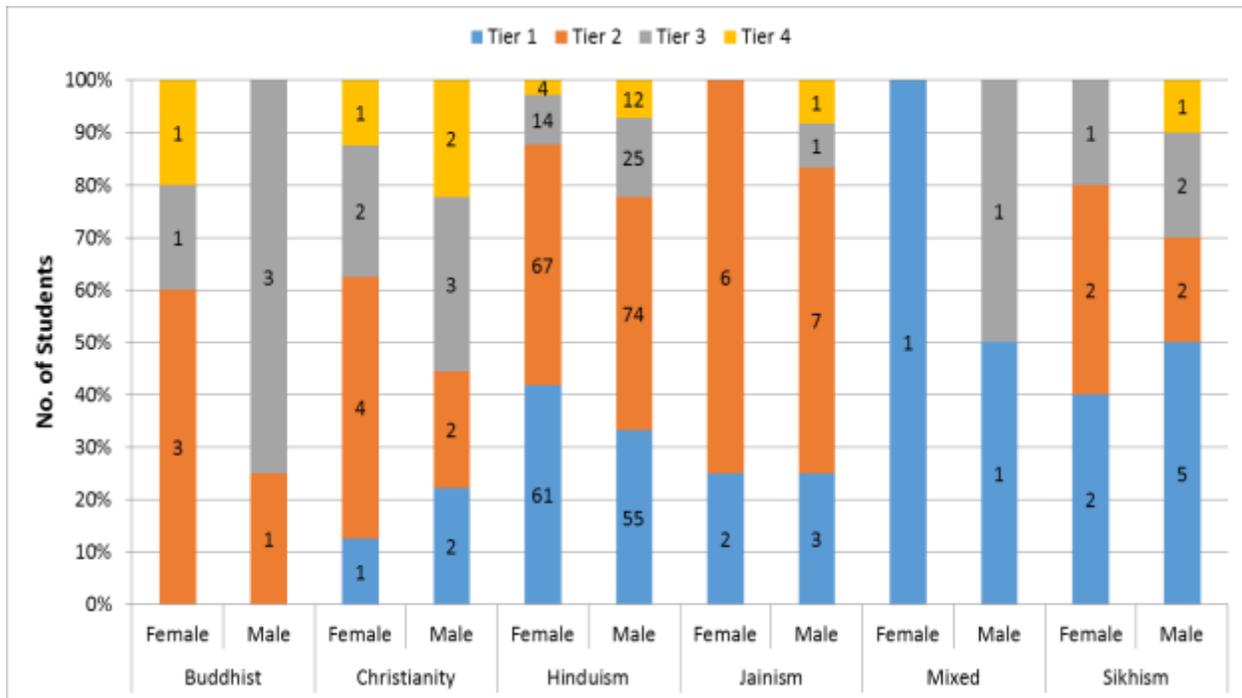


Figure 3-4: Distribution of annual hometown/village across religion and gender

3.5. Caste and Family Background:

In the previous section, we noted through various factors how there exists a discrepancy between genders across castes and religions. Women who get into NLS have spent more on high school education and come from larger cities than as compared to men in respective groups. Is this also true for caste? Are those from marginalised communities in NLS generally more prosperous than the major groups? Does parents' occupation and family background has have anything to do with caste dynamics, thereby indirectly influencing to whom benefits of affirmative action policies accrue? We shall try and answer these questions in this section.

Brahmins								
Father \ Mother	None	Below 10th	10th Standard	12th Standard	Under-graduate	Post-graduate	Doctoral (Ph.D.)	Grand Total
Doctoral (Ph.D.)					3 (2.86%)	6 (5.71%)	1 (0.95%)	10 (9.52%)
Post-graduate				1 (0.95%)	9 (8.57%)	46 (43.81%)	6 (5.71%)	62 (59.05%)
Under-graduate			1 (0.95%)	1 (0.95%)	9 (8.57%)	16 (15.24%)	2 (1.90%)	29 (27.62%)
12th Standard				1 (0.95%)		2 (1.90%)		3 (2.86%)
10th Standard					1 (0.95%)			1 (0.95%)
Below 10th								
None								
Grand Total			1 (0.95%)	3 (2.86%)	22 (20.95%)	70 (66.67%)	9 (8.57%)	105 (100%)
Other Upper Castes								
Father \ Mother	None	Below 10th	10th Standard	12th Standard	Under-graduate	Post-graduate	Doctoral (Ph.D.)	Grand Total
Doctoral (Ph.D.)					3 (2.33%)	9 (6.98%)	1 (0.78%)	13 (10.08%)
Post-graduate					17 (13.18%)	52 (40.31%)	4 (3.10%)	73 (56.59%)
Under-graduate			1 (0.78%)	1 (0.78%)	13 (10.08%)	20 (15.50%)		35 (27.13%)
12th Standard			1 (0.78%)	1 (0.78%)	2 (1.55%)			4 (3.10%)
10th Standard					2 (1.55%)	1 (0.78%)		3 (2.33%)
Below 10th								
None		1 (0.78%)						1 (0.78%)
Grand Total		1 (0.78%)	2 (1.55%)	2 (1.55%)	37 (28.68%)	82 (63.57%)	5 (3.88%)	129 (100%)

Table 3-4: Caste and Parents' Education Qualifications (1/2)

In Tables 3-4 and 3-5, we can observe the caste-wise distribution of the students parents' education qualification. The columns specify Mother's qualifications, and rows specify Father's. Among all caste groups, highest number of respondents have both their parents who are post-graduates. 115 out of 129 'other upper castes' fall in the green-coloured cells, which means nearly 90% of them have both parents having an under-graduate degree. There is not as much concentration observed amongst Scheduled Castes respondents. The proportion of SC and ST respondents in the orange-coloured cells, especially when compared to their overall proportion in NLS, is visibly higher.

Scheduled Castes								
Father Mother	None	Below 10th	10th Standard	12th Standard	Under- graduate	Post- graduate	Doctoral (Ph.D.)	Grand Total
Doctoral (Ph.D.)						1 (1.69%)	4 (6.78%)	5 (8.47%)
Post-graduate					3 (5.08%)	15 (25.42%)		18 (30.51%)
Under-graduate		1 (1.69%)			11 (18.64%)	12 (20.34%)		24 (40.68%)
12th Standard					5 (8.49%)	1 (1.69%)		6 (10.17%)
10th Standard					1 (1.69%)			1 (1.69%)
Below 10th					3 (5.08%)	1 (1.69%)		3 (5.08%)
None	1 (1.69%)							1 (1.69%)
Grand Total	1 (1.69%)	1 (1.69%)			23 (38.98%)	30 (50.85%)	4 (6.78%)	59 (100%)
Scheduled Tribes								
Father Mother	None	Below 10th	10th Standard	12th Standard	Under- graduate	Post- graduate	Doctoral (Ph.D.)	Grand Total
Doctoral (Ph.D.)								
Post-graduate					4 (14.29%)	5 (17.86%)	2 (7.14%)	11 (39.29%)
Under-graduate					7 (25%)	4 (14.29%)		11 (39.29%)
12th Standard				1 (3.57%)	2 (7.14%)			3 (10.71%)
10th Standard				1 (3.57%)				1 (3.57%)
Below 10th								
None		1 (3.57%)			1 (3.57%)			2 (7.14%)
Grand Total		1 (3.57%)		2 (7.14%)	14 (50%)	9 (32.14%)	2 (7.14%)	28 (100%)
No Caste								
Father Mother	None	Below 10th	10th Standard	12th Standard	Under- graduate	Post- graduate	Doctoral (Ph.D.)	Grand Total
Doctoral (Ph.D.)						1 (2.33%)	1 (2.33%)	2 (4.65%)
Post-graduate			1 (2.33%)		3 (6.98%)	14 (32.56%)		18 (41.86%)
Under-graduate				2 (4.65%)	11 (25.58%)	7 (16.28%)		20 (46.51%)
12th Standard				1 (2.33%)	1 (2.33%)			2 (4.65%)
10th Standard					1 (2.33%)			1 (2.33%)
Below 10th								
None								
Grand Total			1 (2.33%)	3 (6.98%)	16 (37.21%)	22 (51.16%)	1 (2.33%)	43 (100%)

Table 3-5: Caste and Parents' Education Qualifications (2/2)

Substantive difference could be noticed across caste groups regarding the family education history, where we asked ‘How many generations before you were graduates in your family?’ Table 3-6 illustrates the break-up across caste groups. The rows represent number of generations who were college graduates on Mother’s side and columns represent the number of generations who were college graduates on Father’s side of the respondent. ‘More than 3’ refers to more than three generations of graduates. 2-3 refers to families where grandparents and great grandparents have been graduates. One represents where respondent’s parents or their siblings have been college graduates. And none refers to- no previous generation having ever been a college graduate (See Table 2-15).

Majority of Brahmins have had at least 2-3 generations of graduates in their families and 34.2% of Brahmins have had more than three generations of graduates in their families. Only a few outliers fall in the orange coloured cells which represents those respondents whose families do not come from long lines of college graduates.

The picture is different for other caste groups. Only 24.8% respondents belonging to Other Upper Castes and 21% belonging to No Caste category come from families with more than three generations of graduates. Whereas only 15-17% of SCs and STs fall within the same category. Quite a considerable share amongst all caste groups other than Brahmins fall in the orange coloured cells-they come from families which didn’t have any college graduates before respondents’ generation themselves or their parent’s. 23.2% of Other Upper Castes, 44% of SCs, 39.2% of STs, 18.6% of No Caste, fall within this category.

Surprisingly, first-generation college goers are uniformly spread across all caste groups. Since they are few in number, it does not seem prudent to look at their proportion within each caste group and derive inferences.

		Brahmins				
Father	Mother	None	1	2-3	More than 3	Grand Total
	More than 3		1 (0.95%)	3 (2.86%)	27 (25.71%)	31 (29.52%)
	2-3		14 (13.33%)	44 (41.90%)	4 (3.81%)	62 (59.05%)
	1		8 (7.62%)	1 (0.95%)	1 (0.95%)	10 (9.52%)
	None	1 (0.95%)	1 (0.95%)			2 (1.90%)
	Grand Total	1	24	48	32	105

	(0.95%)	(22.86%)	(45.71%)	(30.48%)	(100%)
Other Upper Castes					
Father Mother	None	1	2-3	More than 3	Grand Total
More than 3		1 (0.78%)	6 (4.65%)	18 (13.95%)	25 (19.38%)
2-3	1 (0.78%)	14 (10.85%)	46 (35.66%)	6 (4.65%)	67 (51.94%)
1	1 (0.78%)	27 (20.93%)	6 (4.65%)	1 (0.78%)	35 (27.13%)
None	1 (0.78%)	1 (0.78%)			2 (1.55%)
Grand Total	3 (2.53%)	43 (33.33%)	58 (44.96%)	25 (19.38%)	129 (100%)
Scheduled Castes					
Father Mother	None	1	2-3	More than 3	Grand Total
More than 3		1 (1.69%)	2 (3.39%)	4 (6.78%)	7 (11.86%)
2-3		7 (11.86%)	14 (23.73%)	2 (3.39%)	23 (38.98%)
1		19 (32.20%)	2 (3.39%)		21 (35.59%)
None	1 (1.69%)	6 (10.17%)	1 (1.69%)		8 (13.56%)
Grand Total	1 (1.69%)	33 (55.93%)	19 (32.20%)	6 (10.17%)	59 (100%)
Scheduled Tribes					
Father Mother	None	1	2-3	More than 3	Grand Total
More than 3		1 (3.57%)	2 (7.14%)		3 (10.71%)
2-3		3 (10.71%)	8 (28.57%)	1 (3.57%)	12 (42.86%)
1	1 (3.57%)	8 (28.57%)	1 (3.57%)	1 (3.57%)	11 (39.29%)
None	2				2 (7.14%)
Grand Total	3 (10.71%)	12 (42.86%)	11 (39.29%)	2 (7.14%)	28 (100%)
No Caste					
Father Mother	None	1	2-3	More than 3	Grand Total
More than 3			1 (2.33%)	3 (6.98%)	4 (9.30%)
2-3		5 (11.63%)	20 (46.51%)	5 (11.63%)	30 (69.77%)
1		6 (13.95%)	1 (2.33%)		7 (16.28%)
None	1 (2.33%)	1 (2.33%)			2 (4.65%)
Grand Total	1 (2.33%)	12 (27.91%)	22 (51.16%)	8 (18.60%)	43 (100%)

Table 3-6: Caste and family education history

3.6. Do Reservations Work?

There are several arguments for caste-based reservations in India. It can be argued that it does not matter if the benefits of reservation are cornered by the more privileged among the marginalised groups, as one of the primary functions of reservation is to correct historical injustice; the mere presence of representatives from excluded groups (notwithstanding their economic privilege) in Universities serves to make academic spaces more inclusive. On the other side of the spectrum is the argument that reservations ought to be completely income based, completely leaving aside caste.³⁹ Without addressing the merits of these arguments, the economic profile of the beneficiaries of reservation in NLS is still worth looking into. Do these beneficiaries on average fit into the anti-reservation rhetoric that SC/ST students in Universities are typically rich and come from a lineage of generations of reservation beneficiaries? On the contrary, the data reveals that the profile of reservation beneficiaries are on average from less privileged backgrounds.

Amongst the 90 students who got admitted through SC/ST reservation, 87 of them identify themselves as SC/ST. Out of the remaining three-one identifies themselves as Brahmin while the other two identify themselves as Rajputs. Another student who got admission through General category-identified itself as Rajput but holds Scheduled Tribe status. This anomaly is explained by the fact that in the Himalayan states, ST status was accorded area-wise, not on the basis of social background, and since their families were located in such areas as a consequence, they too were accorded ST status.

If we look at family history, it is evident that it has been Brahmins mostly who come from families with long lines of college graduates. Out of 397 students, there are 103 who come from families where more than three generations had gone to college-they form 26% of total NLS population. But when we look at those who got admitted through SC/ST reservation, only 15 out of 90 such students, or 16.67% come from such families. Whereas amongst those who got admitted through General category (279), such students who come from families with more than three generations of graduates are nearly 28% of all 279 such students. On the other hand, amongst those in whose families no one before their parents' generation were graduates (88), 38 or 43.18% of them are the

³⁹ Sukhadeo Thorat *et al*, *Prejudice against Reservation Policies*, 51(8) ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL WEEKLY 62 (20 February 2016).

ones who are beneficiaries of reservation. Their share amongst this group is nearly double of their share in total NLS population (22.67%).

Generations of graduates – Mother’s side	More than 3	-	4 (1.01%)	16 (4.03%)	60 (15.11%)
	2-3	1 (0.25%)	46 (11.59%)	144 (36.27%)	20 (5.04%)
	1	2 (0.50%)	71 (17.88%)	14 (3.53%)	3 (0.76%)
	None	6 (1.51%)	9 (2.27%)	1 (0.25%)	-
		None	1	2-3	More than 3
Generations of Graduates – Father’s side					

Table 3-7: Generations of college-goers

It has already been demonstrated in Table 3-2 that the average income of reservation beneficiaries is substantially lower than those in the General Category. This can be corroborated from another angle- Among the takers of the Common Law Admission test, an overwhelming majority choose NLSIU as their first option and NALSAR as their second. Hence, it is safe to assume that if NLSIU did not reserve seats, the 25 or so seats would have been occupied by those students who are presently studying in NALSAR admitted under General Category. Graph A in Figure 3-5 represents the annual family income break-up of students at NLS who got admission through SC/ST reservation and Graph B represents the break-up amongst students who got admission through General category at NALSAR. It is evident from the two graphs that those who got displaced through SC/ST reservation belonged to much more prosperous backgrounds than those who displaced them the students from the general category at NALSAR are from more prosperous backgrounds than those from the SC/ST groups in NLS. Even though ‘Graph B’ is generated through sampling, it confirms that on average, the beneficiaries of reservation at NLS are from less privileged backgrounds than top ranked general category students. It also confirms the trends as noticed in Figure 3-1 which shows how Brahmins and Other Upper Castes at NLS belong to much more prosperous backgrounds than the students from SC/ST backgrounds.



Figure 3-5: Annual Family Income breakup of SC/ST category students at NLS (Graph A) and General Category students at NALSAR (Graph B)

Does this mean our reservation-based affirmative action policy works in improving access to the genuinely underprivileged? It ought to be borne in mind that NLS is an elite institution, and instead of looking at elitism amongst the SCs and STs individually, their elitism ought to be looked in the context of NLS as a whole. And when seen holistically, they are comparatively less privileged and elite than those who got admitted through General category.

This however does not dispel another notion that majority of reservation beneficiaries are children of Civil Servants and senior government functionaries. Our findings confirm this (Table 3-8). As a pre-emptive disclaimer, we analyse Father's Occupation instead of Mother's here not due to any other reason other than the fact that the data on father's occupation showed a greater diversity in terms of occupations. Mothers of 164 students are homemakers, a result which impedes analysis.

20 students who got admitted through SC/ST reservation are children of civil servants. (Two of them have their mothers as civil servants. In total, mothers of three students are civil servants). 22.2% of SC/ST students belong to this category. This is in extreme contrast with General Category-where only 9.31% have their parents as civil servants. And if we expand the analysis to include both government servants and civil servants in the same category, we find 50 SC/ST students belonging to this grouping-forming 55.5% of the total SC/ST population. In contrast, only 20.79% of General category students have their fathers as either government servants or civil servants.

Father's Occupation	Foreign Nationals	General	PWDs	Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes	Grand Total
Business	7 (33.33%)	46 (16.49%)	2 (28.57%)	6 (10.17%)	2 (6.45%)	63 (15.87%)
Govt. Service	0 (0%)	32 (11.47%)	0 (0%)	21 (35.59%)	9 (29.03%)	62 (15.62%)
Civil Servant	0 (0%)	26 (9.32%)	0 (0%)	10 (16.95%)	10 (32.26%)	46 (11.59%)
Engineer	4 (19.05%)	23 (8.24%)	2 (28.57%)	4 (6.78%)	3 (9.68%)	36 (9.07%)
Doctor	2 (9.52%)	24 (8.60%)	0 (0%)	6 (10.17%)	0 (0%)	32 (8.06%)
Management	1 (4.76%)	21 (7.53%)	1 (14.29%)	1 (1.69%)	0 (0%)	24 (6.05%)
Private Service	0 (0%)	20 (7.17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.23%)	21 (5.29%)
Legal Profession	1 (4.76%)	17 (6.09%)	1 (14.29%)	4 (6.78%)	0 (0%)	23 (5.79%)

Table 3-8: Distribution of most common Father's Occupation amongst each admission category

Queer Movement:

Out of 397 respondents to our census, 11 students declared themselves as LGBTQ, and another 4 students said they were unsure. The rest reported themselves as heterosexuals. While the more vocal students may be seen as generally successful in all spheres of law school, an analysis of the composition of these 15 students reveals that their backgrounds are varied and mostly conformed to trends in the overall population.

The queer movement, (though it may be premature to say) may be called one of the few successful internal movements concerning inclusiveness within the University. The NLS Queer Alliance was formed as a group to act as a support mechanism for the queer community in NLS especially new entrants to the law school who were coming out and to facilitate discussion on queer related issues. The idea was mooted following the coming out of one of the first year students, when it was felt that there was a need to provide an adequate support structure to such students. Although the Queer Alliance was formed only last year in 2014, engagement on queer related issues and discourse on alternate sexualities has been taking place since the nineties.

The Alliance has been active, organising discussion groups and helping in organising the Bangalore Pride. NLS has generally been quite 'tolerant' towards queer issues. Several students have reported having come out about their alternate sexualities after coming to the law school. Students who came out in the first and second years report having had extremely positive reactions from seniors who were queer. Some of these students have parents who are not aware of their sexual orientation. The decision to come out was made after seeing the University as having a largely tolerant atmosphere. Active discrimination is not abundant. It is however, not possible to make a general statement that the University as a whole is inclusive. The lack of open Homophobia in the campus may be attributable to the fact that people are not publicly homophobic, the dominant discourse being one that is tolerant towards queer students. There may be students who might be homophobic but are reluctant to voice it publicly.

A vandalism incident happened a few years ago where homophobic slurs were written on the bulletin board of a queer professor, it is perhaps an example that things may not be as they appear. Jokes on

sexuality are common as an independent survey carried out last year (2014) revealed. However, on the plus side, most students also identified themselves as supportive of queer rights with some considering themselves allies of the movement. Most queer students as the interviews and survey will show have not faced any active discrimination from students or the faculty and administration. Most of them reported having support structures within the University itself to fall back to. The survey results indicate that some of the queer students had faced some form of situation where they were asked not to 'push their homosexuality onto others'. Most of them had come out after coming to NLS and have also reported taking part in more queer related activities after coming to NLS.

Although the movement calls for acceptance of queer students, the more prominent students within the movement seem to be a rather homogeneous bunch as one student interviewee stated. While regionally they may be diverse, the vocal students who are part of the queer movement and more specifically the Queer Alliance are generally seen to be doing well in other spheres in the law school as well. Their identity as being queer is only viewed as one facet of several other identities.

Differently-Abled:

There are twelve students who are differently abled. Amongst them seven are visually impaired while five are physically-handicapped. Seven of them have taken admission under Persons with Disabilities (PWD) category, three through general and two through SC categories.

The group of students who got admitted under PWD category, is quite equal in terms of gender composition and all but one of these students hails from big cities and four of them belong to families with high annual incomes. Only one amongst the seven is from a family with annual income below Rs. 3 lakh. Nearly all come from families where even their grandparents were college graduates, more than half of them have at least one parent who is a post-graduate. Thus, those who are eligible for admission through PWD category are usually the ones who come from privileged families.

The average CGPA of this group is 4.25, indicating that their academic performance is only a little less than the college average. However, it ought to be noted that none of them has ever been a member of an Activity-Based Committee or Hostel Committee. While five of them did apply at some point or the other

to be a member of ABCs, they were not selected. They have neither debated nor participated in ADR/MUN tournaments nor mooted, except for one single student who has mooted. During the interviews, while everyone did confirm that there is no discrimination or bias, some did revealed that the infrastructure in NLS does not make it an easy place for them to live in. There have however, been a few improvements such as the installation of an elevator in the Academic Block in 2012.

4. Diversity at NLS

4.1. Big Cities and Small Towns:

A majority of students at NLSIU express their hometowns to be cities (Tier 1 & 2), as opposed to smaller towns and rural areas. This is easily explainable due to the as-yet limited appeal and awareness of premiere legal education, when compared to other professional streams like medicine and engineering. 17.8% of the students (i.e., 71 students) in NLS at present are from small places (Tier 3 & 4), and this number is increasing every year. From forming only 13.6% of batch strength in the senior-most batch, their share has nearly doubled (23.1%) in the junior-most batch. And taking into account the ever-increasing number of CLAT aspirants-the trends definitely indicate an increase in awareness and expansion of the talent pool.

Type of Home town/ village:	Year of Joining:					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Grand Total:
Tier 1	33 (45.21%)	30 (38.96%)	24 (30%)	23 (29.87%)	23 (28.04%)	133 (34.19%)
Tier 2	26 (35.62%)	30 (38.96%)	36 (45%)	39 (50.65%)	36 (43.90%)	167 (42.93%)
Tier 3	9 (12.33%)	10 (12.99%)	11 (13.75%)	11 (14.28%)	11 (13.41%)	50 (12.58%)
Tier 4	1 (1.37%)	3 (3.90%)	5 (6.25%)	3 (3.89%)	8 (9.75%)	21 (5.40%)
Abroad	4 (5.48%)	4 (5.19%)	4 (5%)	1 (1.30%)	4 (4.87%)	18 (4.63%)
Grand Total	73 (100%)	77 (100%)	80 (100%)	77 (100%)	82 (100%)	389 (100%)

Table 4-1: Distribution of type of home town/village across batches

Background:

As we noticed earlier in Section 3.5, the distribution of gender across types of home town is skewed. While more than 80% women come from cities (Tier 1&2), in comparison 73.5% men come from the cities. The proportion of men coming from Tier 3 (16.5% of total males) and Tier 4 (7.55%) places is nearly double that of women (9.2% and 3.8% respectively). This strengthens our proposition that women from more privileged backgrounds are more likely to gain admission at NLS.

Across admission categories, majority of the students are from Tier 2 cities. However there is noticeable difference in proportions of students coming from different tiers. While a mere 16.4% (46) of General category students come from Tier 3 and Tier 4 places, their proportion amongst STs is 45.1% (14). The distribution amongst SC category mirrors closely to that in General category.

Type of Home town/ village:	Foreign Nationals	General	PWDs	SCs	STs	Grand Total
Tier 1	2 (9.52%)	107 (38.35%)	2 (28.57%)	19 (32.20%)	5 (16.13%)	135 (34.01%)
Tier 2	1 (4.76%)	125 (44.80%)	4 (57.14%)	28 (47.46%)	12 (38.71%)	170 (42.82%)
Tier 3	0 (0%)	33 (11.83%)	1 (14.29%)	9 (15.25%)	10 (32.26%)	51 (12.85%)
Tier 4	1 (4.76%)	14 (5.02%)	-	3 (5.08%)	4 (12.90%)	23 (5.79%)
Not Applicable	17 (80.95%)	-	-	-	-	18 (4.53%)
Grand Total	21 (100%)	279 (100%)	7 (100%)	59 (100%)	31 (100%)	397 (100%)

Table 4-2: Break-up of hometowns/ villages across admission categories

This is confirmed when we look at Table 4-3 where the shares of caste and religion groups amongst each Tier is given. A disproportionately low number of Brahmins come from Tier 4 (small towns and villages) places and a disproportionately high number of STs come from the same. Overall too, the distribution of hometowns amongst STs is quite skewed, compared to other caste groups where majorly-their shares amongst each Tier roughly corresponds with their share in total population. However, the distribution amongst religion groups is more skewed. While Buddhists, Christians and Sikhs have a disproportionately large share in the small town/village population (Tier 3 & 4), Jains and Hindus have a larger share amongst those from cities than their total share in population (Tier 1 & 2).

Interestingly when we look at those students who are religious minorities and who also identify themselves as SC/STs, they are more likely to come from small town/village than their non-SC/ST religious peers. This trend is highly evident amongst Buddhists, but not as much amongst other religious minorities.

Caste Groups:	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Share in Total Population
Brahmins	39 (28.89%)	43 (25.29%)	12 (22.64%)	4 (18.18%)	105 (26.45%)
Other Upper Castes	44 (32.59%)	56 (32.94%)	16 (30.19%)	6 (27.27%)	129 (32.49%)
Scheduled Castes	19 (14.07%)	28 (16.47%)	9 (16.98%)	3 (13.64%)	59 (14.86%)
Scheduled Tribes	4 (2.96%)	12 (7.06%)	9 (16.98%)	3 (13.64%)	28 (7.05%)
None	12 (8.89%)	20 (11.76%)	4 (7.55%)	4 (18.18%)	43 (10.83%)
Religion Groups:	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Share in Total Population
Buddhist	-	4 (2.35%)	4 (7.55%)	1 (4.55%)	11 (2.41%)
Christians	3 (2.22%)	6 (3.53%)	5 (9.43%)	3 (13.64%)	17 (4.56%)
Hindus	116 (85.93%)	141 (82.94%)	39 (73.58%)	16 (72.73%)	325 (83.65%)
Jains	5 (3.70%)	13 (7.65%)	1 (1.89%)	1 (4.55%)	20 (5.36%)
Sikhs	7 (5.19%)	4 (2.35%)	3 (5.66%)	1 (4.55%)	15 (4.02%)

Table 4-3: Break up of hometowns/villages across admission categories

When we look at income levels across students from different tiers, we see that those from smaller places also tend to be economically disadvantaged compared to their city-dwelling peers. This is especially true for the below Rs. 3 lakh bracket and the Rs. 3-6 lakh bracket. 22.73% of students from Tier 4 towns fall within the lowest income bracket, as compared to just 6.58% of the entire NLS population. . Likewise, we notice that the share of students with above Rs. 36 lakhs per annum family income is nearly double amongst those from Tier 1 cities (28.15%), whereas for other places-their share is less than half of their share in total population (13.95%).

Thus it is evident that many of those who come from smaller places (75 in all) also come from relatively lesser economic privilege. The next section analyses the background of these 75 students in greater detail.

Income Brackets:	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Share in Total Population
Above 36,00,000	38 (28.15%)	12 (7.06%)	2 (3.77%)	1 (4.55%)	53 (13.95%)
12,00,001-36,00,000	59 (43.70%)	59 (34.71%)	23 (43.40%)	7 (31.82%)	148 (38.95%)
6,00,001-12,00,000	28 (20.74%)	57 (33.53%)	15 (28.30%)	6 (27.27%)	106 (27.89%)
3,00,001-6,00,000	10 (7.41%)	26 (15.29%)	9 (16.98%)	3 (13.64%)	48 (12.63%)
Below 3,00,000	-	16 (9.41%)	4 (7.55%)	5 (22.73%)	25 (6.58%)

Table 4-4: Hometowns/villages break-up across annual family income brackets

Trends over the batches:

As noticed earlier in Table 4-1, the number of students from Tier 3&4 towns has been increasing consistently year on year. They are a small minority in the senior-most batch, but form consistently higher portions of junior batches. Interestingly, we also see that with every batch, these students from small towns also come from more varied economic backgrounds. Of the 75 students at NLS currently from these small towns divided across batches, everyone in the senior-most batch reported an annual income of more than 6 lakh, but in the junior-most batch, we see annual income varying across all ranges. This is positive evidence of the growing popularity of CLAT not only geographically, but also vertically, across economic lines although as we saw above, the two are often correlated (Table 4-5 excludes those who joined prior to 2011).

Income Brackets:	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Grand Total
Below 3,00,000	-	2 (15.4%)	2 (12.5%)	1 (7.1%)	3 (15.8%)	8 (11.1%)
3,00,001-6,00,000	-	3 (23.1%)	3 (18.8%)	2 (14.3%)	3 (15.8%)	11 (15.3%)
6,00,001-12,00,000	4 (40.0%)	3 (23.1%)	2 (12.5%)	5 (35.7%)	7 (36.8%)	21 (29.2%)
12,00,001-36,00,000	6 (60.0%)	4 (30.8%)	7 (43.8%)	6 (42.9%)	6 (31.6%)	29 (40.3%)
Above 36,00,000	-	1 (7.7%)	2 (12.5%)	-	-	3 (4.2%)

Table 4-5: Annual family income of students from small places across batches

Schooling background:

Having identified these 75 students hailing from small towns, it is also pertinent to understand the kind of schooling received by them. Regarding schooling, we collected data about the type of school and annual school fees. However importantly for this context, we also asked the students to specify where they studied classes 9, 10, 11 and 12. Table 4-6 gives the distribution of where the students completed high school from.

Where did you do 11&12 th from?	Type of Home town/village:					
	Type:	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Grand Total
	Tier 1	126	34	23	5	188
	Tier 2	7	131	6	10	154
	Tier 3		3	22	1	26
	Tier 4	1	1		4	6
	Abroad	1	1		1	3
	Did not Specify			1	1	2
	Grand Total	135	170	52	22	379
Where did you do 9&10 th from?	Type of Home town/village:					
	Type:	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Grand Total
	Tier 1	120	25	16	4	165
	Tier 2	10	131	10	8	159
	Tier 3	1	5	26	2	34
	Tier 4	1	2		6	9
	Abroad	3	6		1	10
	Did not Specify		1		1	2
	Grand Total	135	170	52	22	379

Table 4-6: Place of 9&10th standard schooling versus home town/village

It is quite evident that a lot of students moved to larger cities for their final two years of schooling. But despite this huge shift, we are still left with 32 who completed Classes 11 and 12 in Tier 3 and 4 towns. However, it ought to be noted that this in itself is not indicative of whether the students received quality education or not-a number of students did their schooling from Mussoorie, which although falls under Tier-4 as per our categorisation, houses some of the most elite boarding schools in the country. Therefore it becomes pertinent to look at the kind of schooling each group attended and how much yearly schooling fees did they pay.

Background/ Type of Schooling	Government	Private	Reputed Private	Missionary	Elite
Total Population (397)	35 (8.82%)	97 (24.43%)	205 (51.64%)	24 (6.05%)	36 (9.07%)
Students from Tier 1 or 2 (305)	20 (6.56%)	70 (22.95%)	170 (55.74%)	21 (6.89%)	24 (7.87%)
Students from Tier 3 or 4 (75)	13 (17.33%)	24 (32.00%)	30 (40.00%)	3 (4.00%)	5 (6.67%)
Students who went to school in Tier 1, 2 or abroad (361)	28 (7.76%)	84 (23.27%)	195 (54.02%)	22 (6.09%)	32 (8.86%)
Students who went to school in Tier 3 or 4 places (34)	7 (20.59%)	12 (35.29%)	9 (26.47%)	2 (5.88%)	4 (11.76%)

Table 4-7: Type of high school attended across different types of hometowns/ place of schooling

Table 4-7 shows type of schooling which students from various backgrounds attended. It can be noticed that those students who come from Tier 3 & 4 places and those who went to schools located in such places-attended government and private schools in considerably larger proportion than others. Also it ought to be noted that a considerable number of students who attended schools in Tier 3 or 4 places, classified their school as 'Elite'.

When we look at Table 4-8, we notice that these students who attended schools located in Tier 3 or 4 places, attended schools at the extremes of the spectrum-while a disproportionate number paid annual schooling fee of less than Rs. 5000 (11.8%), a disproportionate number also paid fees of greater than Rs. 1 lakh (17.7%). This disproportion is not as profound for students who themselves are from Tier 3 or 4 places-while nearly half of them paid schooling fees of less than Rs. 30,000, a considerable chunk, 16% paid fees of more than Rs. 1 lakh as well.

Annual School Fees	Less than 5,000	5,001-30,000	30,001-1,00,000	More than 1,00,001
Total Population (397)	29 (7.30%)	135 (34.01%)	181 (45.59%)	52 (13.10%)
Students from Tier 1 or 2 (305)	21 (6.89%)	103 (33.77%)	150 (49.18%)	31 (10.16%)
Students from Tier 3 or 4 (75)	6 (8.00%)	30 (40.00%)	27 (36.00%)	12 (16.00%)
Students who went to school in Tier 1, 2 or abroad (361)	25 (6.93%)	126 (34.90%)	166 (45.98%)	44 (12.19%)
Students who went to school in Tier 3 or 4 places (34)	4 (11.76%)	9 (26.47%)	15 (44.12%)	6 (17.65%)

Table 4-8: Annual school fees across different types of hometowns/ place of schooling

Fluency in Spoken English	1	2	3	4	5
Total Population (397)	1 (0.3%)	5 (1.3%)	17 (4.3%)	104 (26.2%)	270 (68.0%)
Students from Tier 1 or 2 (305)	0 (0.0%)	4 (1.3%)	12 (3.9%)	74 (24.3%)	215 (70.5%)
Students from Tier 3 or 4 (75)	1 (1.3%)	1 (1.3%)	5 (6.7%)	24 (32.0%)	44 (58.7%)
Students who went to school in Tier 1, 2 or abroad (361)	0 (0.0%)	3 (0.8%)	13 (3.6%)	89 (24.7%)	256 (70.9%)
Students who went to school in Tier 3 or 4 places (34)	1 (2.9%)	2 (5.9%)	4 (11.8%)	14 (41.2%)	13 (38.2%)

Table 4-9: Fluency in Spoken English

Thus it becomes pertinent to identify students, who not just came from disadvantageous background, but also had disadvantageous schooling and yet managed to make it to NLS. We could identify 36 such individuals who come from Tier 3 or 4 places, and attended schools where fees was less than Rs. 30,000 a year. Only one student who though from a city background, went to schooling in Tier 3 or 4 place, attended a school which it perceived as neither 'Elite' nor 'Reputed Private' and thus has been classified along with the 36 abovementioned individuals.



Figure 4-1: Caste, gender and family income break down of those who went to schools in small places

4.2. Implications of Schooling:

In the preceding section, we looked into type of schooling received by students from different tiers of towns. We were able to notice not just how there is often an overlap between schooling expenditure and where one is from, but also how there is a certain group which gets disadvantageous schooling because of multiple factors- size of hometown being a major one. But these are not all the inferences which could be drawn with respect to schooling background.

In this section we shall try to identify different stratifications amongst students based on their schooling background and thereafter look at the ramifications it may have had upon their linguistic skills.

Non-English Medium background:

There are in all only 13 students who attended non-English medium high schools. Two of them attended Telugu medium, and the other eleven attended Hindi medium. How did these 13 make it to NLS while innumerable others couldn't, is a question which needs to be looked into.

Amongst these thirteen, only three are females. Their average family income is Rs. 7.6 lakhs per annum, which is nearly a third of the overall average. Only four managed to get admission through general category, while remaining (6 SCs and 3 STs) got admitted through SC/ST categories. These nine (SC/ST background) had their ranks beyond 1000 in CLAT, while 3 out of 4 who managed to get in through general category had their ranks between 30-50, i.e., the lower half in the general category. Only one student from a non-English medium background managed to get a rank amongst the top ten in CLAT

Vast differences in schooling experiences:

We identified 201 students (in green) as having received a decent schooling based on the annual expenditure one incurred on schooling and the category of high-school as perceived by the student. Similarly, on these two criteria we can classify the 77 (highlighted in orange), as having received a relatively lower quality schooling

School category/Fees	Below 5000	5001-30,000	30,001-1,00,000	More than 1,00,000
Elite	-	4 (1.01%)	11 (2.77%)	21 (5.29%)
Missionary	2 (0.50%)	14 (3.53%)	6 (1.51%)	2 (0.50%)
Reputed Private	4 (1.01%)	63 (15.87%)	114 (28.72%)	24 (6.05%)
Private	6 (1.51%)	41 (10.33%)	45 (11.34%)	5 (1.26%)
Government	17 (4.28%)	13 (3.27%)	5 (1.26%)	-

Table 4-10: Co-relation between school categories and annual fees

We see a marked difference between those who received quality schooling and those who didn't with respect to how they procured admission. Considerable share of Foreign Nationals also received quality education (13), as compared to those who did not (3). The foreign nationals are admitted solely on the basis of their XII board results. They have far higher average family annual income of Rs. 26.9 lakhs compared to the overall average of Rs. 19.6 lakhs.

While the gender distribution is skewed amongst those who received lower quality schooling (77)- with 49 of them being Males and 28 being females, the distribution is somewhat equal in the other group (201) with females (104), being marginally more than males (97). There is also a difference

in the share of Brahmins amongst the two groups. While in the first group having received non-quality schooling (77), Brahmins form only 22%, their share jumps to nearly 30% in the group having received quality schooling (201). The proportion of Other Upper Castes however remains constant in the two groups.

Admission categories:	Foreign Nationals	General	PWDs	Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes
Total Population (397)	21 (5.29%)	279 (70.28%)	7 (1.76%)	59 (14.86%)	31 (7.81%)
Non-Quality schooling (77)	3 (3.90%)	47 (61.04%)	2 (2.60%)	16 (20.78%)	9 (11.69%)
Quality schooling (201)	13 (6.47%)	147 (73.13%)	2 (1.00%)	24 (11.94%)	15 (7.46%)
Non-English medium schools (13)	-	4 (30.77%)	-	6 (46.15%)	3 (23.08%)

Table 4-11: Distribution across admission categories as per type of schooling

Expectedly those who received poorer schooling largely come from lower-income backgrounds whereas there is a direct co-relation between higher income and quality schooling (Table 4-12).

Income Brackets:	Below 3,00,000	3,00,001-6,00,000	6,00,001-12,00,000	12,00,001-36,00,000	Above 36,00,000
Total Population (397)	26 (6.55%)	49 (12.34%)	108 (27.20%)	155 (39.04%)	59 (14.86%)
Non-quality schooling (77)	12 (15.58%)	12 (15.58%)	19 (24.68%)	30 (38.96%)	4 (5.19%)
Quality schooling (201)	5 (2.49%)	14 (6.97%)	58 (28.86%)	80 (39.80%)	44 (21.89%)
Non-English medium schools (13)	4 (30.77%)	4 (30.77%)	3 (23.08%)	2 (15.38%)	-

Table 4-12: Distribution across income brackets as per type of schooling

Given that school education is highly privatised, it is a very expected trend. Table 4-13 clearly demonstrates the same. Those from lower income backgrounds (Below Rs. 6 lakhs per annum) are much more likely to attend Government and low-quality private schools than others. Majority of those who attended non-English medium high schools also tend to come from lower income

backgrounds. Similarly those who are from economically prosperous backgrounds (Above Rs. 12 lakhs per annum) are more likely to attend ‘Elite’ and ‘Missionary’ schools.

Type of School:	Government	Private	Reputed Private	Missionary	Elite
Total Population (397)	35 (8.82%)	97 (24.43%)	205 (51.64%)	24 (6.05%)	36 (9.07%)
Below Rs. 6 lakhs (75)	11 (14.67%)	24 (32.00%)	36 (48.00%)	3 (4.00%)	1 (1.33%)
6,00,001-12,00,000 (108)	6 (5.56%)	29 (26.85%)	55 (50.93%)	11 (10.19%)	7 (6.48%)
Above Rs. 12,00,001(214)	18 (8.41%)	44 (20.56%)	114 (53.27%)	10 (4.67%)	28 (13.08%)

Table 4-13: Type of high school attended across income brackets

4.3. The English hegemony:

A factor which is very closely tied with schooling and has a huge impact upon ones performance is fluency in English. Given the nature of the entrance examination which is only conducted in English and 20% of total weightage is given to English proficiency-an overwhelming majority of students are highly fluent in the language. This is also a reason why students from non-English medium schools (13) form a minuscule minority. However, CLAT is conducted only in the form of multiple-choice questions and does not have any question where the applicant has to write down answers. Nor is there an interview component during admissions. Thus those who make it to NLS need not necessarily be as fluent in English as it may seem since proficiency in spoken English is not tested and written English is only tested through MCQs.

Assessing proficiency in English is difficult since there are no courses or examinations to assess the same. We instead relied upon self-perception based questions. Even though there is always a problem of how one assesses itself, it is a good indicator of confidence levels in a language and could help to understand performance patterns better. We asked the students to specify their fluency skills (in spoken and written English separately) on a scale of 0-10, which has been for better analysis and representation was converted to a scale of 0-5. Table 4-14 gives a distribution of self-perceived English fluency levels.

Marginally, students perceive themselves to be more fluent in written English than spoken English.

Fluency in Spoken English	Fluency in Written English							Grand Total
	Scale(0-5, 5 being highest)	0	1	2	3	4	5	
0								
1			1					1
2			2	2	1			5
3				6	11			17
4				4	69	31		104
5					12	258		270
Grand Total			3	12	93	289		397

Table 4-14: Fluency in English amongst students

The ones highlighted in green could be classified as having high fluency in English language (301 or 75.8%) given they assessed both their spoken and written skills highly. The ones in orange having identified as at least one skill at a level below 4 out of 5 (below 8 out of 10), have been categorised as having low fluency (27 or 6.8%).

Fluency in Spoken English:	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
0					
1	1				
2	3	1			
3	6	2	3	3	2
4	28	26	23	14	11
5	44	48	54	60	60
Grand Total	82	77	80	77	73
Fluency in Written English:	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
0					
1					
2	3				
3	4	3	2		1
4	26	20	20	16	10
5	49	54	58	61	62
Grand Total	82	77	80	77	73

Table 4-15: Fluency in English across batches

Table 4-15 exhibits fluency levels across batches. This distribution is also indicative of the fact that NLS is becoming relatively more diverse with each batch. And even though the ones who ranked themselves low in fluency might improve over the years, in the absence of an English course-this equalising process might be taking longer than needed and would perhaps be having a

detrimental effect upon one’s learning process. Lack of fluency in English may also take away to a certain extent from one’s experiences at law school. Most courses require an average to above average level of English to both comprehend the course and for writing exams as well as projects. Aside from this, most daily interactions on campus take place in English. While there is an increasing presence of Hindi as well with more students coming in from the North, English continues to remain the main language of communication. Students with poorer English are generally seen to interact less in class and engage in public discussion. It also affects one’s ability to moot and debate to a great extent.⁴⁰

Factors influencing fluency in English:

Amongst the thirteen who are from non-English medium schooling background, a majority still perceive themselves to be considerably fluent in English-more so in written English than verbal.

Admission Categories:	Overall	Foreign Nationals	General	PWDs	Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes
Total Population	397	21	279	7	59	31
Not fluent in English	27 (6.8%)	1 (4.76%)	12 (4.3%)	1 (14.29%)	7 (11.86%)	6 (19.35%)
Fluent in English	301 (75.8%)	15 (71.43%)	231 (82.8%)	3 (42.86%)	35 (59.3%)	17 (54.84%)

Table 4-16: Fluency of English across Admission Categories

It is quite evident that students from PWD, SC and ST categories are relatively not as fluent as those from General and other categories. They form a disproportionately larger chunk of those who aren’t as fluent, and likewise a disproportionately smaller chunk amongst those who are fluent. However, it ought to be remembered that the SC/ST population is not homogenous. 50 of them come from families where at least one of their parents is either a civil servant or is in government service. If we look at fluency levels amongst this group and the remaining SC/ST population, we notice a considerable difference. While 50% of the remaining 40 SC/ST students

⁴⁰ Interview with Student (Batch of 2012) [NLSIU, 16 December 2015].
 Interview with Student (Batch of 2014) [NLSIU, 16 December 2015].
 Interview with Student (Batch of 2013) [NLSIU, 30 December 2015].
 Interview with Student (Batch of 2011) [NLSIU, 16 December 2015].
 Interview with Student (Batch of 2011) [NLSIU, 15 December 2015].
 Interview with Student (Batch of 2013) [NLSIU, 16 December 2015].

stated that they were fluent in English, over 64% of the remaining 50 SC/ST students who hail from civil and government services background stated that they were fluent in English.

Income Brackets:	Below 3,00,000	3,00,001- 6,00,000	6,00,001- 12,00,000	12,00,001- 36,00,000	Above 36,00,000
Total Population (397)	26 (6.55%)	49 (12.34%)	108 (27.20%)	155 (39.04%)	59 (14.86%)
Not fluent in English (27)	9 (33.33%)	7 (25.93%)	8 (29.63%)	3 (11.11%)	-
Fluent in English (301)	11 (3.65%)	30 (9.97%)	76 (25.25%)	130 (43.19%)	54 (17.94%)

Table 4-17: English fluency across income brackets

Fluency is a direct product of privilege. Table 4-17 corroborates the same. While the lower income groups (Below Rs. 6 lakhs) form not even 20% of total population, they form nearly 59% of those who are not as fluent in English. None from Above Rs. 36 lakhs bracket stated that their fluency in English is low. This could probably be due to the fact that -higher family income means better schooling. It was also found that a greater proportion of higher income students belong to tier 1 and tier 2 cities where English is more commonly used

We had previously identified two groups-one, which received quality schooling (201), and those who received schooling which could be said to be sub-standard relatively (77). The discrepancy in attainment of English fluency is quite stark. While only 8 (4%) of those who received quality schooling stated that they weren't so fluent in English, 10 (13%) amongst the other group stated so. And similarly 149 (74.1%) of those received quality schooling assessed themselves as being highly fluent compared to only 45 (58.4%) amongst those who received sub-standard schooling.

Type of schooling received:	Non-quality schooling (77)	Quality schooling (201)
Not fluent in English (27)	10 (13%)	8 (4%)
Fluent in English (301)	45 (58.4%)	149 (74.1%)

Table 4-18: Fluency in English as per type of high schooling

Where one does one's schooling from also becomes an important determining factor. If one does 11th and 12th from small places (Tier 3 & 4), he/she is 4 times more likely to have poor fluency than one who does schooling from cities.

4.4. Generations and privilege:

Another factor along with schooling which has direct influence upon an individual’s comfort with English and thereby law school life is family background. This is different from social background. Even though social, i.e., caste background does overlaps with educational attainments in a family as we noted earlier, the overlap is not absolute. Due to a variety of factors, students from across castes have different family backgrounds-educationally and occupationally. Therefore it becomes important to identify students from different family backgrounds.

Generations of graduates – Mother’s side	More than 3	-	4 (1.01%)	16 (4.03%)	60 (15.11%)
	2-3	1 (0.25%)	46 (11.59%)	144 (36.27%)	20 (5.04%)
	1	2 (0.50%)	71 (17.88%)	14 (3.53%)	3 (0.76%)
	None	(1.51%)	9 (2.27%)	1 (0.25%)	-
		None	1	2-3	More than 3
	Generations of Graduates – Father’s side				

Table 4-19: Generations of college-goers in the family

One way we can differentiate is on the basis number of generations which have been graduates. In NLS a considerable number (103) come from families where more than three generations preceding the current students’ have been graduates. In contrast there are only six first generation college-goers, and only 88 who come from families where the first college graduates were their parents’ generation. We choose this factor to categories students as per family background because it largely overlaps with parents’ education qualification. While 70 (68%) of those who come from families with 3+ generations of graduates have their parents as either at least one having a doctoral degree or both being post-graduates, the corresponding number amongst those who are either first or second generation college-goers is merely 23 (26.1%).

Similarly it has a considerable influence upon occupation of parents. Table 4-20 and 4-21 clearly demonstrates that. These tables give shares of each category of students availing from different types of families (based on number of generations of graduates), amongst the most popular occupations. The first row gives their share in total population. Share of any category which exceeds their share in total population indicates that disproportionate number of them have such

occupations, for instance-Business in case of 1st & 2nd generation college goers (30.16%) exceeds their overall share in the total population.

Table 7-1 clearly demonstrates that professions like Doctors, Management, Services and Engineers has a direct relationship with the number of generations of graduates-these professions are *preferred* by those who come from families which had greater generations of graduates. The opposite is true for government services and business.

Father's Occupation	1 st &2 nd generation college goers (88)	Students from 2-3 generations of graduates (206)	Students with more than 3 generations of graduates (103)
Total Population (397)	88 (22.17%)	206 (51.89%)	103 (25.94%)
Business (63)	19 (30.16%)	31 (49.21%)	13 (20.63%)
Govt. Service (62)	19 (30.65%)	34 (54.84%)	9 (14.52%)
Civil Servant (46)	11 (23.91%)	21 (45.65%)	14 (30.43%)
Engineer (36)	6 (16.67%)	14 (38.89%)	16 (44.44%)
Doctor (32)	2 (6.25%)	18 (56.25%)	12 (37.50%)
Management (24)	2 (8.33%)	16 (66.67%)	6 (25.00%)
Service (21)	3 (14.29%)	10 (47.62%)	8 (38.10%)
Legal Profession (23)	5 (21.74%)	14 (60.87%)	4 (17.39%)

Table 4-20: Father's occupation across family background

Mothers from families where there have been long history of going to college tend not to be homemakers. Other occupations like school teachers, doctors and services have a direct relationship with greater number of college going generations.

Mother's Occupation	1 st &2 nd generation college goers (88)	Students from 2-3 generations of graduates (206)	Students with more than 3 generations of graduates (103)
Total Population (397)	88 (22.17%)	206 (51.89%)	103 (25.94%)
Homemaker (164)	46 (28.05%)	89 (54.27%)	29 (17.68%)
School Teacher (56)	8 (14.29%)	28 (50.00%)	20 (35.71%)
Doctor (42)	6 (14.29%)	20 (47.62%)	16 (38.10%)
Professor (19)	5 (26.32%)	9 (47.37%)	5 (26.32%)
Management (17)	4 (23.53%)	9 (52.94%)	4 (23.53%)
Govt. Service (12)	1 (8.33%)	6 (50.00%)	5 (41.67%)
Service (10)	1 (10.00%)	9 (90.00%)	-
Legal Profession (6)	1 (16.67%)	3 (33.33%)	3 (50.00%)

Table 4-21: Mother's occupation across family background

Socio-Economic Correlation:

There is a stark difference in family background amongst those who get admitted to NLS through SC/ST category and those from General category. Amongst SC/ST students only 15 (16.67%) come from families with 3+ generations of graduates whereas amongst General category, 78 or 28% of them belong to this group. The difference is as stark amongst those who are first and second generation college-goers. While 38 or 42.2% of SC/STs fall in this group, only 46 (16.5%) of General category form part of this group.

Notably, only 10 amongst 105 Brahmins, i.e., less than 10% of Brahmins come from families where their grandparents and before generations did not go to college. Compared to SCs and STs, amongst them 44% for SCs and 39.2% of STs form part of this group. Thus, as of now there are 88 who are either first or second generation college-goers. Had reservation not been there, their number would have reduced to 60 amongst all 397 students.

There is a strong correlation with income levels too. 36.4% (32) of 1st and 2nd generation college-goers belong to income groups which earn less than Rs. 6 lakhs per annum. Whereas nearly 75% (67) of those in the second family background category come from families which earn more than Rs. 12 lakhs per annum. As more and more private institutions like Jindal Global Law School come about, which don't just have any obligations to provide reservations and charge an exorbitant fee which is nearly 5 times of NLUs-they would not just exclude a vast segment of the population but also further reduce socio-economic mobility, which should be a primary function of any educational institution.

Income Brackets:	Below 3,00,000	3,00,001- 6,00,000	6,00,001- 12,00,000	12,00,001- 36,00,000	Above 36,00,000
Total Population (397)	26 (6.55%)	49 (12.34%)	108 (27.20%)	155 (39.04%)	59 (14.86%)
1st&2nd generation college goers (88)	16 (18.18%)	16 (18.18%)	22 (25.00%)	27 (30.68%)	7 (7.95%)
Students with more than 3 generations of graduates (103)	2 (1.94%)	13 (12.62%)	21 (20.39%)	43 (41.75%)	24 (23.30%)

Table 4-22: Population shares of those from different family backgrounds across income brackets.

4.5. Income Inequality:

The last background information we collected was regarding the financial status of the students. Overall students at NLS come from families earning average to above average incomes. Over 50% (214) come from families which earn more than Rs. 1 lakh a month, amongst whom 59 come from families earning more than Rs. 3 lakhs a month. Whereas there are also students (26) who come from families which earn less than Rs. 3 lakhs in a year.

Just like table 4-1 which shows that over the course of the five years NLS has become more diverse, data on income distribution is also reflective of the same. There has been a steady increase in students coming from below Rs. 3 lakhs per annum background-in the senior-most batch there is just one, whereas now they are 11 such students. Likewise the population of those coming from Above 36 lakhs bracket has also decreased steadily. Another interesting thing to note, all but one students who had joined NLS before 2011 belong to lower income groups.

Year of Joining:	Before 2011	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Grand Total
Above 36,00,000	-	15 (20.55%)	19 (24.68%)	11 (13.75%)	8 (10.39%)	6 (7.32%)	59 (14.86%)
12,00,001-36,00,000	1 (12.50%)	34 (46.58%)	26 (33.77%)	30 (37.50%)	35 (45.45%)	29 (35.37%)	155 (39.04%)
6,00,001-12,00,000	-	15 (20.55%)	18 (23.38%)	25 (31.25%)	23 (29.87%)	27 (32.93%)	108 (27.20%)
3,00,001-6,00,000	4 (50.00%)	8 (10.96%)	11 (14.29%)	11 (13.75%)	6 (7.79%)	9 (10.98%)	49 (12.34%)
Below 3,00,000	3 (37.50%)	1 (1.37%)	3 (3.90%)	3 (3.75%)	5 (6.49%)	11 (13.41%)	26 (6.55%)
Grand Total	8 (100%)	73 (100%)	77 (100%)	80 (100%)	77 (100%)	82 (100%)	397 (100%)

Table 4-23: Income-wise distribution across batches

We recognised that there are several problems with relying on self-identified income: for various reasons, students may under or over-report their parental income. In other cases, students may simply not be aware of their parental income. Further, annual parental income may not be indicative of financial well-being, considering factors such as number of siblings, indebtedness, family wealth, etc. Therefore as a countercheck to this question, we also asked three questions testing the expenditure of students:

1. How much do you spend monthly while at NLS?
2. What was the cost of your laptop when you purchased it?
3. What was the cost of your mobile when you purchased it?

Expenditure Brackets	No. of students	Percentage of students
Above 15,000	26	6.55%
10,001-15,000	53	13.35%
6001-10,000	126	31.74%
3001-6000	135	34.01%
1001-3000	49	12.34%
Below 1000	8	2.02%

Table 4-24: Monthly Expenditure at NLS

Based on the answers to these questions, we can identify students as living a comfortable lifestyle or not. The first three expenditure brackets in Table 4-24 can be classified as leading a comfortable lifestyle- their average daily expenditure is around Rs. 200. Their share of total population (51%) closely corresponds to the share of students whose family income is more than Rs. 1 lakh a month. However, low monthly expenditure alone may not be an accurate indicator of (lack of) economic well-being: low expenditure could be due to personal consumption habits or because few students live at home, with their parents. Hence, a reading of this data in conjunction with data on spending on mobile phones and laptops is useful in arriving at whether students with low monthly expenditure are likely to be economically well-off.

Laptop:		Mobile Phone:	
Price Brackets:	No. of Students:	Price Bracket:	No. of Students:
Above 65,001	57 (14.36%)	Above 20,000	115 (28.97%)
45,001-65,000	119 (29.97%)	10,001-20,000	130 (32.75%)
20,001-45,000	197 (49.62%)	3001-10,000	130 (32.75%)
Below 20,000	8 (2.02%)	Below 3000	12 (3.02%)
Did not purchase (Received as part of assistance/ award/ scholarship)	16 (4.03%)	Did not purchase (Received as part of assistance/ award/ scholarship)	10 (2.52%)

Table 4-25: Break-up of expenditure on laptops and mobile phones

Therefore if we consider the low-spending groups, i.e., last three rows in Table 4-24 and check how many of them have spent more than Rs. 10,000 on mobiles and Rs. 45,000 on laptops-we get

a number of 68 such students. There are few others who have spent generously on mobile phones (Rs. 20,000 and above) and perhaps have not spent as much on laptops, and vice versa (spent at least Rs.65,000 on laptop). Taking them into account the number of these students goes upto 86.

This equals to 44.8% of the low-spending group and adds another 21.67% to the share of those who can be said to be leading a reasonably comfortable lifestyle at NLS. Hence, the total number of 'economically well-off' students at NLS is 291, or 73.31% of the population.

5. The Inaccessible Island

The Constitution mandates that all institutions reserve seats for candidates from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for a variety of reasons such as making reparations for historical injustices, and trying to level the playing field for the future. Ideals of equality, creating “social justice engineers”, etc. were foundational to the establishment of NLS, and for this to become a reality, merely reserving the constitutionally mandated seats for marginalised communities has proven to be insufficient on its own.

5.1. Question of Caste:

In this Part, we noted that the oft-heard myth of the benefits of reservation being cornered by the affluent members of marginalised groups who do not ‘need’ reservation, is not true. Members of these groups in NLS, on average, do come from relatively lower income backgrounds and are more likely to hail from smaller towns as compared to their peers. However, it is also observed that at least 50% of this group have their parents employed in government sector, much more than for the general category. It reflects other studies which have indicated how SC/STs continue to face discrimination in private sector compared to government jobs where there is scope for reservations.⁴¹ Likewise, many SC/STs are also excluded from primary and secondary education in several regions.⁴² Our findings indicate that an overwhelming number of students attended private schools and invested considerably on their schooling. The bulk of the country’s students still have access only to government schools. As a consequence, most students, especially those from scheduled caste and scheduled tribes backgrounds who attend government schools, automatically face reduced educational mobility. The data indicates that an overwhelming number of students in NLSIU attended private school, and paid a considerable amount of fees as well. Thus the talent pool from which Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes reservation students come, is a

⁴¹ Sukhadeo Thorat *et al*, *Prejudice against Reservation Policies*, 51(8) ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL WEEKLY 62 (20 February 2016).

⁴² UNICEF, *Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children-South Asia Regional Study*, (January 2014) available at http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SouthAsia_OOSCI_Study_27Jan_014Final.pdf (Last visited on: 3 March 2016).

very small one. This is similar to those who clear CLAT and come through the general category. That is, NLSIU is composed of a smaller pool of students, largely consisting of those who come from families which have already experienced social and educational mobility.

Another factor could be low levels of awareness about law as a career option among marginalised communities-children of government servants are more likely to have more exposure due to their social mobility and the consequently formed networks. The data does also demonstrate that when compared to the upper caste students, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students on average have fewer generations of graduates before them in their families.

The effects of this is by no means limited to NLS alone. A 2011-12 NSSO Survey reveals that enrolment rates amongst SC/ST groups in higher education is lower than the 'forward' groups.⁴³ While the national Gross Enrolment Ratio is 20.4, that of SCs is 15.1 and for STs is 11.⁴⁴ One of the suggestions proposed by Professor Madhava Menon is to set up a separate National Law University in tribal-dominated areas for scheduled tribe students, with the curriculum focussing less on commercial law and more on socio-economic justice.⁴⁵ As well-meaning as this suggestion is, focusing on setting up isolated institutes for already marginalised communities denies these communities the opportunities available to relatively privileged students. Applying Amartya Sen's 'Development as Freedom' thesis, justice would require that individuals are given the ability to choose freely the activities they pursue and the kind of life they wish to lead. To this end, policy solutions must work towards enabling marginalised communities to make use of available opportunities rather than create a compartmentalised set of opportunities which will not place them on an equal footing with the rest of the population.

As a consequence of exclusion in primary and higher education, upper castes still dominate the positions of power in all spheres. Various studies have shown that an astonishing 85% of editors and other leaders of the media circles in Delhi and 90% of corporate boards around the country are constituted by Upper Castes. A 2014 study by John Dreze, Ankita Aggarwal and Ashish Gupta further studied the caste composition of the upper echelons of society in Allahabad. The numbers

⁴³ Government of India, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, *India in Figures (2015)* available at http://mospi.nic.in/Mospi_New/upload/India_in_figures-2015.pdf (Last visited on: 5 March 2016).

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ Interview with Prof. Madhava Menon (NLSIU, Bangalore, 21st December, 2015).

were stark- 89% of hospital doctors, 100% of the leaders of the teachers union and 100% of the office bearers of the Allahabad Press Club were upper caste.⁴⁶ The observation about the caste composition of corporate boards was also made in another study. The study revealed that only 3.5% of corporate board members were from scheduled caste or scheduled tribes background, while only 3.8% were from other backward castes background.⁴⁷

In the legal profession, the same study found that 79% of the Advocates Association and 86% of the Executive Committee of the Bar Association also consisted of upper caste members. This is reflected in the bench of the Supreme Court as well. In the first two decades of its existence, there was not a single ‘backward caste’ (i.e. belonging to Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Other Backward Class) judge in the Supreme Court. The first such judge was appointed only in 1980. Since then, there have been 1-3 Backward Caste Judges in the Supreme Court serving

Foreign Nationals-Unequal Access

There are 21 foreign national students in NLS – 15 females and 6 males. Among them there are 16 Hindus, 15 of whom belong to upper caste background, with none being from a backward caste (SC/ST/OBC) background. 71.42% of them belong to families with annual income more than Rs.12 lakh. This is much more than the overall number of students in NLSIU whose families lie within the same income bracket (53.90%). This is perhaps a natural consequence since the fee charged from foreign nationals is much higher than from others. However, important to note, apart from being privileged, out of 21 ‘foreign’ nationals, 17 of them did their schooling in India.

Five seats in each batch are reserved for ‘foreign nationals’. They do not have to appear for CLAT but they are selected on basis of marks obtained in XIIth standard or its equivalent. The only additional requirement is having a valid passport of a foreign country.⁴⁸ Surprisingly, they

⁴⁶ Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, AN UNCERTAIN GLORY, p.229 (Pub: Penguin, 2013).

⁴⁷ D. Ajit *et al*, *Corporate Boards in India: Blocked by Caste*, Vol. 47(31) ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL WEEKLY 39, 41 (2012).

⁴⁸ Admission to U.G. and P.G. Programmes under Foreign Nationals Category: 2016-17, *available at* <https://www.nls.ac.in/resources/year2016/fnadmnugpg2016.pdf> (Last visited on: 1 March 2016).

are not barred from giving CLAT, as CLAT application process does not take nationality into account.⁴⁹

As a consequence, a foreign national, like person of Indian origin (PIO), can apply for admission both through the seats reserved for foreign nationals and through CLAT. This is giving them two shots at admission to NLS. While SC/ST reservations are often criticised as being unfair by others, no one has looked into that ‘foreign national’ quota at NLS is not just unfair, but also illegal and unconstitutional. By giving two shots to such applicants, without any rational differentiation, it fails to meet the test of Article 14-The Right to Equality.

simultaneously at any given time, out of 27 sitting Judges.⁵⁰ This is despite these ‘backward castes’ constituting nearly 70% of the Indian population.⁵¹ Despite these statistics, any discourse on caste and affirmative action is often labelled as perpetuating casteism or “anti-meritocratic”.

5.2. In absentia- Muslims:

Also stark-but not surprising- is the enrolment level of Muslims in NLS. There are only 3 Muslims in the entire student body of 397 forming not even 1% of the population. To understand the reasons for such a low representation of Muslims, we analysed the CLAT Merit List in order to identify the number of Muslim CLAT aspirants. Out of the 37358 candidates who gave CLAT in May 2015, only around a thousand were Muslims. Thus, Muslims constituted only around 2.75% of the CLAT aspirants this year. Out of these, only around 40 or 4% of the Muslim candidates managed to get a seat in all NLUs put together.⁵²

One possible explanation for this low representation could be the low levels of literacy among the Muslim population. While this might be true, the representation of Muslims in National Law Universities is still substantially lower than their average representation in higher education

⁴⁹ CLAT 2016 Eligibility, *available at* <https://clat.ac.in/eligibility/> (Last visited on: 1 March 2016).

⁵⁰ Abhinav Chandrachud, *THE INFORMAL CONSTITUTION*, p.257 (Pub: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁵¹ NSS Report No. 523: Household Consumer Expenditure in India, 2005-2006 *available at* <http://www.ilo.org/surveydata/index.php/catalog/199> (Last visited on: 3 March 2016).

⁵² CLAT 2015 Allotment List, *available at* <http://www.clatgyan.com/the-window/clat-merit-list/> (Last visited on: 10 February 2016).

institutions across the country (4.5%). In 2012, Muslims constituted around 4% of the total candidates who got into IITs which is twice the enrolment rate in NLUs.⁵³

However, this discrepancy in the proportion of Muslims in IITs and NLUs howsoever small, had not always been there. In fact, Muslims constituted only 1.70% of the students in IITs in 2006. This number is comparable to the number of students selected in NLUs in 2008 (around 2%). Muslim representation in the IITs therefore saw a twofold increase in less than a decade. Perhaps the implementation of OBC quota in IITs led to the doubling of Muslim students. Since NLS and other NLUs too aspire for central university and ‘institute of excellence’ status, they could perhaps consider implementing OBC reservations as well. Going by how they were implemented in IITs and other central universities, the total number of seats was increased proportionally so that OBC reservations would not lead to reduction in number of seats made available in general category. And implementation of creamy layer bar in this quota, like it is applicable in IITs and elsewhere, would substantially help in making NLS and other NLUs more diverse-not just along social lines, but also economically.

Any discourse on affirmative action for Muslims is met with automatic resistance and labelled as against the Indian Constitution as it is ‘religious discrimination’. Majority of Christians and Muslims in India are converts from lower castes, and their discrimination subsists even today. Thus, another major reason for lack of Muslims in NLUs and other higher education institutes is Presidential Order 1950. This Order forbade extension of Scheduled Caste status to non-Hindu dalits. While scheduled caste status was extended to Sikhs in 1956 and Buddhists in 1990, Muslim dalits still cannot claim benefits of reservations.⁵⁴ The Kundu Committee, constituted in 2013 to review the social, economic and educational status of Muslims in India, suggested that the poor representation of Muslim Dalits in public spheres warrants their removal from the OBC list and granted Scheduled Caste status instead. The issue was brought up in front of the Supreme Court in a PIL in 2015. The apex court ruled that if the forefathers of a person from any religious faith were dalit, then they can be granted reservation under the constitution. They did not have to reconvert

⁵³ A. Vishnoi, *Nearly 400 Muslim Candidates Crack IIT-JEE, Largest Number Ever*, THE INDIAN EXPRESS (25 May 2012), available at <http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/nearly-400-muslim-candidates-crack-iitjee-largest-number-ever/953649/> (Last visited on: 2 December 2015).

⁵⁴ *Reservation for Religious Minorities*, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL WEEKLY, Vol. 45(2), pp. 5, 9 January 2010.

to Hinduism to receive the benefits of reservation. However, the government has thus far refused to oblige to the ruling.⁵⁵

5.3. Is ‘Harvard of the East’ a Worthy Dream?:

Caste and religion aside, India is a country where the top 1% owns 40% of the nation’s wealth.⁵⁶ Recent studies have shown that if ‘middle class’ is to be defined as having basic levels of comfort, only 5% of the Indian population is middle class.⁵⁷ At the same time, India has 10% of the world’s billionaires. In terms of gender, ranks 130th out of 155 countries in the gender inequality index.⁵⁸ Education, especially professional legal education such as what is imparted by NLS, has the potential to have a direct bearing on reducing inequality by empowering different communities. In this context, it is important to critically examine whether NLS should pride itself on being the ‘Harvard of the East’.

The US higher education system, especially with respect to the expensive, private, elite ‘Ivy League’ Universities such as Harvard has a host of problems of its own. Studies have shown that throughout history, the admission process in these Universities has privileged students from high-income backgrounds.⁵⁹ This bias is manifested through, among other things, rising tuition fee and a systemic movement away from need based scholarships to ‘merit’ based ones. Applicants’ SAT

⁵⁵ *Supreme Court status to Dalit Muslims, Christians will encourage*, DAILY THANTHI (15 February 2016), available at <http://www.dtnext.in/News/National/2016/02/15181740/Supreme-Court-status-to-Dalit-Muslims-Christians-will.vpf> (Last visited on: 16 February 2016).

⁵⁶ Subodh Varma, *Top 1% in India Owns 8-9 % of National Income, ‘Rockstar’ Economist Thomas Piketty Says*, TIMES OF INDIA (11 May 2014) available at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/sunday-times/deep-focus/Top-1-in-India-owns-8-9-of-national-income-rockstar-economist-Thomas-Piketty-says/articleshow/34949259.cms> (Last visited on: 17 February 2016).

⁵⁷ *India's Middle Class Population to Touch 267 million in 5 Yrs*, ECONOMIC TIMES (6 February 2011) available at http://articles.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/2011-02-06/news/28424975_1_middle-class-households-applied-economic-research (Last visited on: 17 February 2016).

⁵⁸ Shalini Nair, *Gender Inequality Index: In South Asia, India Leads in Poor Condition of Women* INDIAN EXPRESS (17 December 2015) available at <http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/gender-inequality-index-in-south-asia-india-leads-in-poor-condition-of-women/> (Last visited on: 17th February 2016).

⁵⁹ C. Hill and G. Winston, *There is a Paucity of High-Ability, Low-Income Students at Highly Selective Colleges*, FORUM FUTURES 2006 PAPERS available at <https://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ff0615S.pdf> (Last visited on: 29 February 2016).

score has also proven to have a direct correlation with parental income.⁶⁰ The more selective a University is, therefore, the more elite it is likely to be.

While primary education is state-sponsored, the US faces the issue of unequal school funding. The country follows a system where schools are funded through local taxes. Thus, as a consequence, disadvantaged communities receive lower school funding, thereby perpetuating the pre-existing inequalities. Hence, areas with fewer economically disadvantaged communities tend to have better schools and further increase the prospects of its students to attend the top Universities. Studies have shown that the policy of local taxes funding schools has tangible effects on increasing income inequality.⁶¹

In NLS, we see a somewhat similar pattern, with more than 50% of the NLS population classifying their school as ‘Reputed Private’ or Elite English medium schools. Almost 60% of the students paid more than Rs. 30,000 per annum for their school education (average private expenditure on high school education in India is far below at Rs. 12,619, according to the 2014 National Sample Survey).⁶² This disproportionate representation of students from certain schools is not surprising, as the state of primary and secondary education in India is nothing to boast about. While government schools lack infrastructure to a large extent, private schools are widely unregulated. The government discourages international standardised testing of Indian students, but a few sample tests have shown that Indian students demonstrate among the lowest learning abilities in the world.⁶³ No wonder then that it is a few ‘reputed’ private and ‘elite’ schools, most of whom also charge more than Rs.30,000 per annum or Rs.2,500 a month as tuition fee which manage to secure their children’s future in elite institutions such as NLS. For instance, even until 2010, in every

⁶⁰ There is a difference of more than 100 points between test takers from the highest and lowest income groups within each of the SAT’s testing components.

See <http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/research/2013/TotalGroup-2013.pdf> (Last visited on: 1 March 2016).

⁶¹ R. Chetty and J. Friedman, *Does Local Tax Financing Propagate Inequality?*, NATIONAL TAX ASSOCIATION SESSION: TAX POLICY LESSONS FROM ADMINISTRATIVE TAX RECORDS available at http://www.rajchetty.com/chettyfiles/proptax_nta.pdf (Last visited on: 29 February 2016).

⁶² Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, *Key Indicators of Social Consumption in India: Education* (NSS 71st Round, 2014) available at http://mospi.nic.in/Mospi_New/upload/nss_71st_ki_education_30june15.pdf (Last visited on: 1 March 2016).

⁶³ A Dhar, *Indian Students Fare Poorly in International Evaluations Test*, The Hindu (16 January 2012) available at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/indian-students-fare-poorly-in-international-evaluation-test/article2804134.ece> (Last visited on: 29 February 2016).

incoming batch of 80 students, there would be 5-10 students in NLS from one such reputed school in Delhi alone. In the batch that joined in 2011, the fourth batch which wrote the CLAT, there were 4 students from this school. This number has, however, been consistently reducing every year.

Less than 10% of students at NLS are first or second generation learners, with a majority of such learners coming from non-English medium schools. The connection between income and schooling is also evident, with students from higher income families attending better schools and gaining admission in NLS in larger numbers. Education has immense value as a tool for social mobility. We see that to a large extent, education at NLS is perpetuating privilege rather than providing an opportunity for such mobility. At the school level, the Right to Education Act will perhaps bear fruit ten years from now, when the 25% reservation for underprivileged students in private schools will lead to a more diverse set of students competing for seats in coveted institutions such as NLS. However as of now, RTE covers education as a right only upto 8th standard. While initiatives are on to extend applicability of RTE upto 12th standard, in its present form, even the students who might benefit from Economically Weaker Section quota upto 8th standard, would find themselves in difficult situation during high schooling.

If diversity is to be taken seriously, Universities must make concerted efforts to encourage and foster it in campuses. Azim Premji University is one such private University, with a unique model worth looking into. The University conducts an entrance examination for admission. As a private university, it is not bound to have caste-based reservation quotas, but only bound to reserve 25% seats based on state domicile. However, in order to honour its self-commitment to diversity when selecting students, the University takes into account the socio-economic background of the applicant and assigns a 'Disadvantage Score' which will be added to the admission test score of the student. This commitment to diversity does not extend to admission alone- as the admission policy has resulted in large sections of students from rural and non-English medium backgrounds, the University has set up a translation department to translate reading material for these students.⁶⁴

Another interesting observation is as regards gender – the sex ratio has been consistently decreasing over the past five years, as illustrated by the following graph. It has fallen consistently every year, from a positive ratio of 52% females in the seniormost batch to a mere 39% in the

⁶⁴ Interview with Prof. Sitaram Kakarala (NLSIU, Bangalore, 23 December, 2015).

junior-most batch. In India, the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education for females is 18.9 and for males is 21.6.⁶⁵ The ratio of female to male enrolment in India is therefore 0.875. As problematic as that figure is, in comparison, the ratio of female to male enrolment in the junior-most batch at NLS is a mere 0.64. This downward trend in female enrolment is complemented by upward trend in enrolment from lower income backgrounds and from smaller towns and cities. Further, it is seen that women at NLS across all five years are more likely to be from the more affluent backgrounds, studied in bigger cities and went to better schools.

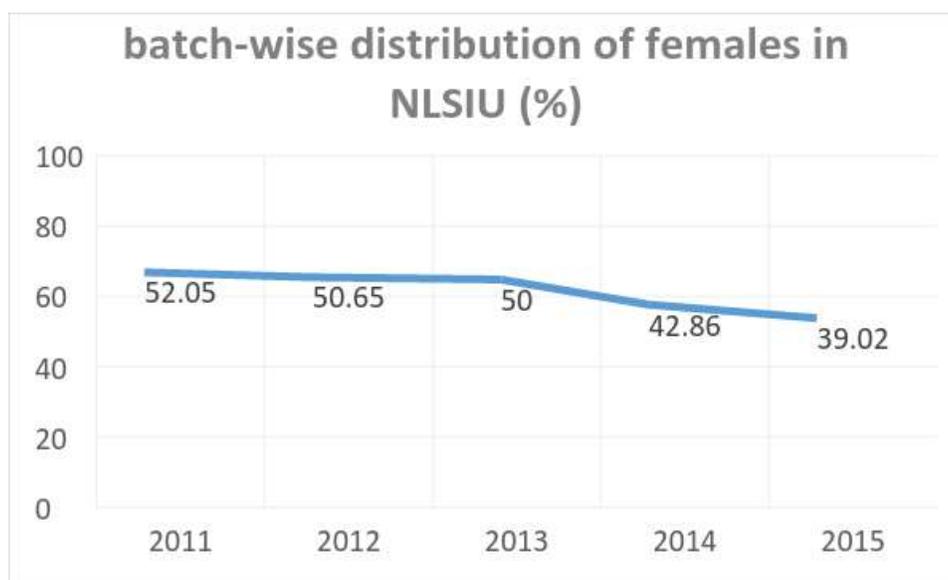


Figure 5-1: Percentage of females across batches

The verdict is therefore clear- the growing reach of NLS, CLAT and legal education is a cause for celebration. However, unless this reach also grows equitably among all sections of society, the composition of NLS will only exchange some forms of privilege (elite schooling, big city) with others (male). Widespread awareness growth can happen through concerted efforts by the CLAT committee by taking measures such as reducing examination fee for certain groups, spreading awareness about the exam among such groups, etc. One way NLS can also do its part is through targeted (and publicised) scholarships to encourage those from under-represented groups to encourage them to aspire to study here.

⁶⁵ Ministry of Human Resource Development (Government of India), *Educational Statistics at a glance* (2014) available at http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics/EAG2014.pdf (Last visited on: 29 February 2016).

Moreover, the buck ought not to stop with admission alone. While it is true that more and more members of non-elite groups are taking the opportunity to study here, it is worth analysing the inclusiveness of activities at NLS- whether the opportunities afforded *inside* NLS are available equitably to all. Hence, in the next section, we analyse performance and participation indicators with respect to CGPA, Committees, Moots and Debates.

PART B- INCLUSIVITY

6. Performance in Law School

In Part B we looked at various background factors and their interrelation which make up the diversity in NLS student body. In this Part, we shall look into how background of students affects their performance at NLS, participation in committees and journals and also how one's background affects career choices and options. We shall look at whether NLS provides an equalising ground for everyone from diverse backgrounds to flourish and avail opportunities, *equitably*. Finally, we shall look into support systems within NLS and how the NLS model caters to diversity and inclusivity as a whole.

It could be questioned though that how much effect does one's background has upon performance or as disputed by some-if at all any. In order to gauge the perceptions of students on how much socio-economic background factors affect CGPA, mooting and debating participation we conducted a survey amongst 81 students at NLS (hereinafter referred to as 'Perceptions Survey', for the questionnaire see Appendix 2). This survey was conducted in January 2016, with respondents distributed across batches, gender and admission categories proportional to their respective shares in total population. The perceptions survey revealed that a huge majority (nearly 80%) believes that fluency in English and schooling background are the strongest determinants of how well one does academically and in moots and debates at NLS. Whereas nearly 60% believe that gender and caste on other hand, does not have much bearing upon performance in NLS. We shall look into how these factors specifically influence one's performance at NLS in terms of academics, participation in moots and debates, writing and publishing research papers etc.

Interestingly, 65% respondents also stated that they believe family income to be an important determining factor in one's participation in debates and moots. We shall look at how the financial assistantship policy at NLS plays a role in facilitating participation in these competitions.

6.1. Academics and background:

S. No.:	Categories:	3.00-3.49	3.50-3.99	4.00-4.49	4.50-4.99	5.00-5.49	5.50-5.99	Above 6	Average CGPA:
1.	Total (307)	29	53	53	53	54	36	29	4.70
2.	SC/STs with no Civil Services background (48)	14	11	14	3	3	2	1	4.04
3.	Upper Caste Hindus with less than Rs. 6 lakhs annual income (19)	3	2	2	3	6	2	1	4.70
4.	Upper Caste Hindus with more than Rs. 12 lakhs income (124)	6	15	15	26	26	19	17	4.96
5.	Those who are from cities or abroad and did their schooling there (250)	18	41	45	42	48	29	27	4.76
6.	Those from small places and did schooling in cities and abroad (35)	6	6	5	6	5	5	2	4.55
7.	Those who are from and did schooling in small places (16)	4	4	3	4	1			4.06
8.	Those who received quality schooling (153)	11	23	28	29	28	21	13	4.76
9.	Those who did not receive quality schooling (61)	11	12	6	6	15	7	4	4.57
10.	Those from non-English medium schools (8)		3	3	1	1			4.25
11.	Those who are fluent in English language (243)	14	37	43	44	44	32	29	4.82
12.	Those who are not as fluent in English (12)	3	4	1	1	2	1		4.17
13.	3+ generations of graduates (Non SC/ST background) (74)	5	8	9	13	14	13	12	4.99
14.	1st or 2nd generation college-goer (Non SC/ST background) (36)	2	6	3	4	12	5	4	4.93
15.	3+ generations of graduates (SC/ST background) (13)	2	4	4	1	2			4.13
16.	1st or 2nd generation college-goer (SC/ST background) (26)	8	7	9		1	1		3.90
17.	Those who are leading comfortable lifestyle (163)	15	32	29	26	25	22	14	4.67
18.	Those who are not leading comfortable lifestyle (144)	14	21	24	27	29	14	15	4.73

Table 6-1: CGPAs distribution across categories (2nd years and above)

Table 6-1 shows CGPA (Cumulative Grade Point Average) distribution and average CGPAs across different background groups identified in Part B. CGPA at NLS is measured by converting grades (B, B+, A, A+ and O) into grade points (3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 respectively), dividing the cumulative grade points by total number of courses cleared. Thus CGPA could vary from 3.00 to 7.00. The majority falls within 4.00-4.99 bracket and there is a clear bell-curve which emerges. Since the data collection was carried out in first trimester of 2015-16, the first year students did not yet have a CGPA and were asked not to report it. Also, wary of the fact that those who joined NLS prior to 2011, who due to inability to clear all courses are still continuing at NLS, would be having lower CGPA (average CGPA being 3.5) have not been taken into account for analysis in this chapter and henceforth in Part C.

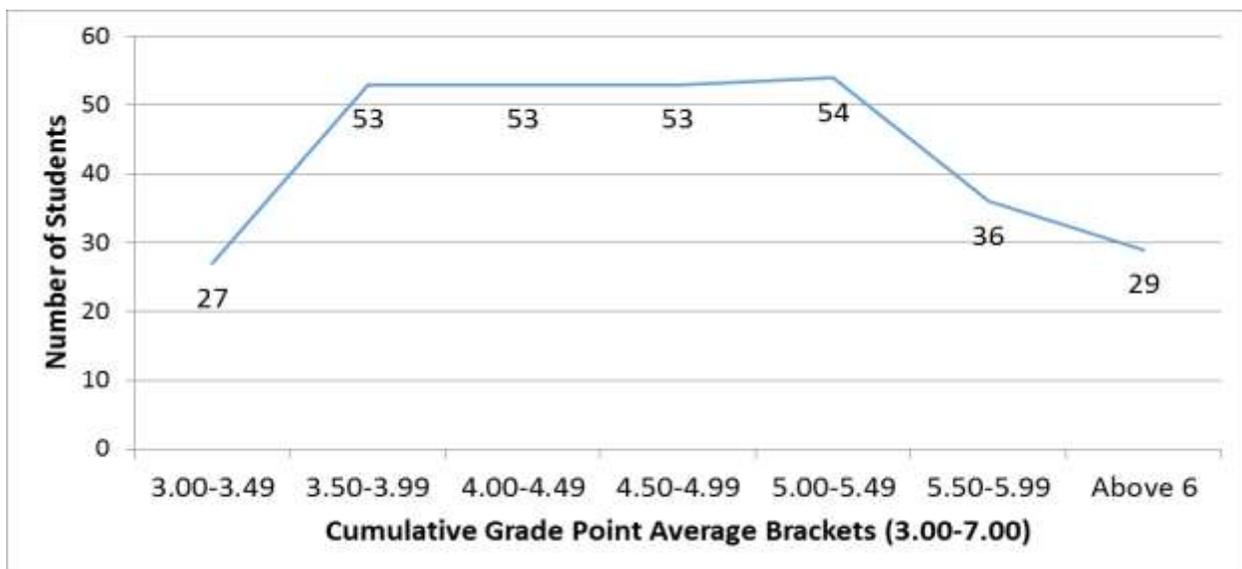


Figure 6-1: Overall CGPA distribution (Excluding first years and those who joined prior to 2011)

The overall average CGPA of 307 students from second year to fifth year is 4.70. The deviation across batches is quite low, average CGPA for students who joined in different years is: 4.66 for those who joined in 2011 and 2012, 4.89 for those who joined in 2013 and 4.57 for those who joined in 2014.

6.2. Who are the toppers?:

There are 29 students who reported having CGPAs over 6.00. By NLS standards, that is exceptional, given that the average CGPA is 4.70. All 29 of them, as Table 6-1 indicates, did their schooling in Tier 1 or 2 places or from abroad, and perceive themselves as fluent in English.

Expectedly, none of them attended vernacular-medium schools. Interestingly, 21 out of these 29 toppers, are women. Their average family annual income too, is around Rs. 29.3 lakhs, much above the overall average of Rs. 21 lakhs and nearly double of those with CGPA between 3.00-3.49 whose average family income is Rs. 15.5 lakhs per annum.

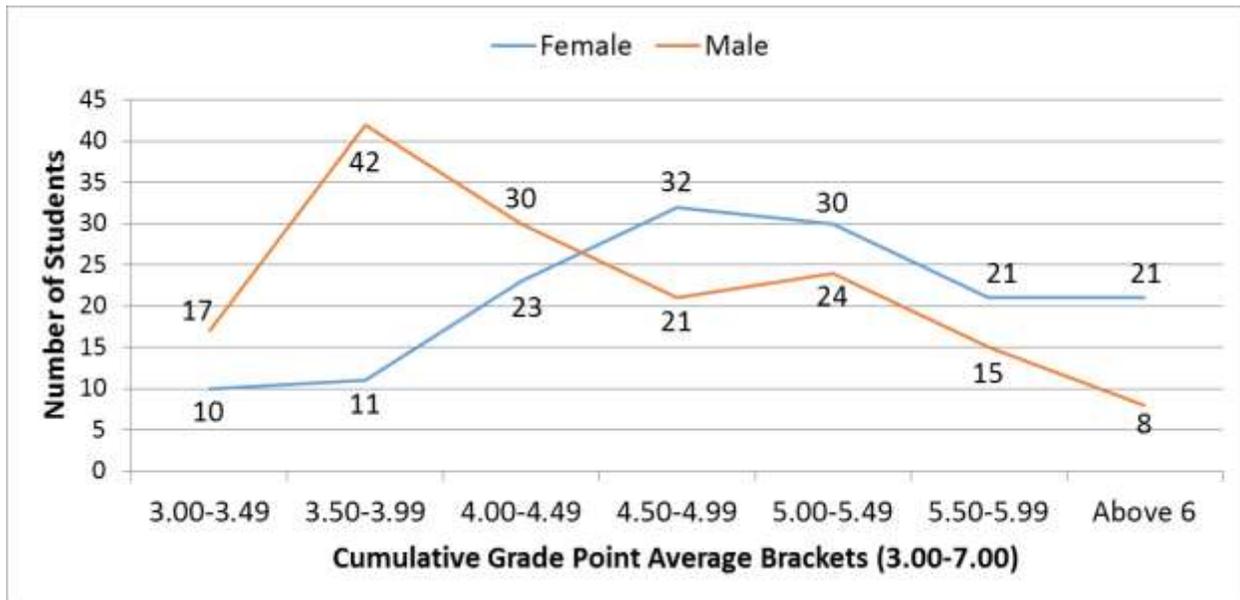


Figure 6-2: CGPA distribution gender-wise

Those with CGPA over 5, in the Perceptions Survey, on average perceived background factors as having more bearing on their academic performance than those with CGPA less than 4. While fluency in English and schooling were perceived to be highly determining factors by both the groups (Below 4 and above 5 CGPA), it is those with higher CGPA who also believe that caste and family income have determining role in academic performance of a student. Surprisingly, both the groups perceived gender as an unimportant factor regarding academic performance. Yet what our data has revealed is there is only one scheduled caste student with CGPA over 6.00 and none from scheduled tribes background. This trend is not just confined to law school. In IIT Roorkee, a study revealed that nearly 90% of the dropouts in 2015 belonged to backward castes (SCs, STs or OBCs).⁶⁶ In 6 IITs collectively, of the 63 students who failed in the academic year 2014-15, 55 belonged to backward castes background. Among them, 30 belonged to scheduled caste

⁶⁶ G. Pramod Kumar, *90 percent of IIT-R Dropouts Are Backward Caste: Is This a Case Against Affirmative Action?*, FIRST POST INDIA (5 August 2015), available at <http://www.firstpost.com/india/90-percent-iit-r-dropouts-backward-caste-case-affirmative-action-2379964.html> (Last visited on: 27 February 2016).

background, 16 belonged to scheduled tribe background and 9 belonged to other backward castes.⁶⁷

Also notably, none amongst those who took admission through Foreign National category has CGPA over 6.00, their average CGPA being 3.97.

As opposed to popular perceptions, CGPA is very much varied across caste groups. Table 6-2 demonstrates the fact. 50% of SCs and 65% of STs have CGPAs below 4.00, compared to less than 20% amongst Brahmins and Other Upper Castes. And similarly, while nearly half of Brahmins and Other Upper Castes have CGPAs greater than 5.00, less than 10% SCs fall in that bracket. The variations in average CGPA amongst religion groups could also be understood since there is considerable overlap amongst SC/STs, and Buddhists, Christians, Hindus and Sikhs groups as noted in Section 3.3.

S. No.	Caste Groups	Average CGPA	S. No.	Religion Groups	Average CGPA
1	Brahmins (90)	4.9	6	Buddhists (9)	3.92
2	Other Upper Castes (103)	4.9	7	Christians (12)	4.54
3	Scheduled Castes (44)	4.06	8	Hindus (258)	4.7
4	Scheduled Tribes (20)	3.9	9	Jains (9)	5.36
5	No caste (25)	4.97	10	Sikhs (12)	4.79
S. No.	Admission Categories	Average CGPA			
11	Foreign national (16)	3.97			
12	General (219)	4.96			
13	PWDs (5)	4.25			

Table 6-2: Average CGPA of different Caste, Religion and Admission Categories

Academics isn't the sole criteria of popularly accepted 'success' at NLS and other law colleges. Along with CGPA, we asked the students questions regarding the number of research papers they have published, research assignments they been assigned and details about their participation in mooting, debating, ADR and MUN competitions.

⁶⁷ 63 students Failed in IITs in Last Session: Smriti Irani, TIMES OF INDIA (21 December 2015), available at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/education/news/63-students-failed-in-IITs-in-last-session-Smriti-Irani/articleshow/50268729.cms> (Last visited on: 27 February 2016).

Higher the CGPA, the more likely one is to publish research paper(s) in journals and to have worked on research assignments. A student with over 5.00 CGPA is at least twice as likely to have published multiple research papers and worked on multiple research assignments than those with CGPA below 5.00. Overall only 32.5% of 307 students have published papers while 44% have worked on research assignments. And 85% of those with CGPAs below 4.00, have never published any paper nor worked on any such assignment.

Similarly there is a direct correlation with CGPA and participation in moots. Overall, only 17% have gone on to participate in international moots, while more than half of those above 6.00 CGPA have participated. On the other hand, only 1 student with CGPA less than 4.00 has participated in an international moot out of 82. Similar to research assignments and papers, a student with CGPA over 5.00 is 2.5 times more likely to have participated in a domestic or international moot competition than others.

Overall about 51.5% reported as having never participated in debating competitions, even those conducted within NLS, compared to 36% in the case of moots. Only 32% have ever participated in domestic and international debating competitions. There again exists a direct correlation between debating and CGPA, however it is not as profound. Unlike a ratio of 50:1, a student with over 6 CGPA is only thrice more likely to have gone for international rounds than the one below 4 CGPA. 65.9% of those with CGPA less than 4 have never debated (neither within NLS), compared to only 20.7% of those with 6.00 CGPA.

ADR/MUN participation does not show any strong direct correlation with CGPA. While 45.6% of students have never participated in these competitions, 11.7% have taken part in international ADR/MUN competitions. There is not much variance amongst different CGPA groups, but those with higher CGPA are just a little more likely to have participated-within NLS, domestic and international ADR/MUN competitions.

Generations and CGPA

		Number of generations having gone to college (Mother side)			
Father side	Students:	None	1	2-3	More than 3
	More than 3	0 (0%)	2 (0.65%)	16 (5.21%)	51 (16.61%)
	2-3	1 (0.33%)	9 (2.93%)	109 (35.50%)	14 (4.56%)
	1	4 (1.30%)	54 (17.59%)	38 (12.38%)	4 (1.30%)
	None	4 (1.30%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.33%)	0 (0%)

Table 6-3: Distribution of students as per family's educational history

The above table shows the number of generations who are graduates on each side (Column- Father's, Row- Mother's). Each number in the cell represents number of students falling in that category (Total no. of students= 307). It shows that there are only four first college-goers at NLS, with overwhelming number (79.9%) having even their grandparents-greatgrandparents gone to college. Close to one-third hail from families where the generations even prior to their greatgrandparents' had gone to college.

		Number of generations having gone to college (Mother side)			
Father side	Average CGPA	None	1	2-3	More than 3
	More than 3	NA	3.25	4.94	4.94
	2-3	3.75	4.47	4.72	4.79
	1	3.38	4.59	4.68	4.75
	None	4.38	NA	3.25	NA

Table 6-4: Average CGPA of students having different numbers of generations in family having gone to college

The cells in Table 6-4 indicates average CGPA in each group. It indicates a direct correlation between academic performance of a student and family's educational history. While the average CGPA for first-generation college-goers is 4.38, it is 4.5 for those whose parents generation had gone to college, 4.68 for those whose grandparents-greatgrandparents generation had gone to college and 4.87 for those whose families have history of college-goers even prior to three generations. Table 6-1 gives further information regarding academic performance as a factor of caste and family's educational history.

6.3. Mooters and Debaters:

In the previous section we noted how there is a direct correlation between CGPA and participation in moots and debates. In this section, we shall look at who are the ones who debate and moot, and

succeed at same. Who are the ones who get left out in the process, and is there any plausible reason for inclusion of some and exclusion of others.

		Participation in Debates:				
Participation in Moots:	Level:	International	National	Inside NLS	Never	Grand Total
	International	14 (4.56%)	10 (3.26%)	12 (3.91%)	16 (5.21%)	52 (16.94%)
	National	16 (5.21%)	26 (8.47%)	11 (3.58%)	42 (13.68%)	95 (30.94%)
	University Rounds	4 (1.30%)	11 (3.58%)	15 (4.89%)	19 (6.19%)	49 (15.96%)
	Never	2 (0.65%)	15 (4.89%)	13 (4.23%)	81 (26.38%)	111 (36.16%)
	Grand Total	36 (11.73%)	62 (20.20%)	51 (16.61%)	158 (51.47%)	307 (100%)

Table 6-5: Participation in moots and debates

1/4th of the students have neither debated nor mooted, not even within NLS. A little over half have never debated and 36% have never mooted. But there are 66 (21.5%) who have represented the institution in both moots and debates competitions.

85% of these 66 not just are from big cities/ abroad, and all but one did their schooling in big cities or from abroad. By our classification, 36 of them received good quality schooling, while 12 did not. Though all 66 did go to English-medium schools. There is no gender disparity, but only 4 of them belong to scheduled castes background, while only 1 to schedule tribes.

As evident from Table 6-6, there does exist income disparity. While overall average family income amongst all students (excluding first years and those who joined prior to 2011), is Rs. 21 lakhs per annum, those who have represented college in both moots and debates-their average annual family income is Rs. 24.4 lakhs. And confirming the trends, those who have represented NLS in international rounds of both Moots and Debates, amongst them the average goes up to Rs. 28.7 lakhs per annum.

Annual Income:	Overall (307):	Those who have represented college in both moots and debates (66):	Those who have represented college at international level in both moots and debates (14):
Below 3,00,000	12 (4%)	1 (2%)	-
3,00,001-6,00,000	36 (12%)	6 (9%)	-
6,00,001-12,00,000	81 (26%)	16 (24%)	2 (14%)
12,00,001-36,00,000	125 (41%)	26 (39%)	8 (57%)
Above 36,00,000	53 (17%)	17 (26%)	4 (29%)

Table 6-6: Annual income distribution of those who have represented NLS in moots and debates

Amongst these 14, who have represented NLS at international level in both moots and debate competitions, gender disparity exists-only 5 of them are females, rest males. More notably, none of them is from scheduled castes, scheduled tribes or other backward castes background.

We also asked the students whether they mooted or debated when they were in their first year. 150 stated that they did neither, while 52 said they did both. It shows that over the years students do tend to participate in debates and moots, overcoming reluctance which they had in first year which could have been for variety of reasons. Peer pressure to participate in moots and debates could be one strong reason. The Perceptions Survey revealed that, amongst activities such as mooting, debating, vying for law firm job, joining Activity-based committees and journals, the peer pressure is felt to be highest for mooting (294 out of 405), followed by for committee membership (283), debating (255), vying for law firm job (251) and lowest for membership of editorial boards of journals (219). This is reflected through Table 6-5 as well, which shows a greater participation in moots than in debates.

The 66 who have represented NLS in both debating and mooting competitions, did not necessarily moot or debate in their first year, only half of them participated in both then. But the 14 who have participated in both international moots and debates, started participating in debates from first year itself, while they may not have started mooting back then. Only 3 out of 36 debaters who have gone on to participate at international level did not start participating in first year, compared to 20 out of 52 mooters who eventually participated in international moots but did not moot in first year. It shows that those while preference to debate or not remains quite static, mostly those who start debating early go on to represent NLS at international level, but the choice to moot does not remain as static-perhaps because of peer pressure and overcoming the initial reluctance.

6.4. Financial Assistance Policy:

Mooting and debating activities not only add to the personal growth of students, but also helps to make the university more visible. Both activities, when pursued at international levels, can be financially demanding. Earlier, students used to personally write to alumni and others in the legal profession seeking funds in order to finance their participation in various competitions. However in recent years, NLS has started allocating funds to finance some of these activities, including certain ADR/MUN competitions to various amounts. For the year 2015-16, budget allocated for financing was Rs. 35 lakhs. This amount is decided each year on ad-hoc basis by the Executive Council. Under the vice-chancellorship of Prof. Venkat Rao, the student body has been given the complete freedom to draft the financial assistance policy themselves, perhaps because the administration feels correctly, that students would be more informed about the competitions that really require funding. The policy hitherto has been primarily based on the principle *'Incentivize those best suited to participate in an activity to do so'*.

It is perhaps commendable on the administration's part to democratise the policy-framing, however it has its own repercussions. Until 2015-16, the Financial Assistance Policy which is supposedly framed on a year-to-year basis, never took 'need' into account. This year, perhaps for the first time, another principle *'No student should be prevented from participating in extra-curricular or co-curricular activities due to economic reasons'* has been included as a guiding principle for framing the year's policy. However, at the time of drafting this report, the Policy has not been formally adopted. The absence of this 'need-based' principle has had visible effects upon participation. Table 6-7 shows how average family income of those who participate in international moots is much higher than that for others and overall average of Rs. 21 lakhs per annum (excluding first years). This trend is confirmed amongst participation in debates and ADR/MUN competitions too-where the average annual income of those who participate at international tournaments is in excess of Rs. 27 lakhs. While there are certainly many other factors at play like fluency in English, schooling background, caste and gender (Section 6.3), this finding indicates that there is a failure with respect to Financial Assistance Policy, because its limited guiding principles focused only upon incentivising participation and not facilitating it for those who would be unable to source finances from elsewhere. To illustrate, in the senior four batches, only three students belonging to sub-Rs. 6 lakhs per annum bracket have ever participated in international moots. In cases of

debates and ADR/MUNs, there has been only one person each in the below Rs. 6 lakh per annum income category to have participated at the international level.

Moots (Level of participation):	Average Family Annual Income
International (52)	Rs. 26,10,576.92
National (95)	Rs. 20,79,473.68
University Rounds (49)	Rs. 21,36,734.69
Did not participate (111)	Rs. 18,67,567.56

Table 6-7: Participation in moot court competitions and average family annual income

The problem is that committees have never felt obliged to cater to different populations and they do not feel that it is in their mandate to make these activities more appealing and doable for those coming from unprivileged backgrounds. This is clear from the policy documents each committee is required to submit at the beginning of academic year. Moot Court Society, Literary and Debating Society broadly state their agenda as to promote these activities, to see over all such activities happening at NLS, guide the teams and to facilitate participation in competitions etc. Diversity at NLS thus far has never been recognised in these policy documents. This gets reflected in the guidelines prepared for financial assistance-which is framed by Finance Committee working in tandem with Moot Court Society, Literary and Debating Society, ADR Board and MUN Board. It is finalised by the Coordination Committee which comprises of the Convenors and Joint-Convenors of all activity based committees and SBA President and Vice-President. The administration plays no role, apart from allocating the budget.

Fortunately, this year there is a need-based guiding principle laid down for framing the policy. Hopefully, it would democratise participation more. Since convenors and joint-convenors of Activity-Based Committees (ABCs), broadly come from privileged backgrounds as evident in Chapter 9, it is pertinent that these guiding principles of both incentivising participation and taking need into consideration be concretised by the administration itself in order to ensure continuity and its implementation. The Scholarship Policy which had been framed and adopted in 2015 contains a clause whereby if a recipient of a scholarship earns Rs. 50,000 or more per month within three years of graduation, he/she shall be liable to pay 10% of monthly income back to Scholarship Fund until the scholarship amount availed is realised. While Prof. Japhet, head of Scholarship Committee, is against the university making the scholarship recipients to sign a bond in this regard and prefers self-declaration instead, having a similar clause for the Financial Assistance Policy should be considered. These activities add to personal growth, and unlike scholarship recipients,

Table 6-7, shows that majority of the financial assistance recipients actually are financially well-off. It would make sense to expect them to contribute back to a similar fund like Scholarship fund, than to expect only those in need of scholarships for tuition and hostel fees to.

6.5. Who gets excluded in the process?:

As we have seen earlier, a significant portion of the NLS population has tried their hand at either mooted or debating at least in the intra-University level. For many, participation in either activity is a Law School 'rite of passage'. Apart from moots and debates, one's CGPA is another marker of how well-adjusted one is within the law school system. In this section, we shall look at two sets of students- those who have never mooted or debated, and those who fall within the lowest CGPA bracket.

There are 81 such students who have never debated nor mooted, not even within NLS. In the senior-most batch there are 15 such students (in this batch highest number of students have dropped out too), while in the batches which joined NLS between 2012-2014, the population of these students ranges between 21-23-thus indicating that this segment remains pretty immobile over the years. They do not start debating or mooted if they have not done either by the time in second year. More than half are women amongst these 81 students, whereas overall it is men who are in the majority.

Not surprisingly, highest number (23, 28% of 81) of them come from Scheduled Castes background and 14% come from Scheduled Tribes background-both groups being at least double their proportions in total population. Notably, average annual income amongst this segment (Rs. 16.3 lakhs) is far below the overall average of Rs. 21 lakhs per annum. This when compared to Table 6-6, shows a huge income disparity amongst those who go on to represent NLS in various competitions and those who don't/could not.

Four out of eight students (barring first years) who did their schooling in vernacular medium, fall in this category of 'invisibles'. Only 53 (65%) perceived themselves as fluent in English language, whereas in total nearly 80% of NLS population perceives themselves to be fluent.

These 81 have however, participated in other activities at NLS. Half of them have participated in some activity or project of Legal Services Clinic, while 10 have even represented NLS in ADR/MUN competitions. Figure 6-3 shows how this segment largely has a lower CGPA than others.

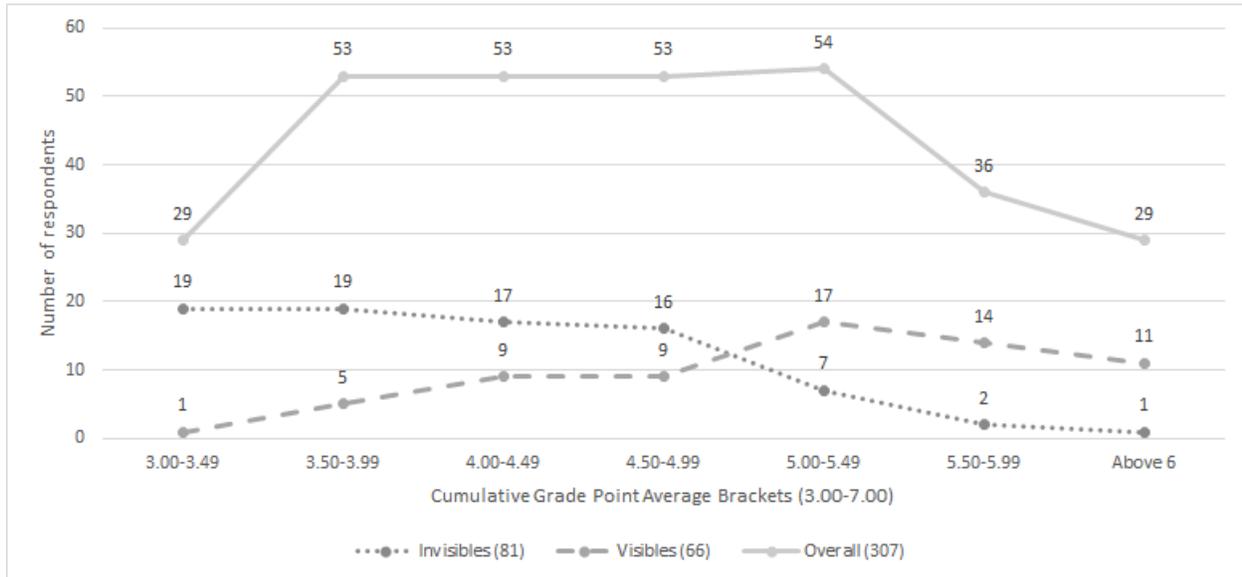


Figure 6-3: CGPA distribution amongst 'Visibles' who have participated in both debates and moot court competitions, the 'invisibles' who have participated in neither and overall distribution

There are 29 students in the lowest CGPA group (3.00-3.49). Majority of them as noted, have never debated nor mooted, exception being only one who has gone on to represent NLS in both the competitions. The biggest social group amongst these 29 is the scheduled tribes (31%) followed by scheduled castes (27.6%). There are 17 males and 12 females who have CGPA below 3.5. Interestingly none of them is from vernacular-medium school. Most of the students from non-English medium schooling, actually have a CGPA between 3.5 and 4.5.

While overall 16.6% of the students are from small town backgrounds, in this lowest CGPA bracket, nearly 35% come from small places. The proportion of first or second generation college goers who are also from SC/ST background in this CGPA bracket is three times of their proportion in total population. Only half of the 29 said they were fluent in English, compared to 100% amongst those with CGPA over 6.

If we look at scholarship recipients, excluding Aditya Birla scholarships, an individual in this CGPA group is twice as likely to be recipient of a scholarship as others. Perhaps it is evidence to

the fact majority of scholarships (unlike Aditya Birla scholarships) are constituted keeping 'need' in mind than prizing 'merit' which as this chapter shows, largely camouflages 'privilege'. We shall look at various aspects of different scholarships, background of scholars and analyse the new scholarship policy adopted by NLS in the subsequent section.

7. Scholarship and financial aid

“No student shall discontinue studies at NLSIU for reasons of lack of financial assistance” claims NLSIU’s prospectus. As a university that charges fees of upwards of 1.5 lakh per annum in a country where 75% earn less than 34,000 per annum, the status of financial assistance at NLS is worth looking into. There are three primary sources of scholarship that students at NLS avail of- scholarship granted by the University (NLS), scholarships by Central and State governments and the Aditya Birla Scholarships which began in the year 2012. University scholarships are further granted either under through endowments or through the advocacy efforts of the organization Increasing Diversity by Increasing Access.

All the university scholarship recipients fall within the below 6 lakh per annum category. The IDIA scholarship was specified as a separate option, although it is borne out of university funds- all three recipients of this scholarship were from the lowest income category. It must be noted that IDIA Scholarships offer a full tuition fee waiver, along with waiver of ‘extra’ charges for food, usage of electrical appliances, etc. The other university scholarships are funded by endowments. The SC/ST Scholarships, granted by the Central Government, is availed of by students from higher income brackets as well. Of the 9 recipients of this scholarship, 2 reported an income of more than 12 lakh per annum.

Not counting the recipients of the need-blind Aditya Birla Scholarship, only 18 students reported that they are recipients of financial aid. However, there are 75 students who reported their family income to be less than 6 lakh per annum, with 26 of them falling in the below 3 lakh category. This means that 75% of students in the lowest income brackets were not covered by any financial assistance, either by the university or the state. There are several reasons for this, one of them being that prior to 2015, NLS did not have a concrete scholarship policy at all. Awareness about the availability of financial assistance was very low, which led to few students even applying for aid. Further, the process suffered from problems such as announcing names of applicants in classes (which could possibly lead to stigma), allowing self-declaration of income, over-reliance on ‘merit’ in place of need, etc. Students in dire financial straits could approach the Vice-Chancellor or other senior professors and they would often also find their concerns addressed; however, it was

on an ad-hoc basis and there was no system to ensure that every student who needed aid would be covered.

7.1. The 2015 Scholarship Policy

In 2015, NLS unveiled a Scholarship Policy addressing these issues. Under the new policy, the University is the largest scholarship donor, donating upto 20 lakhs every year for financial aid. Earlier, the University heavily relied on external endowments and made contributed only a fraction of what it does now. Moreover, the scholarship takes into consideration the steep upfront cost of admission at NLS- the first year's fees have to be deposited with the University and the scholarship process only takes place later into the term. This itself would act as a disincentive for potential students from lower economic strata. Only the IDIA scholars were granted an upfront waiver. Under the present policy, students may sign a declaration stating that they cannot pay the fee and that they are applying for a scholarship. If the student is later found ineligible for the scholarship, a penalty will be imposed. The new Policy has also greatly reduced its emphasis on 'merit', allowing for a more equitable assessment of students from less privileged backgrounds. Further, under the Policy, a dedicated Scholarship Cell has been set up, under which students are given the task of spreading awareness about scholarships, identifying potential applicants, aiding them with the application and so on. When data was collected for the Census, the results of financial aid under the new policy had not yet been declared. However, there has been a steep rise in the number of applicants itself- while only 10-15 students would even apply prior to the new policy in place, 41 students applied after the new policy was announced. 39 of them have received some form of financial assistance.⁶⁸

The new Policy has received a lot of publicity from the media for being unique in its scope.⁶⁹ This is certainly welcome news as it paves the way for other institutions to also take similar steps. However, Professor Japhet, one of the brains behind the policy, is of the opinion that the University can do much more to raise funds for financial aid. One of the avenues that hasn't been fully exploited is the alumni community- currently, there are 3-4 alumni batches contributing money

⁶⁸ Interview with Prof. S. Japhet (NLSIU, Bangalore, 10 February 2016).

⁶⁹ K.C. Deepika, *NLSIU Floats New Scholarship Policy* (17 July 2015), THE HINDU, available at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/bangalore/nlsiu-floats-new-scholarship-policy/article7431916.ece> (Last visited on: 1 March 2016).

towards financial aid. However, the money is sufficient to support only around 2 students every year. With NLS having more than 20 batches of alumni, there is scope for much greater engagement. Further, Foundations working in the sphere of social justice, which already contribute to NLS in the form of Research Grants, can be persuaded to specifically provide funding for scholarships as well. With the new Policy, there is now momentum to addressing the question of financial aid in NLS, with the Policy being just the first step.

7.2. The Aditya Birla Scholars

Apart from scholarships provided by the University and the Central Government, since 2012, the Aditya Birla Foundation has also been granting full fee-waiver scholarships to selected students from NLS.⁷⁰ Students within the top 20 ranks in every first year batch are invited to apply, and are selected through a competitive process consisting of several rounds. The Scholarship is completely need-blind, and therefore based entirely on ‘merit’. An analysis of the Aditya Birla Scholars yields interesting insight into the backgrounds of the ‘meritorious’ in NLS.

Of the 13 scholars, 11 of them reported an Annual Income of Rs. 12 Lakh and above, with 4 of them in the top income bracket of more than 36 Lakh per annum. None of them hail from families with less than Rs. 6 lakhs annual income. Further, all of them identified big cities as their hometowns. 9 out of 13 also paid more than Rs.30,000 per annum as school fee, and categorized their schools as either Elite or Reputed Private. 5 are Brahmin, 7 belong to other upper castes and 1 classified their caste as ‘None’, none of them belongs to OBC, SC or ST background.

Clearly, the Aditya Birla Scholars are the cream of the crop, not just in terms of the metric of merit adopted by the Foundation but also in the socio-economic hierarchy.

As for their subsequent performance in Law School, it is fair to say that they remain among the cream of the crop- all of them have a CGPA of above 5. All of them have participated in moot court competitions (with 7 of them having taken part in an international moot) and 12 out of 13 have tried their hand at debating. All of them have also been a member of an Activity Based Committee. Nearly half (4 out of 10) of the Aditya Birla Scholars in the third and fourth year have also gone on to become Conveners of the Committees they have been in. The Scholarship Board

⁷⁰ See more at http://www.adityabirlascholars.net/about/The_scholarship.aspx (Last visited on: 1 March 2016).

seems to be doing a good job identifying potential to succeed in law school in the pool of applicants. It could also be possible that receiving the scholarship acts as an early confidence boost to the winners, which impacts their subsequent performance.

8. Committees, Participation and Exclusivity

Activity Based Committees are student run bodies in NLSIU. There are 13 ABCs currently in NLS, undertaking several activities from organizing sports events to moot court competitions, etc. Each year, the Committee is reconstituted according to policies that are set by the Committees themselves. Ordinarily, each Committee has a number of Members, who are selected on a points-based system and Co-Opts, who are selected on the basis of interviews. Points are awarded for participating in activities related to the Committee and/or other activities in an organizational capacity. The Committees also elect a Convenor and Joint Convenor from among themselves. The following is the list of Academic Based Committees currently under the Constitution of the Student Bar Association:

- Academic Support Program
- Cultural and Fine Arts Committee
- Campus Development & Management Committee
- Event Management Committee
- Finance Committee
- Literary and Debating Society
- Law and Society
- Law and Technology Society
- Legal Services Clinic
- Moot Court Society
- Sports Committee
- Student Advocate Committee

Hostel Committees are also student run bodies in NLSIU. There are 3 hostel committees currently in NLS, undertaking several activities, all aimed at making the lives of students easier. Each year, the Committee is reconstituted according to policies that are set by the Committees themselves. Ordinarily, each Committee has a number of Members, who are selected on the basis of an interview with the warden. Co-Opts, who are selected on the basis of interviews conducted by the

Committee members. There is no points system involved in the selection process. The convenors and joint convenors are usually appointed by the warden. The following is the list of Hostel Committees currently under the Constitution of the Student Bar Association:

- Mess Committee
- General Welfare Committee
- Disciplinary Committee/ Security, Discipline and General Management Committee

ABCs and Hostel Committees form an important part of campus life. While not all members of the student body are members of an ABC or Hostel Committee, those that are will invariably vouch for its role in enhancing their experience at NLS. Especially for first year students, being part of an ABC is an important way in which one interacts with seniors and develops a sense of ‘belonging’ in the Law School community. More importantly, many ABCs also wield enormous power in determining the experience of the general student body. For instance, the Sports Committee is responsible for organizing Spiritus, the annual Sports Festival and also for organizing sporting events throughout the year. The Moot Court Committee not only organizes its own inter-collegiate moot, but also facilitates the University Moot rounds, where students compete to become part of the University Moot Team. As 50-100 students across five years participate in the University Moot Rounds each year, a large part of the student body has a stake in the functioning of this Committee. The same can be said of the Literary and Debating Society as well. Other Committees, such as the Law and Society Committee and the Law and Technology Committee often constitute research groups to submit recommendations and policy briefs to Government and non-Government institutions. Each Committee is also granted a considerable sum of money each year by the University to carry out their functions. The Hostel Committees are responsible for maintenance of the hostels and discipline on campus.

The SBA Constitution grants Committees the power to set their own selection criteria and decide their mandate. The only requirement is that they release the next year’s selection criteria well in advance, in order to prevent the rigging of criteria to privilege certain members or groups. There is also oversight in ensuring that the Committees actually implement their policies and points are awarded fairly and equitably. There is no oversight over the content of the policies themselves.

Arguably, such freedom is the backbone of the functioning of committees, as Committees remain free to remain dynamic and evolve according to the Law School community's needs.

However, given the important role of Committees and the influence they wield, it is worth looking into how inclusive these committees are. It is often seen that while some students, over the course of five years, obtain membership in several committees (and even go on to lead more than one), several students do not become Members at all.

To begin with, a total of 270 students, or 68% of the student body said that they have been part of an ABC at some point of time in their Law School career, while 27% of the students said that they have been part of a Hostel Committee. With this number in mind, it can be observed whether certain categories of students are over- or under-represented in ABCs and Hostel Committees. Applying the Income filter, it is clear that participation in committees sees a direct correlation with the family income of the student. The above 36 lakhs income segment has a much greater proportion of its population in ABCs than the below 6 lakh segment. Hostel Committees do not show any particular trend in this regard. However, what is clearly visible is that students whose family income is between Rs. 3 to Rs. 12 lakh seem to be more interested in joining a hostel committee, while students in the two extreme income brackets (Below Rs. 3 lakh and Above Rs. 36 lakh) appear to be under represented in the hostel committees.

Annual Income	Participation ABCs	Participation in Hostel Committees
Below Rs. 3 lakh	10 (38.46%)	4 (15.38%)
Rs. 3-6 lakh	28 (57.14%)	17 (34.70%)
Rs. 6-12 lakh	72 (66.67%)	38 (35.19%)
Rs. 12-36 lakh	113 (72.90%)	37 (23.87%)
Above 36 lakh	47 (79.66%)	10 (16.95%)

Table 8-1: Distribution of annual family income brackets and their participation in committee

Similarly, students who completed their secondary education (Class IX-XII) in bigger cities find more representation in Committees, be it ABCs or Hostel Committees. It must be noted that the percentage representation of Tier 1 and Tier 2 educated students hovers around the average representation of NLS students. Therefore, it's Tier 3 & 4 educated students who are grossly under-represented in the Committees.

Place of Schooling (Class XI-XII)	Participated in ABCs	Participated in Hostel Committees
Total	268 (100%)	105 (100%)
Tier 1	138 (51.49%)	44 (41.9%)
Tier 2	105 (39.18%)	57 (54.29%)
Tier 3 & 4	18 (6.72%)	2 (1.9%)
Abroad	7 (2.61%)	2 (1.9%)

Table 8-2: Distribution of place of 11th & 12th standard schooling as per participation in ABCs and Hostel Committees

Earlier it was noted that students educated in Tier 3&4 places are also more likely to have attended Government or Private Schools as opposed to ‘Reputed Private’ or Elite Schools. The data reveals that students from these schools are less likely to participate in Committees. Hence, the exposure gained by students in school has a role to play in whether they participate in Committees. How exactly this happens will be discussed in more detail later in this Chapter.

Type of School	Total Students	Participated in ABCs	Participated in Hostel Committees
Elite	36 (9.07%)	25 (9.26%)	8 (7.55%)
Reputed Private	205 (51.64%)	146 (54.07%)	56 (52.83%)
Missionary	24 (6.05%)	17 (6.3%)	11 (10.38%)
Private	97 (24.43%)	63 (23.33%)	23 (21.70%)
Government	35 (8.82%)	19 (7.04%)	8 (7.55%)

Table 8-3: Distribution of type of high school of those who participated in ABCs and Hostel Committees

Data reveals that the composition of hostel committees is quite different from the composition of ABCs. It is interesting to note that while most of the students whose family income is above Rs. 12 lakh are or have been in an ABC, they are not so keen on joining the hostel committees. Instead, students with annual family income between Rs.3 lakh to Rs. 12 lakh are the ones who join hostel committees the most. Further, majority of the students joining ABCs are from tier 1 cities, while hostel committees are mostly represented by students from tier 2, 3 and 4 cities. Hence, it can be said that ABCs have a more privileged representation as compared to hostel committees.

One reason for this might be that ABCs are seen as the more ‘glamorous’ twin of hostel committees. Hence, students in general are more eager to join ABCs than hostel committees. This is exhibited in the fact that 69% of the students have never applied for a hostel committee as compared to a mere 32% who have never applied for an ABC.

Among those who apply to an ABC, students from more privileged backgrounds are more likely to get selected, thanks to a selection procedure that privileges certain competencies which are accentuated by privileged backgrounds (such as articulation skills, experience gained at the school level, etc.). The selection procedure for the Hostel Committees, on the other hand, is quite different and much simpler than that of the ABCs. The Hostel Committees do not award points for experience gained in school. Instead, emphasis is laid on the student's willingness to think about hostel issues and their ability to communicate with the hostel and mess staff. This leads to a more level playing field, with a student's background having a much smaller impact on their selection. This might a reason why Hostel Committees are much less representative of privilege than the ABCs.

8.1. Caste and Exclusion:

Only around 47% of SC and 61% of ST students have participated in ABCs. In order to determine whether lack of participation is due to lack of interest or otherwise, the questionnaire also asked whether the student had ever applied to be on a Committee but was rejected. While around 12% of General Category students said that they have never been in a committee despite applying, 24% of SC and 16% of ST students said the same. Moreover, the difference between the number of General Category students and SC/ST students who had never applied to a Committee is also considerable.

Admission Category Committee Participation	General	Scheduled Caste	Scheduled Tribe	Foreign Nationals
Yes	220 (78.85%)	28 (47.46%)	19 (61.29%)	13 (61.90%)
None, But I had applied	33 (11.83%)	14 (23.73%)	5 (16.13%)	2 (9.52%)
None	26 (9.32%)	17 (28.81%)	7 (22.58%)	6 (28.57%)

Table 8-4: Distribution of participation in ABCs across admission categories

Of course, committee selection policies are 'caste blind' in the sense that Committees do not actively ask for the caste of the individual in the application form or during interviews. However, we saw in Part B of the Report how issues of inter-sectionality cannot be ignored- students from SC/ST backgrounds are also more likely to come from smaller towns and cities and lower income

families. We have seen above that students from lower income families and small-town upbringing are under-represented in Committees. However, it is also seen that even when one compares students from similar economic backgrounds, SC students in specific have lower representation in Committees than their General Category counterparts. Moreover, twice the percentage of SCs and ST students from this income bracket reported that they had applied to a Committee but had not been selected (admittedly, the number of ST students in NLS is too low for this to be statistically significant). The following table compares the participation of General Category Students from the Below Rs. 6 Lakh income bracket with SC and ST students in the same income bracket.

Admission Category	Total students with family income < Rs. 6 Lakh p.a.	Have been in a Committee	Applied but were rejected
General	40	26 (65%)	6 (15%)
Scheduled Caste	21	7 (33.33%)	6 (28.6%)
Scheduled Tribe	10	4 (40%)	3 (30%)

Table 8-5: Participation in ABCs of students with annual family income below Rs. 6 lakh across admission categories

Similarly, controlling for place of education, we find that similarly placed SC/ST students tend to be much less likely to participate in Committees. In addition, the same students are more likely to have applied for Committees but rejected.

While the student body at NLS is quick to engage with a variety of social issues, caste is an issue that is not discussed enough. In the upper caste dominated campus, it is assumed that caste identity is immaterial and discrimination does not exist. It is conceded that the above data does not conclusively determine whether there is outright discrimination in committee selections. However, the patterns of exclusion cannot be ignored either.

8.2. Analysis of Committees:

The following charts present a snapshot of Committee composition based on where its members went to school and family income. To reiterate, the question we asked was “have you ever been on a Committee or Board?”. Hence, the data reflects all students who have ever been on any of these Committees in their career in NLS, and not the composition of the Committee in any

particular year. The following section will analyse the composition of select Committees, in greater detail.

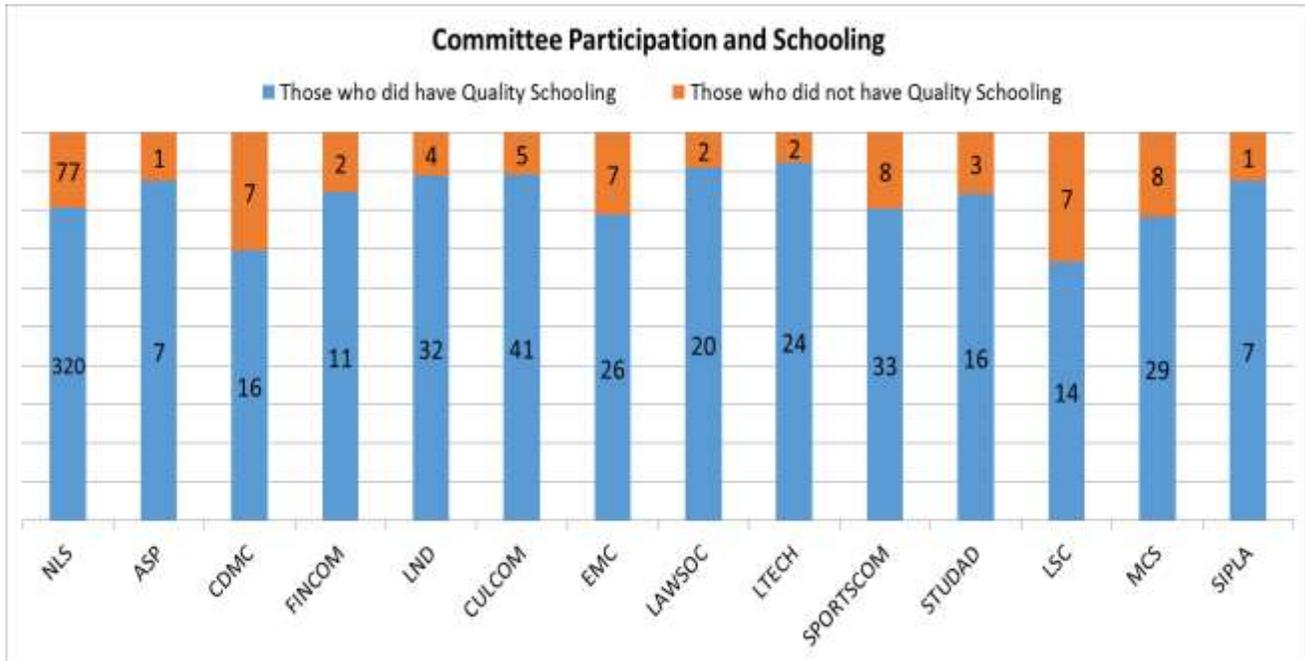


Figure 8-1: Distribution of quality of schooling across different ABCs

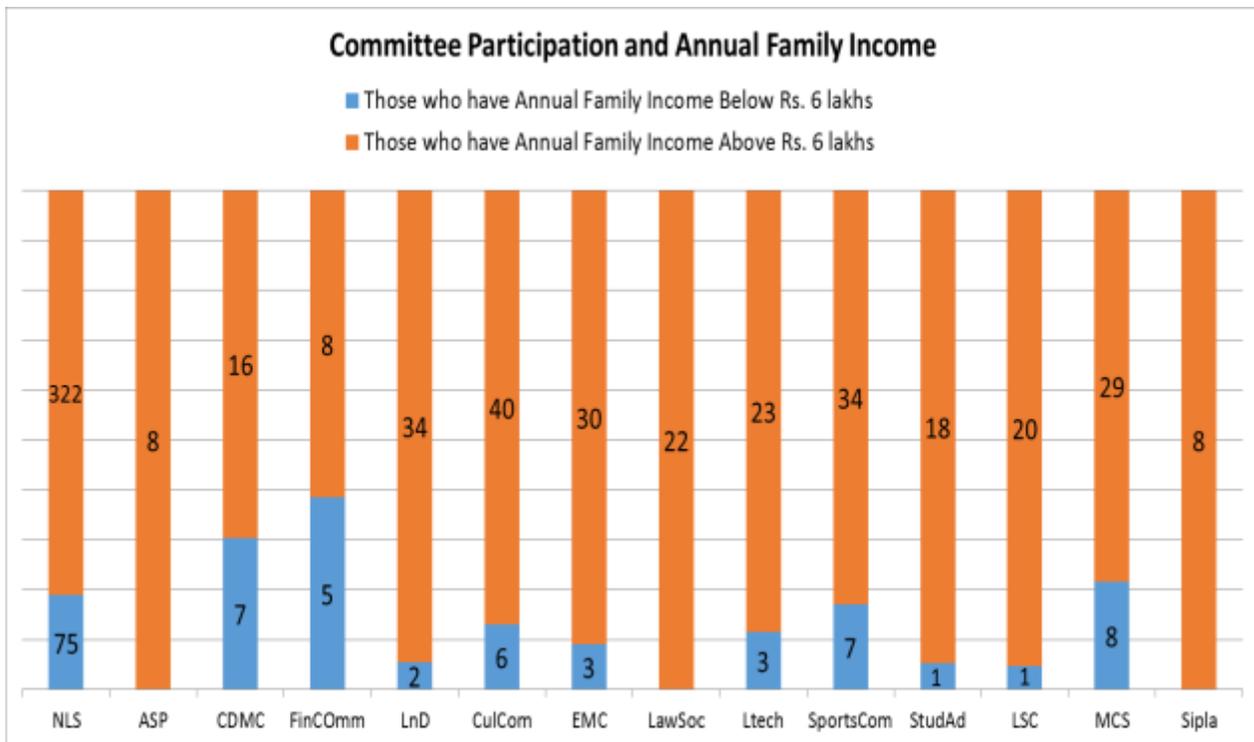


Figure 8-2: Distribution of annual family income across different ABCs

8.3. Literary and Debating Society:

The Literary and Debating Society is also one of the largest ABCs in NLSIU. It has the mandate of encouraging debating, quizzing and literary activities on campus. The Committee also organizes the NLS Debate, one of India's largest 'Asians-style' debating tournaments and the NLS Debate Junior, a debate tournament for school students. The Committee also has among the lowest representation of students from low-income backgrounds and those who did not receive quality schooling.

The LnD receives among the highest number of applications from first year students every year and the selection process therefore extremely competitive. According to Mr. Aditya Patel, a former Convener of the Committee, the selection process for first years (of which an interview is the primary component) tests whether the candidates are hardworking, 'street smart' and have an easy-going nature. These are attributes that do not confine themselves to students from any particular socio-economic background. According to Mr. Patel, the demographic of LnD is not because of the selection process but the kind of work that the Committee does. A Committee that works to promote debate and literary activities naturally tends to attract students who have dabbled and excelled in these activities before- and these are students from privileged backgrounds.

However, Mr. Patel concedes that being interested in and excelling at literary activities and debating is not necessary for working for the Committee itself. At the end of the day, the most important jobs that the Committee does is organization and sustaining interest in LnD activities- these don't require particularly articulate or 'debate-smart' students. Mr. Patel also believes that more diversity on the Committee will in fact help it, as it may lead to more innovative ideas and broaden the mandate of LnD. In 2015-2016, the Committee has a Member who is interested in Hindi poetry.⁷¹ Mr. Patel believes that this can be taken further and Hindi debating can be encouraged more by LnD. This would not only encourage more students to debate, but also encourage more students to apply for and join the Committee.

⁷¹ Interview with Mr. Aditya Patel (NLSIU, Bangalore, 7 January 2016).

8.4. Legal Services Clinic:

The mandate of LSC is to spread legal awareness among underprivileged and marginalized groups, provide free basic legal aid to such groups and engage in social policy based research. The Committee is one of the most coveted committees for first year students; it has consistently received among the highest number of applications from them in the past five years.⁷² Therefore, the selection procedure is extremely competitive. LSC is also unique because the trend over the past five years has been for members who join in their first one or two years to stay on in the Committee for several years. Hence, the Committee composition does not change drastically every year, and getting admitted into it in first year becomes more important than for other committees. Hence, despite LSC being one of the larger committees, the number of students who said they have been a part of LSC in the past five years is lower than some other Committees due to the relatively low flux in its composition every year. Figures 8-1 and 8-2 show that while the LSC has a healthy mix of students from different schooling backgrounds, the proportion of students from low-income families in the Committee is much lower than the proportion at NLS as a whole as well as lower than most other Committees.

Upon interviewing the current Convenor of the Committee, Ms. Atulaa Krishnamurthy, we gained some insights into why this might be so. Ms. Krishnamurthy said that when selecting first year co-opts, the Committee looks for students who have some experience with social work at the school level and have shown leadership potential. The applicants are also judged on ideas that they have for the Committee. Knowledge of Kannada is also a plus. The single most important criteria, however, is 'fit', i.e. whether the person will fit in with the other members of the Committee. She admits that many of these criteria may inadvertently privilege students from high-income families and those who went to good schools, as opportunities to demonstrate interest in social work are correlated to these factors. Some students from elite schools and wealthy families also consciously pursue volunteering work to build a CV to apply to foreign universities, scholarships, etc. Other criteria such as leadership and 'fit' are also likely to privilege certain backgrounds as they are hinge on articulation skills and depend on prior exposure to similar activities.

⁷² Interview with Ms. Atulaa Krishnamurthy and Mr. Aradhya Sethia (NLSIU, Bangalore, 1 December 2015).

Over time, NLS may act as a levelling factor for criteria such as social work and leadership skills, as all students will be equally exposed to these opportunities once they begin studies here. However, the first years who get selected are likely to stay on at LSC for two reasons, both unique to the Committee⁷³- the first is that the Committee, to an extent, favours continuity in membership as they take on long-term research projects and collaborations; the second is that in past years, the selection policies for senior members had been too restrictive for outside members to compete with those already on the Committee. For senior Members, the selection was based on purely objective criteria, such as experience in social issue based research and knowledge of Kannada. The former privileged present members of the Committee to a great extent, and the latter, although it forms a very small component for selection, created the impression that knowledge of Kannada is a prerequisite and reduced the pool of applicants. Ms. Krishnamurthy said that the Committee this year has revised the selection criteria to make the Committee more accessible to those who did not make it in the first year. Given how first year students are hardly on a level playing field in the first trimester of their Law School career and some talented and enthusiastic individuals may miss out, this is a welcome move.

8.5. Student Advocate Committee:

The Student Advocate Committee (“Stud Ad”) is unique as it is primarily the Editorial Board of NLSIU’s flagship Law Review- The National Law School of India Review. It is the only journal which is also an ABC in its own right. Apart from editing the journal, the Committee also organizes the annual NLSIR Symposium- an event where practitioners and academics are invited to discuss a current legal issue. The Committee has different sets of members- there are the Editors, who perform all tasks related to the Committee, and the Members and Co-Opts who perform the organizational aspects of the Committee’s mandate. Unlike other Committees where the difference between Members and Co-opts is negligible in practice, in the Stud-Ad, apart from tasks undertaken by different classes of members, the selection procedure is also different. We interviewed Ms. Ashwini Vaidialingam, the current Chief Editor of NLSIR on how different categories of members are selected, and how this may affect diversity in the Committee.

⁷³ *Id.*

First year students are selected as Co-Opts, primarily to handle the administrative aspects of running a journal and ‘shadow editing’ pieces along with one of the Editors.⁷⁴ The primary component is an interview, with an interview with the Faculty advisor also carrying weightage. According to Ms. Vaidialingam, the Committee attracts applicants who are usually from big cities, who went to good schools and excelled in writing-related activities in school. The applicants are likely to have been chief editors of their school magazines, etc. She concedes that most first year students are misinformed about the kind of work that a first year student gets to do on a Journal, as the work that they do get to do hardly involves literary skills. Moreover, the interview with Faculty is also likely to favour students with better articulation skills. Moreover, the Committee also tries to watch out for students who are likely to apply to stay on the Committee next year as Editors.

Stud Ad’s selection for Editors is (understandably) different from Committees’ criteria for selecting members. Earlier, the Committee used to have a CGPA component to its selection. However, for the past four years, it has been felt that CGPA does not adequately reflect the abilities required of an Editor, and this component has been scrapped.⁷⁵ The selection procedure for Editors now consists of legal essay writing, abstract writing and a line editing test- all testing the skills required by Editors. Despite this criteria being completely objective, Ms. Vaidialingam was not surprised that the Committee is the most upper-caste dominated ABC (Table 8-9). She posits that being from a high-income and/or Upper Caste family affects one’s legal writing and analysis as they are more likely to have had access to a home and school environment where academic success and critical thinking are encouraged. While what she says may be true, it is often thought that NLS serves as an environment that encourages critical thought and academic success. However, it is unfortunate that the environment at NLS does not seem to equalize the role played by family privilege. Ms. Vaidialingam has an interesting theory- that students from less privileged backgrounds are much more likely to find Law School difficult in the first year or so, and subsequently downgrade their own academic expectations in the subsequent years. This highlights

⁷⁴ Interview with Ms. Ashwini Vaidialingam (NLSIU, Bangalore, 1 December 2015).

⁷⁵ *Id.*

the importance of adequate academic support in the initial years, especially for students from less-privileged backgrounds.

CASTE \ ABC	NLS	CulCom	LnD	LSC	MCS	StudAd	Sports Com
Brahmin	105 (26.45%)	12 (26.09%)	11 (30.56%)	10 (47.62%)	11 (29.73%)	11 (57.89%)	13 (31.71%)
Other Upper Castes	129 (32.49%)	17 (36.96%)	17 (47.22%)	8 (38.10%)	14 (37.84%)	4 (21.05%)	12 (29.27%)
Scheduled Castes	59 (14.86%)	6 (13.04%)	1 (2.78%)	2 (9.52%)	-	1 (5.26%)	7 (17.07%)
Scheduled Tribes	28 (7.05%)	5 (10.87%)	-	1 (4.76%)	-	-	3 (7.32%)
No Caste	43 (10.83%)	5 (10.87%)	4 (11.11%)	-	8 (21.62%)	2 (10.53%)	3 (7.32%)

Table 8-6: Distribution of castes across select ABCs

8.6. Sports Committee:

The Sports Committee is one of the largest Committees. It has the mandate of organizing sporting events throughout the year as well as organize the annual inter-law school Sports fest, Spiritus. The graphs above reveal that this committee has among the highest proportions of students from disadvantaged income and schooling backgrounds. We interviewed the Convener, Ms. Shraddha Chaudhary about the same. She says that the Sports Committee looks for students who love to play and watch sports and also show an interest in organizing events. Talent and interest in sport is not limited to any particular section of society, nor does it depend on an upper-class upbringing.⁷⁶

What is unique to the Sports Committee is the gender-balance of the Committee. Over the past few years, the Committee has been dominated by males. Almost 70% of the students who said that they have been a member of this Committee, were male (Table 8-7). In the past, the college even experimented with having quotas for girls in the Committee. However, this was done away with.

⁷⁶ Interview with Ms. Shraddha Chaudhary (NLSIU, Bangalore, 29 December 2015).

According to Ms. Chaudhary, the 2015-16 Committee has made conscious efforts to involve more women in the Committee and the efforts have been paying off.

Gender \ ABC	NLS	CulCom	LnD	MCS	Sports Com
Female	185 (46.60%)	36 (78.26%)	15 (41.67%)	19 (51.35%)	13 (31.71%)
Male	212 (53.40%)	46 (21.74%)	21 (58.33%)	18 (48.65%)	28 (68.29%)

Table 8-7: Distribution of gender across select ABCs

Another issue that was highlighted by Ms. Chaudhary was the lack of institutional support for sports. Despite sports being one of the few activities that sees participation across students from all socio-economic backgrounds, it receives very little support in terms of funding. Until this year, there was no financial assistance provided for participation in sports. Attendance make-up is also often not granted for participation in sports tournaments, in contrast to participation in moots and debates. As Ms. Chaudhary put it, it appears as if there is a mindset that there is only a future for those who study. Given how our results so far have amply demonstrated that the category of “those who study” has strong links with having a privileged upbringing, greater institutional support for sports will go a long way towards improving inclusivity of Law School.

8.7. Moot Court Society:

The Moot Court Society is also one of the largest ABCs at NLS, with the mandate of encouraging and facilitating mooting in college by conducting University selection rounds, demo sessions for first years, etc. The Committee is also involved in organizing the NLS Trilegal International Arbitration Moot, and the ISRO Manfred Lachs Funding Round moot, which are both prestigious inter-college moot court competitions. The composition of MCS most closely resembles that of NLS and it is reasonably diverse in terms of income and socio-economic backgrounds. According to Mr. Harshvardan Sunder, the Joint Convener of the Committee, while MCS does award points to first year students with prior organizational experience, the qualifying criteria is how hardworking and diligent the students seem. This is tested based on a largely hypothetical-driven interview.

In subsequent years, prior mooting experience and performance is given weightage. This is because organizing moots and drafting and executing mooting-related policy within the University

requires a certain degree of knowledge about mooting, which comes from experience in participating in the same.⁷⁷ However, the selection criteria for Members also differentiates between different types of moots- more points are awarded for participation in the more ‘prestigious’ moots (which happen to all be international moots).⁷⁸ This is a potential source of inequity as participation in international moots incurs substantial financial investment, and the Financial Assistance Policy does not adequately cover the same. However, in practice, this does not seem to bear very strongly on the composition of the committee over the past four years.

8.8. Cultural and Fine Arts Committee

The Cultural and Fine Arts Committee has the most number of students who have been a member or a co-opt in the past five years. The Committee is responsible for organizing cultural events on campus and is involved in organizing University Week, the intra-University fest and Admit One, the inter-university theatre fest. It also helps organize LeGala, the inter-university cultural fest.

The Convener, Ms. Arunima Singal, was of the opinion that the level of diversity in the Committee was largely due to the large number of junior co-opts (first year students) they select every year. Nearly all students who apply, are interested in cultural activities of any kind and perform suitably well at the interview are invited to be part of the Committee. However, the selection criteria for senior co-opts is more stringent. Due to the increased responsibilities they have to shoulder, applicants have to demonstrate leadership potential through past experience in order to be selected.⁷⁹ For Members, it’s a purely objective selection method with points being awarded for organizing and volunteering for college events, and also for performance in cultural activities. Ms. Singal observes that the Senior Co-Opts and Members tend to be from more privileged backgrounds as they more likely to have been taught ‘soft’ skills in school and can apply them effectively in college.

⁷⁷ Interview with Mr. Harshvardhan Sunder (NLSIU, Bangalore, 5 February 2016).

⁷⁸ MCS Selection Criteria, 2015-2016.

⁷⁹ Interview with Ms. Arunima Singal (NLSIU, Bangalore, 15 February 2016).

9. The Representatives

In the preceding Chapter, we noted compositions of student committees. At NLS, student committees like hostel committees, ABCs and Journals are given a lot of autonomy and administration's involvement is minimal. They are headed by senior students who have been on these committees for long, designated as Convenors and Joint-Convenors. Each batch at NLS too has its own representatives in order to facilitate communication with other batches, faculty and administration. Each batch elects one Library Representative and two Class Representatives (1 male and 1 female). In this Chapter we shall look at who are these representatives.

9.1. Convenors/ Joint-Convenors:

On a whole it was found Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students are grossly under represented as convenors while Upper Caste students are over represented in comparison to their proportions in the student population. Scheduled Caste students comprise only around 7% of all the convenors (includes joint-convenors) in comparison to their constituting 14% of the student population. Compare this to Other Upper Caste students who comprise 39% of convenors as against 32% in the rest of the student population.

Hostel committees show a variation with around 29% of hostel committee convenors beings SCs equally with Brahmins. In all hostel committees put together however, SCs constitute only 9.71% of membership compared to Brahmins who constitute almost 34%. SCs form 10% of the membership of ABCs and Boards as well. However, there is only SC convenor in all put together. All the journals put together have only 1 SC student in their committee.

In terms of income levels as well, considerable number of convenors of hostel committees come from families with annual income between Rs. 3-6 lakhs, whereas for ABCs, convenors mostly come from households with Rs. 12-36 lakhs annual income. Nearly equal number of both sexes having become convenors. ABCs and Boards have more students from Tier 1 cities, as a consequence perhaps, majority of their convenors hail from Tier 1 cities. Hostel committees on other hand, have more students from Tier 2 cities, and majority of their convenors also belong to Tier 2 cities.

ABCs/Boards:

Students from SC/ST background who are part of ABCs are far less likely than other members to become Convenors. This indicates that aside from committees themselves being under-represented by SC and ST students, these students who are already on the committee are far less likely than their peers to become convenors.

While overall, 25.96% of people who have been part of an ABC/Board have become the convenor, in the case of SCs and STs the proportions are 4.55% and 18.18%. To put things in perspective, out of the 281 students who have been part of ABC/Boards, 60 have become convenors, out of which only 3 have been from SC/ST backgrounds.

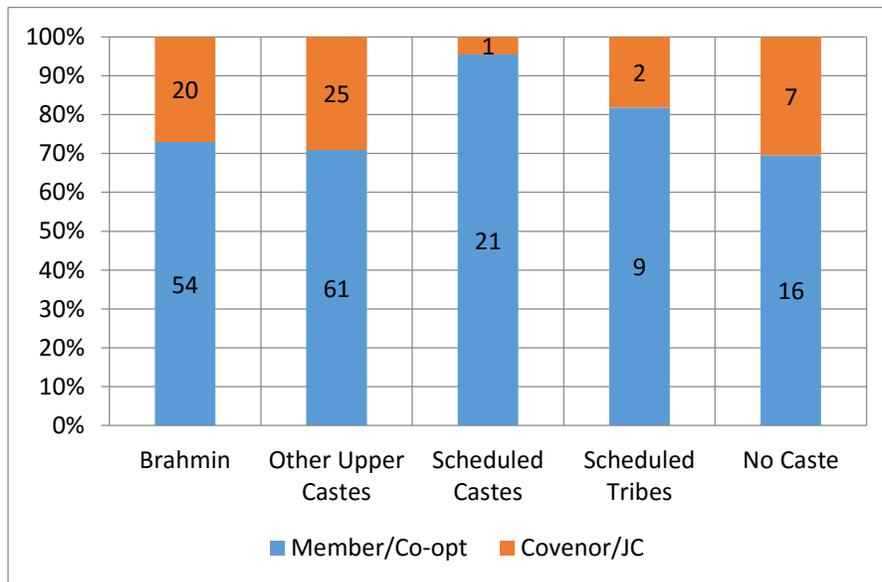


Figure 9-1: Distribution of convenors and Members/Co-opts of ABCs/Boards across caste groups

There overall seems to be a preference for students from Tier 1 cities. Though most students in NLS are from Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities, even within committees for the position of convenor there appears to be a preference for Tier 1 and 2 city students. 27.42% and 25.56% of tier 1 and 2 students respectively became committee convenors in comparison to 15.38% of tier 3 students who were on the committee.

While CGPA is a non-factor, students with better English fluency also showed greater likelihood of becoming convenors as the table below will indicate.

English Fluency (5 being highest):	Member/Co-opt	Convener/JC
3	100.00%	0.00%
4	80.00%	20.00%
5	71.74%	28.26%
Total	74.04%	25.96%

Table 9-1: Distribution of convenors and members/co-opts of ABCs/Boards across different levels of English fluency

Hostel Committees:

Hostel committees show very different trends from that of ABCs/Boards. While, convenors of ABC/Boards are mostly from upper caste, big city backgrounds, hostel committees showed no such trend. Particular is the difference in terms of caste. Figure 9-2 indicates the same. SC students constitute only 9.71% of membership compared to Brahmins who constitute almost 34%. Interestingly 6 out of 14 members from SC/ST backgrounds have gone on to become convenors of these committees. While most convenors in all committees hail from large cities, it is particularly true in case of journals not as much in Hostel Committees. Similarly fluency in English has a stronger correlation with convenorships of ABCs and Journals than Hostel committees.

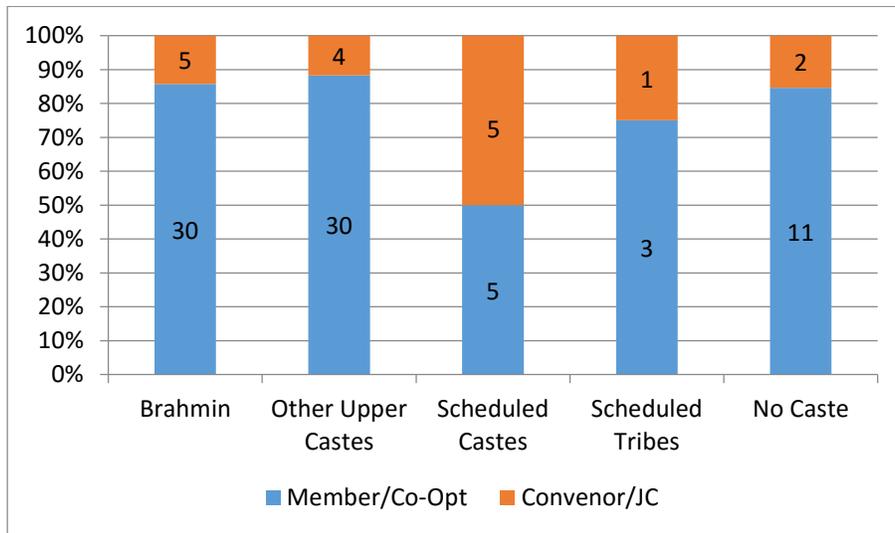


Figure 9-2: Distribution of convenors and member/co-opts of Hostel Committees across caste groups

SBA JOURNALS

SBA Journals tend to show similar but stronger trends to those indicated by ABCs and Boards. There are no scheduled caste or scheduled tribe convenors of journals as can be seen from the below figure.

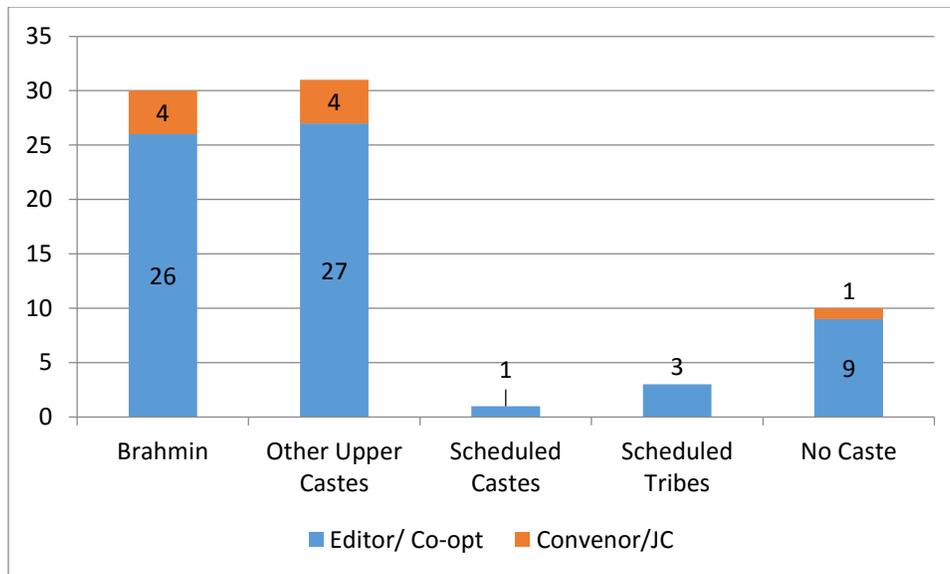


Figure 9-3: Distribution of convenors and Editors/Co-opt of SBA Journals across caste groups

Members of journals with higher CGPAs were very much more likely than their peers to become convenors of the said journals. Students in journals also have a high likelihood of becoming convenors of ABCs.

It is evident that caste remains a big underlying factor. Perhaps not as a result of conscious caste bias, but overall trends indicate a lower representation particularly of SC/ST students in committees. This difference is much starker in cases of ABCs and Journals which are also perceived as more prestigious than in hostel committees. Another factor to be kept in mind is that while in ABCs and Journals, convenors are decided by the respective committees, in most of the hostel committees, convenors and their members are usually selected by the hostel wardens. Perhaps that too is a contributing factor in making hostel committees more diverse.

9.2. Class Representatives/ Library Representatives:

A total of 36 students have been at some point or the other been elected as class representative or library representative. This analysis is limited to students who enrolled from 2011 onwards.

Caste Composition:	Brahmin	Other Upper Castes	Other Backward Castes	Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes	Don't Know	No Caste
Class Representatives/ Library Representatives (36)	12 (33.33%)	14 (38.89%)	2 (5.56%)	2 (5.56%)	-	2 (5.56%)	4 (11.11%)
Overall (389)	104 (26.74%)	126 (32.39%)	9 (2.31%)	58 (14.91%)	26 (6.68%)	22 (6.17%)	42 (10.80%)

Table 9-2: Caste-wise break up of Class Representatives and Library Representatives.

The above table indicates a skewed representation along caste lines. While the representation of Brahmins, other upper castes and even other backward castes are greater than when compared to the rest of the student population, scheduled castes and tribes students are clearly underrepresented. There has been no representative from Scheduled tribes in all five batches. Not a single student who did schooling from small place (Tier 3 & 4) has ever been a batch representative (Table 9-3).

Place of Schooling (11th & 12th):	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Abroad
Class Representatives/ Library Representatives (36)	20 (55.56%)	15 (41.67%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (2.78%)
Overall (389)	190 (48.84%)	157 (40.36%)	26 (6.68%)	5 (1.29%)	9 (2.31%)

Table 9-3: Place of schooling (11th & 12th standards) wise distribution amongst class and library representatives.

33 students (8.5%) in five batches did their high schooling from government schools. However, amongst batch representatives, only 1 (2.8%) such student has ever been elected. Batch representatives also come from relatively more prosperous financial backgrounds. Their average annual income is Rs. 21.9 lakhs compared to overall average of Rs. 19.8 lakhs per annum. None from households with annual income below Rs. 3 lakhs has ever become batch representative.

Participation in Moots:	Batch Representatives (33):	Overall (307):
International	15 (45.5%)	52 (16.9%)
National	7 (21.2%)	95 (30.9%)
University Rounds	6 (18.2%)	49 (16%)
Never	5 (15.1%)	111 (36.2%)
Participation in Debates:	Batch Representatives (33):	Overall (307):
International	11 (33.3%)	36 (11.7%)
National	10 (30.3%)	62 (20.2%)
Inside NLS (Including Univs)	7 (21.2%)	51 (16.6%)
Never	5 (15.2%)	158 (51.8%)

Table 9-4: Batch representatives participation in debates and moots (Excluding 1st years)

While 50.44% of the student population has never represented in a moot court competition, only 19.44% of batch representatives have not. Further, 45.5% of batch representatives have taken part in international moot court competitions, as compared to 16.9% amongst the whole student body. Similarly in debate competitions, only 36.4% of batch representatives have never represented NLS, compared to 68.4% overall.

They are also active in Committees, with 97.22% of representatives having been part of an ABC or Board, when compared to 68.56% of the rest of the student population. More than half of batch representatives (excluding first years) have CGPAs over 5.00, their average CGPA being 5.08. The overall average CGPA is far below at 4.69.

A look at the above figures shows that most representatives appear to be participating actively in law school activities (moots, debates and committees). Background factors like income, schooling, region and caste especially, seems to have a direct bearing on chances of getting elected as batch representative.

A greater proportion of students from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes fall in the lower CGPA categories. Out of the two scheduled caste students who have been representatives, one has a CGPA of above 6, while the other has a CGPA ranging between 5 and 5.49. This would mean that they fall amongst 7.25% of total scheduled caste students. Not a single student from scheduled tribe background has ever been elected. Generally SC and ST students also show lower participation in moots and debates, as noted in Chapter 6. Perhaps, better performance might just indicate more confident individuals. It is also usually seen that higher the batch, the fewer the number of students that stand for class representative elections. Often, it turns out that there will be only one candidate from each gender who automatically get selected. Since there is no real tough competition, it usually just an indication of interest. Unfortunately we did not collect data regarding whether a student stood for elections and lost. It would also have contributed to interesting insights.

10. Future plans and options

A big advantage conferred by a legal education, especially at a premiere institute, is the breadth of career options that it provides. A law degree from NLS opens doors to careers in corporate law firms in India and abroad, hallowed Court halls, business consultancies, research and policy, academia, the civil services, entrepreneurship and many more. The excellent placement records of NLS each year only adds to the confidence of its students to dream big. In our Census, we asked the students what their future plans were upon graduating. We also asked to what extent does one's family's financial situation influence their choice of career, on a scale of 1 to 10. In this Chapter, we analyse the career choices of the students and see its relationship with metrics such as socio-economic background and performance indicators such as CGPA.

Plans After Graduation:	Number of Students
Academia	23 (5.9%)
Civil Services	70 (18%)
Join family business/ chambers	1 (0.26%)
Litigate	70 (18%)
Others	4 (1.03%)
Research and Policy work	14 (3.6%)
Start a business/ venture	14 (3.6%)
Take a law firm/ consultancy job	144 (37.02%)
Unsure	49 (12.34%)
Total	389 (100%)

Table 10-1: Distribution of plans after graduation of all students

However, this data comes with a caveat- one's idea of what their future career will be is greatly shaped by how far along they are in Law School. For instance, in the Perceptions Survey, more than half the students rated peer pressure to join a Law Firm upon graduating as either 4 or 5, on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being highest). In the Census itself, it was found that the percentage of students who chose Law Firm/Consultancy as their career option steadily rose from 26.8% in the first year batch to 53.4% in the fifth year batch. The following Figure 10-1 illustrates the rise in popularity of a Law Firm career and the consequent decline in popularity of all other choices. No wonder then that out of 141 students in the fourth and fifth year, 105 are members of the Recruitment Coordination Class, which means that they have or will be vying for a corporate job.

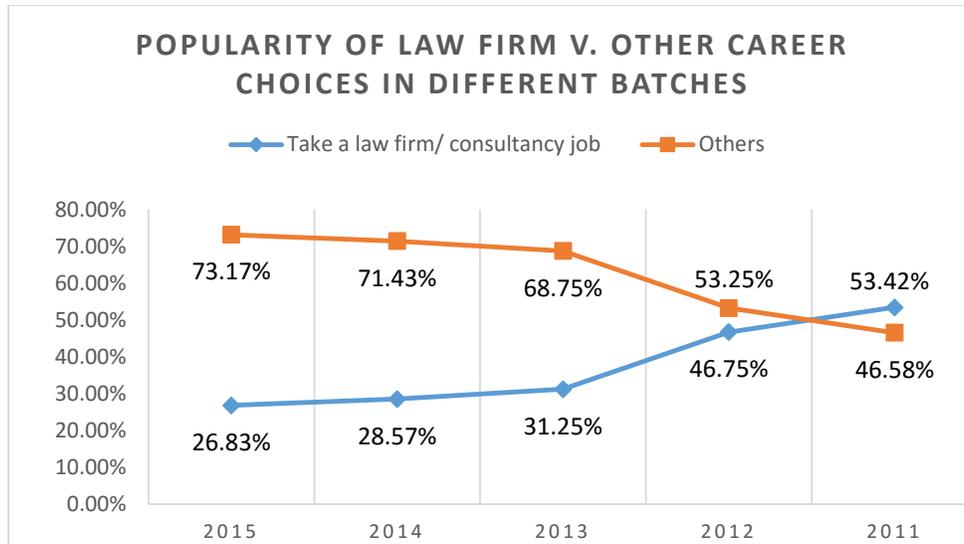


Figure 10-1: Distribution of population of law firm as compared to other career choices across batches

Nevertheless, a sizeable portion of the population in every batch aspires for a career other than in Law Firms, leading to considerable diversity in career choice. Analysis of the demographic of the students who have chosen each career choice leads interesting insight into whether certain careers are seen as more preferable to certain groups.

10.1. Law firms:

The most striking observation regarding the demographic who aspires to join a Law Firm is that it is overwhelmingly female. Out of the 146 students who have picked this choice, 90 (61.6%) are females. This can be partly explained by the fact that Law Firm as a career choice closely tracks the CGPA of the individual, and women on average have higher CGPA than men. While only 9% of students whose CGPA is below 3.5 intend to join law firms after graduation, it is the preferred option of more than 50% of students whose CGPA is above 5. CGPA is an important metric for law firm employees, with students who have high CGPAs routinely receiving more job offers every year at 'Day Zero'.

CGPA	Females (150)	Males (157)	Overall (307)
Plan to take law firm job	77 (51.3%)	45 (28.67%)	122 (39.74%)
3.00-3.49	1 (8.33%)	2 (11.8%)	3 (10.34%)
3.50-3.99	7 (63.64%)	9 (21.43%)	16 (30.2%)
4.00-4.49	11 (47.83%)	12 (40%)	23 (43.4%)
4.50-4.99	16 (50%)	6 (28.57%)	22 (41.5%)
5.00-5.49	18 (60%)	11 (45.83%)	29 (53.7%)
5.50-5.99	14 (66.67%)	5 (33.3%)	19 (52.78%)
Above 6	10 (47.62%)	-	10 (34.48%)

Table 10-2: Distribution of students wishing to join a law firm across genders and CGPA brackets

However, even within each CGPA group, we see that more women than men prefer Law Firm jobs (Table 10-2, excluding first years). The table shows the number of females and males wishing to take law firm jobs, and what percentage they constitute amongst all females and males falling in that CGPA bracket.

Hence, there are factors other than CGPA at play here. Much has been written about the relatively risk-averse nature of women (whether it is because of biology or socialization), and that could be a factor to consider here as well. Getting placed at a law firm is relatively easy due to the large number of Law Firms recruiting directly from campus. Further, success in a law firm does not require taking risks, and growth within the firm is largely proportionate to the number of years spent working there. When compared to the next two most popular career choices- the civil services and litigation, a Law Firm job is by far the ‘safest’ option. Also important is the professional environment at a Law Firm, which is less likely to be sexist than the Courts.

Apart from CGPA, Law Firms also tend to consider prior law firm internship experience in their recruitments. Students who live outside cities which have a presence of the popular law firms (Delhi, Mumbai and to a limited extent, Bangalore) have to spend money out of their own pocket to travel to these cities and intern there. The stipend offered by the Law Firms is largely insufficient to cover all costs of travel, accommodation, etc. However, surprisingly, there was no significant difference in the choices of those from Tier 3 and 4 hometowns when compared to their big-city classmates. Their preference for law firms is only marginally lower than students from Tier 1 and 2 hometowns. Moreover, among the below 3 Lakhs income group, the preference for Law Firms is more or less uniform across all categories of hometowns- i.e. those from bigger towns are not

any more likely to aspire for a Law Firm job; the preference is uniformly low across all hometown tiers.

However, on grouping hometown with the place where the student has completed their higher education, a clear trend is visible. Law firms are clearly the most desirable career option for those who were both born in a Tier 1 or 2 city, and completed their education there. In fact, the percentage of students from this group wishing to join a law firm is more than double the proportion of students among those who were born and completed their education in a tier 3 or 4 city. That group prefers to opt for civil services. In fact, preference for civil services shows a trend completely opposite to that visible for law firm jobs. Students born and brought up in smaller towns prefer civil services. Whereas students who have spent all their life in a big city are least likely to opt for civil services. Hence, the assumption students from bigger cities tend to prefer law firms holds true. One reason for this might be that they are used to living the Metropolitan life, hence they are more comfortable living the city life while working in a law firm. Also, civil servants are more visible in smaller towns (as collectors) than they are in Tier 1 or 2 cities. Hence, those from smaller towns might identify with the profession more than they do with a law firm job (which offers them a city life). This might be the reason for such a trend.

Schooling Group	Civil Services	Take a law firm job
Those who are from cities or abroad and did their schooling there	48 (15.24%)	125 (39.37%)
Those from small places and did schooling in cities and abroad	12 (26.09%)	14 (30.43%)
Those who are from and did schooling in small places	10 (37.04%)	5 (18.52%)
Overall (389)	70 (18%)	144 (37.02%)

Table 10-3: Plans after graduation of students across type of hometowns/villages and place of 11th & 12th standard schooling

10.2. Civil Services:

Finally, it is important to analyse the relationship between caste and career choice. Law Firms remain the most popular career choice with Brahmins (42.9%) and Other Upper Castes (42.6%). This is not the case with the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Communities. Only 27% of Scheduled Caste students and 14% of Scheduled Tribe students chose Law Firms as their preferred option. For both these groups, the most popular career choice is joining the Civil Services. It remained the most popular option across all income groups of SC/ST students. The preference for

Civil Service over all other options is starkest in the lowest income group, where 100% of STs and 80% of SCs have chosen this option (Percentages in Table 10-4 indicate share of students in each admission category and income bracket preferring civil services). Interestingly, Civil Services is the most preferred option among the Below 3 Lakh income group even among the General Category students. It turns out that there is a strong negative correlation between family income and preference of Civil Service as a career option in NLS as a whole.

Income Group	Scheduled Caste students (58)	Scheduled Tribe students (29)	General Category students (274)	Overall Percentage (389)
Total	22 (37.9%)	9 (31%)	37 (13.5%)	70 (18%)
Above 36 Lakhs	-	-	3 (6.67%)	3 (5.08%)
12-36 Lakhs	6 (37.5%)	3 (30%)	11 (9.4%)	20 (12.98%)
6-12 Lakhs	7 (35%)	2 (33.33%)	14 (18.2%)	24 (22.2%)
3-6 Lakhs	5 (33.3%)	-	7 (31.8%)	13 (28.8%)
Below 3 Lakhs	4 (80%)	4 (100%)	2 (13.5%)	10 (43.47%)

Table 10-4: Distribution of students planning to join civil services across admission categories and annual family income

The preference of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe groups in specific towards the Civil Services is not surprising, especially because the UPSC exam has allotted quotas for SCs and STs, slightly increasing their probability of clearing the infamously competitive exam. Further, a career in the Civil Services perhaps also offers more social mobility than most other careers. On analysing whether students whose parents are also members of the Civil Services or serve the Government in any other capacity behave any differently than others, it was found that there is negligible difference among SC/ST groups. However, among the general category students, those whose parents are in the Civil or Government Services are *twice* as likely to prefer the Civil Services as their desired option.

Admission Category	Those who prefer civil services and have parents in government services:	Overall who prefer civil services:
General	11 (18.03%)	37 (13.5%)
Scheduled Caste	12 (38.71%)	22 (37.29%)
Scheduled Tribe	4 (20.00%)	9 (31%)

Table 10-5: Distribution of students planning to join civil services as per admission category and parents' occupation

10.3. Litigation:

The final major career choice to consider is Litigation. At 18%, it is the third most preferred career choice. Like Law Firms, there is a considerable difference between the proportion of men and women choosing this career. 11.9% of women have preferred this choice, when compared to 22.6% men. As mentioned earlier, this could be due to various factors such as the barriers women face in the Courtroom due to sexism, and the fact that establishing a career in the field of litigation involves considerable risk.

Litigation is more popular among those with a CGPA above 5.5 than other groups. The pattern is the same for men as well as women. There is a dip in interest in litigation in the 5.00-5.49 CGPA group- this group is correspondingly more interested in a career in Research and Policy. Also interesting is that among males, interest in litigation also peaks in the 3.5-3.99 CGPA group. Perhaps this could be due to the perception that CGPA is largely irrelevant for an entry into litigation, unlike many other fields.

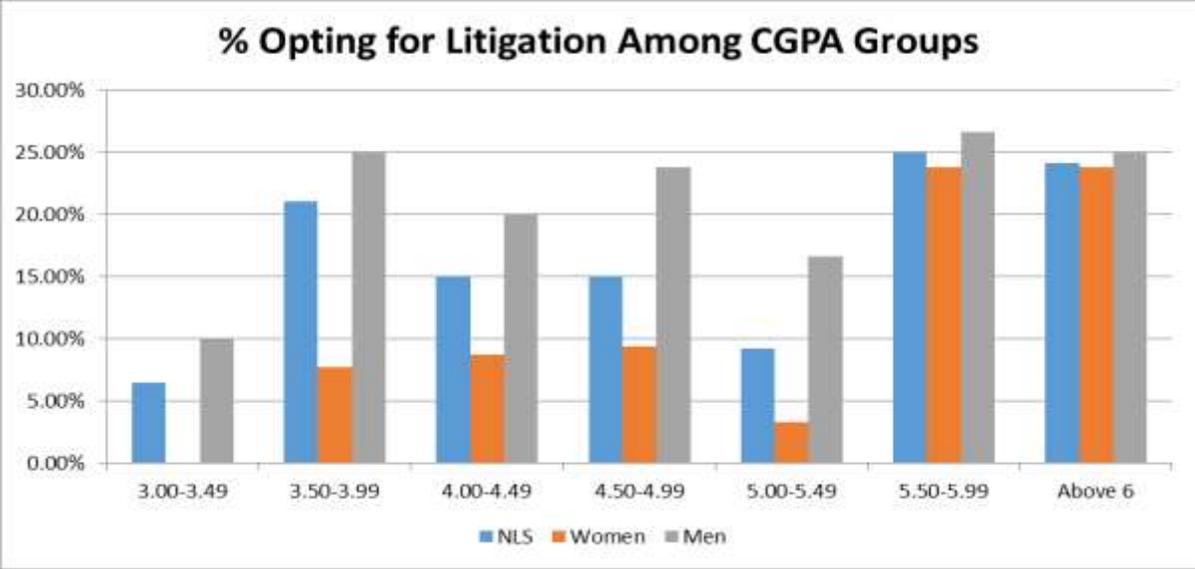


Figure 10-2: Distribution of students opting for litigation across different CGPA brackets

The low salaries involved in litigation, especially the first few years into the job, is an oft-cited reason for many to not consider it as a viable career option. We asked students to rate on a scale of 0-5 how important their family’s economic situation was when considering their future career choice. A 0 would mean that they do not consider their family’s situation at all, while a 5 would mean that it was the sole consideration. We divided the Students into two groups, with those who

chose 0-2 as ‘Low importance to family situation’ and 3-5 as ‘High importance to family situation’. Comparing the choices of different income groups, taking into account this extra data point yields the following result:

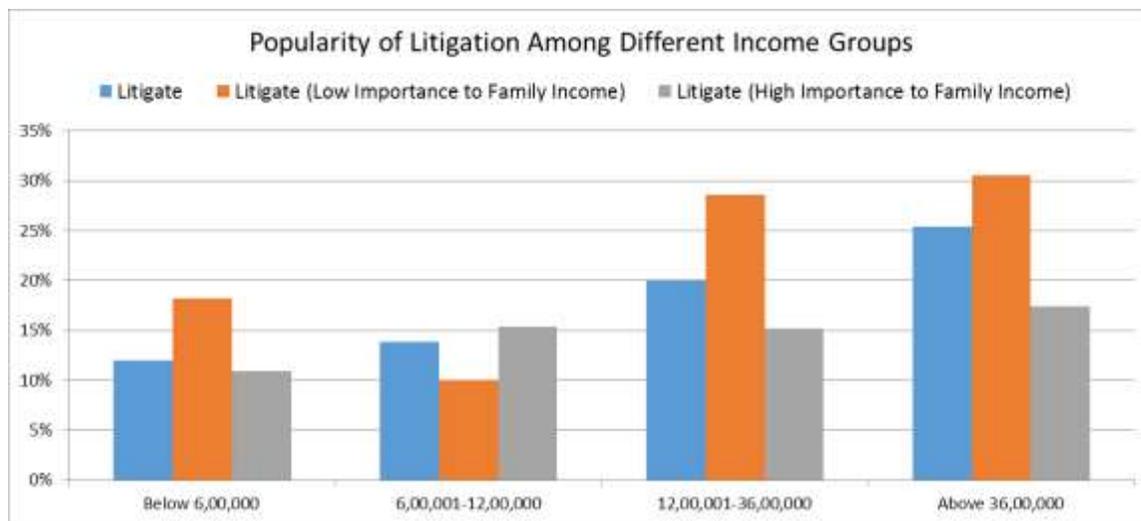


Figure 10-3: Distribution of students planning for litigation across different annual family income brackets

The graph reveals that among the lowest and the highest income groups, family income has the most impact on their decision to litigate. Those in the Below 6 Lakh category who *don't* consider their family income relevant are twice as likely to choose litigation as those who give it high importance. Similarly, and surprisingly, even those from the highest income group who consider their family income irrelevant are almost twice as likely to choose litigation. Among the lower income groups, the reason is obvious- especially if one is expected to support their family upon graduating, litigation would more or less be out of bounds as a career choice. Among the higher income groups, perhaps the pressure or desire to continue the same lifestyle one has led since childhood may lead them to hesitate to take up litigation as a career.

Either way, it is evident that the low salary in litigation is a factor that students at NLS consider when deciding whether to take up litigation. As the founding vision of NLS was to create ‘social engineers’, and litigation, especially at the grassroots levels has a vital role to play in achieving the same, the University must look into incentivizing this career option further. The Gujarat National Law University and National Law University Delhi have well-paying Fellowship schemes to supplement the low salaries of young litigators. NLS could consider doing the same.

Moreover, several NLS alumni are now established litigators. The University or the student body could also explore approaching Alumni to set up a fund for the same purpose.

11. CLAT, Background and Performance

Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) is an all-India entrance examination conducted to provide for admissions to the National Law Universities (NLUs) to their Under-Graduate programmes. This test was conducted for the first time in 2008. There were only 7 participating Universities in the first CLAT exam, now there are 17.⁸⁰ Then each aspirant only had to pay Rs. 2000 to take the test. Now s/he has to forgo Rs. 4000 in order to appear for the exam.⁸¹ Further, as the student now has to pay this increased fee just to attempt the exam, aspirants from financially weaker families might perhaps be hesitating even to appear for the same.⁸²

Also, the number of institutes providing CLAT coaching has mushroomed over the years. Career Launcher's LST, a leading player in the market for CLAT coaching, has expanded from 45 cities in 2011 to over 65 cities in 2016, that is excluding the increase in number of branches in existing and new cities.⁸³ While there was only LST initially, now several new and regional players have also entered into the market. Even though these institutes have improved the access of students to CLAT coaching, they charge a hefty amount of fees for this coaching.⁸⁴ Those who can afford this hefty fee get access to quality CLAT coaching, which might improve their chances of securing a good rank in CLAT. Hence, the CLAT exam structure and fee might be segregating candidates, with those who are more fluent in English and who are from financially stronger backgrounds having a huge advantage over other test takers. Thus it becomes important to analyse the relationship between a CLAT Rank of a candidate and his/her family and social background.

⁸⁰ Common Law Admission Test 2008 details, *available at* <http://www.rediff.com/getahead/2008/jan/30iycu.html> (Last visited on: 10 February 2016).

Also see About CLAT 2016, *available at* https://clat.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/E-Brochure_Front-Pages.pdf (Last visited on: 10 February 2016).

⁸¹ *Id.*

⁸² *Id.*

⁸³ History of LST, *available at* <http://web.archive.org/web/20110317062744/http://www.lawentrance.com/historyOfLST.htm> (Last visited on: 10th February 2016).

Also see About Us, *available at* <http://www.lawentrance.com/about-law.html> (Last visited on: 10 February 2016).

⁸⁴ Sriram Rapid Course, *available at* http://sriramlawacademy.com/law_c_sriram_rapid_course.html (Last visited: 10 February 2016).

11.1. CLAT Ranks Through the Years:

CLAT Ranks of students studying at NLSIU have been divided into 7 rank groups: 1 to 10, 11 to 60, 61-500, 501-1000, 1001-1500, 1501-2000 and Beyond 2000. As NLSIU is regarded as the first preference of most CLAT Aspirants, one might expect the number of students from NLSIU falling within each rank group to be more or less the same through the years. However, the data reveals otherwise.

Year of Joining	1 to 10	11 to 60	61 to 500	501 to 1000	1001 to 1500	1501 to 2000	Beyond 2000	Total
2011	10	38	9	4	6	1	1	69
2012	10	44	3	4	6	3	2	72
2013	10	45	4	1	7	3	6	76
2014	8	48	4	3	6	4	1	74
2015	9	46	4	3	5	2	8	77
Total	47	221	24	15	30	13	18	368

Table 11-1: Distribution of CLAT Rank Groups across the year of joining NLSIU

Each year, barring a few 3-4 students, all amongst top rankers opt for NLS over other NLUs. The number of students opting for other NLUs are 3 in 2012⁸⁵ to 4 in 2013⁸⁶ to 5 in 2014.⁸⁷ This trend was also noted in 2010, when 4 students chose NALSAR or NUJS rather than NLSIU.⁸⁸ While it may indicate that NLSIU is no longer seen as an unmatched institute, it may also be because of several other factors and preferences. We did not enquire regarding the same.

There is a huge difference in average annual family income of those beyond AIR 60 and those between 1-60. An overlapping factor is nearly all the students at NLS who secured rank beyond AIR 60 in CLAT belong to reserved category, be it SCs, STs, or PWD.

The inter-batch trends in CLAT ranks is also interesting to look at (Table 11-1). In CLAT 2011, as many as 9 students who subsequently joined NLS, secured a rank between 61 and 500. This

⁸⁵ CLAT 2012 Allotment List, available at <http://www.clatgyan.com/New%20University%20Allotment%20List.pdf> (Last visited on: 10 February 2016).

⁸⁶ CLAT 2013 Allotment List, available at <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0Bzi-sSJoPEIcTGtUeHBfems0Mk0/edit> (Last visited on: 10 February 2016).

⁸⁷ CLAT 2014 Allotment List, available at <http://www.clatgyan.com/the-window/results-merit-list-clat-2014/> (Last visited on: 10 February 2016).

⁸⁸ Kian Ganz, *93 per cent CLAT Toppers Opt NLS; NALSAR, NUJS Next in Age-Old Pecking Order*, LEGALLY INDIA (31 May 2010), available at <http://www.legallyindia.com/20100531901/Law-schools/93-per-cent-clat-toppers-opt-nls-nalsar-nujs-next-in-age-old-pecking-order> (Last visited on: 27 February 2016).

number reduced to 3-4 in the subsequent CLAT exams. In Chapter 3 we noted the discrepancy in income, schooling, region and family educational history on caste-lines. General category students come from more privileged backgrounds than students from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes background. Hence they might have had more access to quality CLAT coaching as compared to the latter. A better coaching increases ones chances of securing a good rank in CLAT. Our data is limited for us to be conclusive, but perhaps, it indicates that growing popularity of law as career option also resulted in increase in coaching centers. Perhaps, those from general category who are in better position than others to avail coaching facilities, displaced SC/ST students in year after 2011. To verify this assumption, one should analyse the previous year trends in CLAT as well.

Another argument might be that these students in this AIR 61-500 group might be opting for other NLUs. However, we looked at the CLAT University Allotment Lists of various years and found it is not true. We found that no student in the 61-500 rank group opted for any other college if he/she was eligible for NLSIU.

The rank groups 1001-1500 and 1501-2000 show more or less a uniform trend across batches. There are no visible exceptions. The number of students in each of these rank groups have hovered around 6 and 3 respectively. However, the rank group 'below 2000' shows an interesting picture. While only 1-2 students took admission from those rank groups in 2011, 2012 and 2014, however, 6 and 8 students falling in this rank group secured admission in 2013 and 2015. CLAT, in 2015, is known to have been particularly difficult.⁸⁹ In fact, the level of difficulty of the CLAT is known to vary widely across different years. Hence an inter-batch analysis of these rank groups might be insufficient. It would result in huge disparity in the number of students falling within each rank group across batches.

But it is also important to analyse the inter-rank group trends across different batches. Only two batches – 2011 and 2014 – shall be analysed for this purpose. These two batches have been selected as they are the senior most and junior most batch for which complete background and performance data was available. Also another reason for selecting these batches is that there has been a considerable change in demographics overtime as was shown in chapter 2. The batch that joined NLSIU in 2011 is mostly composed of students from relatively privileged backgrounds, the batch

⁸⁹ <http://www.legallyindia.com/Pre-law-student/all-you-need-to-know-about-clat-2015> (Last visited on: 18 February 2016).

which joined in 2014 is much more diverse. Further, a brief overview of the gender-ratio of the two batches presents a picture of how distinct these batches really are. While the batch that joined NLSIU in 2011 has quite a balanced gender ratio, the batch which gave CLAT in 2014 is heavily male-dominated. In fact, this majority of males is visible throughout most rank groups, with only the rank group 501-1000 having more number of females. Hence, an intra-batch analysis across different rank groups might present an interesting picture. It might help check whether a student's CLAT rank is a reflection of one's background or not.

11.2. Comparing 2011 Batch and 2014 Batch:

To understand the composition of rank groups across the two batches, it is important to look at the family and social background of students that joined NLSIU through CLAT. One way to do this is by analysing the caste break up of different rank groups in the two batches. The combined proportion of Brahmins and Other Upper Castes is the same across the two batches. Not a single student from scheduled tribe background who achieved a rank between 61 and 500 in CLAT 2011. This was not the case for CLAT 2014 though, with 25% of the total students in the rank group 61-500 being from this background. Not much has changed with respect of the caste of students cracking CLAT in 2011 and 2014.

The data for 2011 shows that most students across rank groups completed their schooling in a tier 1 or 2 city, irrespective of their hometown. Table 11-2 gives a rank-wise distribution from where students of 2011 and 2014 batches did their schooling and where they hail from. A look at the same data for the batch which gave CLAT in 2014 presents a different picture. It is interesting to note that 2014 saw more students from Tier 3 or 4 cities cracking CLAT than 2011 (Also see Section 4.1).

2011:	1 to 10	11 to 60	61 to 500	501 to 1000	1001 to 1500	1501 to 2000	2001 onwards	Overall
Those who are from cities or abroad and did their schooling there	9 (90.00%)	32 (84.21%)	7 (87.50%)	4 (100.00%)	5 (83.33%)	1 (100.00%)	1 (100.00%)	59 (86.76%)
Those from small places and did schooling in cities and abroad	-	6 (15.79%)	-	-	1 (16.67%)	-	-	7 (10.29%)
Those who are from and did schooling in small places	1 (10.00%)	-	1 (12.50%)	-	-	-	-	2 (2.94%)
2014:	1 to 10	11 to 60	61 to 500	501 to 1000	1001 to 1500	1501 to 2000	2001 onwards	Grand Total
Those who are from cities or abroad and did their schooling there	6 (75.00%)	40 (83.33%)	3 (75.00%)	3 (100.00%)	4 (66.67%)	4 (100.00%)	1 (100.00%)	61 (82.43%)
Those from small places and did schooling in cities and abroad	-	4 (8.33%)	1 (25.00%)	-	-	-	-	5 (6.76%)
Those who are from and did schooling in small places	2 (25.00%)	4 (8.33%)	-	-	2 (33.33%)	-	-	8 (10.81%)

Table 11-2: Distribution of CLAT Rank Groups across type of hometowns/villages and place of standard 11th & 12th schooling of batches which joined in 2011 and 2014

One way to do that is by analysing the educational background of the family of students (Table 11-3). The data for those who joined in 2011 shows that the number of first or second generation college-goers increased as the rank of a student decreased. Those who come from families with long histories of college education, mostly got a higher rank. However for those who joined in 2014, there is no such definite trend. But overall, there isn't any definite correlation which can be established between CLAT rank and family educational history.

Number of Generations of Graduates (2011)	1 to 10	11 to 60	61 to 500	501 to 1000	1001 to 1500	1501 to 2000	2001 onwards	Grand Total
First or second generation college-goers	1 (10.00%)	6 (15.79%)	3 (33.33%)	3 (75.00%)	2 (33.33%)	-	-	15 (21.74%)
Those with 3+ previous generations of graduates	-	9 (23.68%)	4 (44.44%)	1 (25.00%)	2 (33.33%)	-	-	16 (23.19%)
Number of Generations of Graduates (2014)	1 to 10	11 to 60	61 to 500	501 to 1000	1001 to 1500	1501 to 2000	2001 onwards	Grand Total
First or second generation college-goers	3 (37.50%)	10 (20.83%)	1 (25.00%)	2 (66.67%)	1 (16.67%)	2 (50.00%)	-	19 (25.68%)
Those with 3+ previous generations of graduates	1 (12.50%)	15 (31.25%)	1 (25.00%)	-	-	1 (25.00%)	-	18 (24.32%)

Table 11-3: Distribution of CLAT Rank Groups as per number of generations of graduates in the family in the batch which joined in 2011 and 2014

A family background of a student is also characterized by the annual income of a student's family. For the batch that joined in 2011, it is quite evident that the percentage of students whose family income is below Rs. 12 lakh an annum rises as their rank decreases. This trend, however, is not visible in the batch that gave CLAT in 2014. In that batch (2014), only 8.92% of the students in the top 60 have family income above Rs. 36 lakh, almost 71.42% of students between 61 to 1000 ranks are from families in that income bracket. Further, the data shows that 50% of the students securing Top 10 ranks have a family income below Rs. 12 lakhs. Further, looking at the data for average annual family income for each rank group across the batches, it is quite evident that the top 60 in 2011 were from more privileged backgrounds than the top 60 in 2014.

CLAT Rank group	Number of students (2011)	Average Annual Income (2011)	Number of students (2014)	Average Annual Income (2014)
1-10	10	Rs. 27,75,000	8	Rs. 15,00,000
11-60	38	Rs. 24,15,789	48	Rs. 20,06,250
61-500	9	Rs. 21,66,667	4	Rs. 36,00,000
501-1000	4	Rs. 10,50,000	3	Rs. 22,00,000
1001-1500	6	Rs. 19,75,000	6	Rs. 12,00,000
1501-2000	1	Rs. 4,50,000	4	Rs. 13,50,000
Beyond 2001	1	Rs. 48,00,000	1	Rs. 9,00,000
Overall	69	Rs. 23,23,913	74	Rs. 19,29,729

Table 11-4: Distribution of CLAT rank groups across average annual family income for the batches which joined in 2011 and 2014

English Fluency is another factor which might play a part in a student's CLAT rank. As already discussed, English plays a huge role in the rank a student secures in CLAT. In CLAT 2011, the percentage of students "fluent" in English generally fell as one goes into lower rank groups, from 94.74% in rank group 1-10 to 66.67% in rank group 1001-1500. The trend is however not as definite for 2014 batch, however, what is clear is that the percentage of students who perceived themselves fluent in English among those who secured a rank in the top 500 is substantially higher when compared to their counterparts who secured a rank below 500 (81.67% for Top 500, 50% for Beyond 500).

All this makes it quite evident that CLAT has become more diverse between 2011 and 2014. More and more students from less privileged backgrounds are now securing top ranks in CLAT.

However, due to data limitations we cannot conclusively say whether CLAT performance is a result of one's background and if so, which background factor influences one's performance in CLAT most.

12. Can everyone grow equitably at NLS?

In the nineties, a professor courted controversy when he said in a class *'I expect my better students to perform better'*.⁹⁰ Students then found the statement hard to digest probably because differential marking went against their notions of equal treatment. Or perhaps because how could a professor, meeting students only for 60 odd hours spread over short period of three months identify who is a better student and who is not? That said, it is evident from this report that all those who enter NLS are not 'equals'. They do not perform equally well, their backgrounds do have a strong bearing upon their performances. The question then arises, does NLS provides an environment conducive enough for everyone to grow? Or are all the opportunities presented are hoarded by certain section of the population?

In academics, the proportion of SC/STs with CGPA over 5.00 does not increase over the batches, only 1-2 manage to get such CGPA in all the batches. And only 3-4 students in each batch with less than Rs. 6 lakhs family income attain a CGPA of over 5.00. Their proportion remains poor compared to their total strength in each batch. However the number of SC/STs and those with family income of less than Rs. 6 lakhs per annum does increase compared to their total strength in each batch, with respect to their participation in moot court competitions. Such an improving trend is visible when we see performance with respect to number of research assignments taken up, but not visible in participation in debate tournaments. Interestingly more students in junior years from SC/ST backgrounds and those belonging to lower income groups, are more likely to be members of ABCs than those in senior batches. This might be perhaps because since junior batches are increasingly more diverse, students from such backgrounds are no longer as reluctant to apply for committees. And committees too are now more open to having them as students.

The data we collected is inadequate for a proper analysis regarding whether a student's performance improves over the years. For such analysis it would be best to have academic records of each student so that their performance could be assessed over time. Here we have kept one factor constant and compared the performance over the years of the similar group vis-à-vis their batch's performance and participation levels. Various other aspects as Prof. Elizabeth pointed out,

⁹⁰ Interview with Prof. Sitaram Kakarala (NLSIU, Bangalore, 23 December 2015).

like quality of schooling, language fluency, educational background of parents and family, where students come from are perhaps all as likely to affect performance as caste and income are. And since very often a person who is from SC/ST background is likely to have a weaker background in all these factors, she hypothesises that the performance of SC/STs is weaker compared to others because of overlap of these other factors and not because of their caste or any sort of active discrimination.⁹¹

To check that, we kept all the other factors constant. We selected a population group where the student belongs to and has done his/her schooling in a big city or abroad. He/she has paid more than Rs. 30,000 per annum as high school fees. They went to English-medium schools, consider themselves to be fluent in English and are not first generation college-goers in their families. Both their parents are atleast college graduates and their annual family income is in excess of Rs. 12 lakhs per annum. And they have not been admitted through foreign national category but had given CLAT. There are 83 such students.

In Table 12-1, the average CGPAs of the various caste groups across batches can be observed. This table shows two things. One, despite all the above factors being constant, average performance differs on caste lines. This is probably because SC/ST students mostly come from reserved category, i.e., they score lower marks in the entrance examination than those who come in through general category. Therefore perhaps the entrance examination correctly identifies aptitude of applicants and thus, those from reserved categories ought not to be compared in their performance vis-à-vis those from general categories. Or the caste itself might be playing a role. A Brahmin student is likely to have more cousins and peers who have gone to well-known institutions across the world and who have excelled in respective fields, which as an added experience and pressure assists a Brahmin or Other Upper Caste to perform better than a scheduled caste/tribe student, who is likely to not have such cousins. Or the third reason could be, that there is something apart from the above mentioned factors which have been controlled, like parents' occupation which has an impact upon performance.

The other inference which can be drawn from Table 2-1 is that NLS does not help in providing an environment conducive for growth of all. The CGPA does not increase consistently over the years

⁹¹ Facebook comment by Prof. V.S. Elizabeth (25 January 2016 at 11:30 am).

for various caste groups. However this inference is limited by the low number of students belonging to SC/ST and No Caste background in the control group. Further, this inference is based on comparing CGPA of different students with similar background factors. Their performance could be stimulated/inhibited by personal drive rather than background factors, and given the low number of individuals, attributing average CGPA to background factors could be problematic.

	Brahmins (30)	Other Upper Castes (32)	Scheduled Castes (3)	Scheduled Tribes (3)	No Castes (4)	Overall Average CGPA (Batch):
2011 (17)	5.15	4.93	-	3.25	6.25	4.98
2012 (25)	5.2	5.36	3.75	3.75	5.75	5.25
2013 (18)	5.19	4.6	4.25	3.75	5.75	4.8
2014 (23)	5.25	5.06	4.25	-	5.25	4.92
Overall Average CGPA (Caste groups)	5.2	5.01	4.08	3.58	5.75	5.00

Table 12-1: Distribution of average CGPA of different caste groups across batches

However, the second inference does confirm the perceptions and inputs received from the student body while conducting interviews. Most interviewees do feel that a person from SC/ST background usually finds it difficult at NLS. Further, as noted subsequently, the earlier support systems which were evolved to cater to this segment of population-in order to help them improve their academic performance, no longer exist.

In Table 12-2 we have modified the control group-instead of keeping income above Rs. 12 lakhs constant, instead caste has been kept constant as including only Caste Hindus (including Brahmins), and None castes. There is not much of direct correlation between family income and CGPA. In this Table too, no inference can be drawn that over the years those from weaker financial background tend to improve their academic performance.

	Below 3 lakhs (4)	3,00,001-6,00,000 (3)	6,00,001-12,00,000 (24)	12,00,001-36,00,000 (39)	Above 36 lakhs (27)	Total (97)
2011 (21)	5.25	-	5.08	4.93	5.3	5.1
2012 (26)	5.75	-	4.5	5.29	5.35	5.21
2013 (26)	5.75	5.08	5.68	5	5.17	5.25
2014 (24)	4.25	-	4.89	5.08	5.38	5.04
Overall Average CGPA (Caste groups)	5.25	5.08	5.1	5.1	5.13	5.25

Table 12-2: Distribution of average CGPA of different income groups across batches

There is definitely a data limitation for a proper analysis to answer if NLS provides an environment where everyone can grow equitably. However difference in CGPA on caste lines despite keeping all other factors constant cannot be ignored. Perhaps there is a need to re-look at the support systems and academic support programme, so that they can cater better to these populations. However difference in CGPA on caste lines despite keeping all other factors constant cannot be ignored.

Although the available data may not be able to confirm for sure if students from different income backgrounds have the same opportunity to grow at NLS, interviews with former students reveal that law school does have an equalising effect in the sense that even though students came from different income and social backgrounds, most find themselves on an equal footing after leaving NLS.⁹² Aside from the performance within law school, the opportunities for employment and higher education afforded by an LLB degree from NLS contributes to an equalising effect. This is however, entirely based on anecdotal evidence, which though reliable, will perhaps not be able to account for differing perspectives. Considering that law school may not be providing a complete equalising effect, it could be expected that the same would be reflected in placements as well (Chapter 10).

⁹² Interview with Mr. Harish Narasappa, Batch of 1996 (Bangalore, 20 January 2016).

Email Interview with Prof. Rohit De, Batch of 2005, (29 December 2015).

NLS has a largely friendly senior-junior interaction with minimum ragging. Every first year is assigned mentors, aside from the informal system of ‘parents’ where each senior student from the preceding batch acts as a mentor for a first year according to rank, roll number etc. There is also the academic support program which provides additional outside the classroom help to students through student volunteers who act as facilitators for each course. There is a need however, to evaluate these various systems in place in order to analyse whether they are really providing adequate support to the students who really need it.

12.1. Academic Support Programme:

The Academic Support Program is an Activity Based Committee that seeks to provide additional outside the classroom support to students to help them navigate through courses. The most visible task of ASP is to conduct Academic Support Sessions. They are conducted by student facilitators from senior batches who had done well in the course and provide guidance on preparing for the exam, approaching the paper, and sometimes solving specific subject related doubts.

Sessions may be conducted any time during the trimester. However, typically they are conducted very close to exams. Only for some courses, facilitators do take multiple and detailed sessions. For Economics and History, ASP has recently introduced buddy-system in order to provide better assistance to first years. Other than this the ASP also holds orientations for first years on project writing, citations, library usage etc. Recently the ASP also conducted a lecture series.

We conducted a survey amongst student body to gauge the effectiveness of ASP and other support systems at NLS (*hereinafter referred as ‘ASP Survey’*, for questionnaire See Appendix 2).

A significant number opined that ASP should focus more on helping students who need it the most, i.e. those who struggle to cope up and have lower CGPAs. Doubt-solving sessions held just prior to the exam means that students who may require special assistance often do not get it. ASP largely functions as a system to give support on how to navigate an exam rather than address issues within the course itself.

The ASP survey revealed a direct correlation between CGPA of the respondent and perceived effectiveness of ASP. Higher the CGPA, higher are chances of ASP facilitators being found to be more approachable and ASP as generally effective. But those with lower CGPAs, find ASP not to be as helpful. The disparity indicates that ASP has generally been more effective for students with

higher CGPAs than those with lower CGPAs. This is perhaps because even the one or two sessions which are held for most courses, are generally in the form of doubt-solving sessions. There is lesser space for individual attention. Though ASP facilitators may be generally approachable, students who are better placed academically might be more inclined and confident to approach them.

Welcomingly, the History and Eco buddy systems have generally been regarded as a success. However, the data from the survey conducted revealed that students with CGPA between 4-6 were much more forthcoming with their doubts to their buddies compared to students with a CGPA below 3 and even those with above 6 CGPA. Students in the latter two categories reported rarely or never approaching their buddies.

We interviewed Sandeep Kindo (Batch of 2001) who started the Academic Support Program alongwith Prof. S. Japhet.⁹³ He revealed that ASP was started as an attempt to reach out to students who had lost a year or were on the verge of losing a year. A corpus fund was created to pay faculty members and students with good academic performance to take weekly or evening classes. The performance of the students who signed up were reviewed after the mid-term and end exam term results.

Clearly there has been a change in the functioning of ASP over the years. What was started as a support mechanism for students who were struggling with their academics has expanded to cover all students. The ASP survey reveals that the target group with which the committee was started seems to be being left behind. Facilitators usually come into the picture only right before exams and are not a constant presence through the entire trimester. Faculty involvement is no longer present. The introduction of the History and Eco Buddy Program however, may be seen as a move towards more involvement and individual attention as it involves assigning buddies to a smaller group of students. While it has generally been regarded as a success, most students who have had buddies (it was introduced only last year) reported that buddies did not check on them frequently with quite a large percentage saying that buddies never checked up on them.

It is a point to be noted that support programs with individualised attention tend to work better than a one-size fits all model. Students come to NLS from all over the country and from different

⁹³ Email interview with Mr. Sandeep Kindo, Batch of 2001, (16 February 2016).

social and economic backgrounds. Some students may be weaker at English and may require extra assistance particularly in the first year for more difficult readings. Or a student who is weak in maths may require some extra help in economics. Interviews with professors and students also reveals the same sentiment that ASP must focus more on giving individual attention and more subject related support rather than help students approach the paper a few days before the exam.⁹⁴

While it is understandable that institutional changes have taken place over the last decade which would change the approach of the support program, if students who require the extra help are getting left behind, there is a real need to introspect on the success of the program itself.

12.2. Mentors and Mentorship:

Aside from ASP there is also an active mentorship system for first years. Aside from the SBA mentor who is supposed to generally guide the student, a separate mentor is also assigned for project writing to oversee the student's projects. Moot and debate mentors are also assigned to those first years who are interested in those activities.

For the past few years SBA office bearers have put in effort to identify the interests and background of individual students and assign them SBA mentors that would best suit them. In the ASP Survey questions were asked regarding the respondents' perception of how SBA mentors have helped them personally. They were asked to rank the same on a scale of 1-10 (10 being the highest). While rankings were largely evenly spread throughout, the highest percentage of people (around 18%) ranked it lowest at 1, but on other hand, a good number of respondents ranked effectiveness of mentors at quite high level as well. 16% however revealed that they were frequently in touch with their mentor, 8% said that they had never met their mentors.

The survey however, revealed that most respondents thought that the mentor system has in varying degrees been helpful for the student body as a whole. Students with high CGPAs reported finding it easier to approach their mentors and generally found them more helpful personally.

The problems that the mentorship system may have is most likely not attributable to the selection process for mentors. It is more likely the involvement of individual mentors themselves. In some

⁹⁴ Interview with Prof. Sarasu Thomas, batch of 1995 (NLSIU, Bangalore, 15 December 2015).

Interview with Student, Batch of 2011 (NLSIU, Bangalore, 16 December 2015).

Facebook comment by Prof. V.S. Elizabeth (25 January 2016 at 12:02 pm).

cases the student may not really require a mentor at all. However, there also may be instances where students who genuinely require the extra help are not receiving it. Perhaps a review of the working of the system through a feedback system in the middle of the year may help in assigning new mentors to students who are dissatisfied with their mentors. It is indeed commendable that SBA office bearers in recent years have started trying to allocate mentors depending on interests and background of the first year. Before this process was initiated, mentors were allocated on a random basis.

The practice during the 1990s was quite different, Prof. Madhava Menon revealed that he used to personally assign senior students as mentors and often intervene and allocate struggling juniors hostel rooms with seniors. He would assign mentors to those particular students whose subject teachers informed about them struggling to cope up with curriculum.⁹⁵

⁹⁵Interview with Prof. Madhava Menon, (NLSIU, Bangalore, 21 December 2015).

Interview with Prof. Sarasu Thomas, batch of 1995 (NLSIU, Bangalore, 15 December 2015).

13. Making NLS Inclusive- Suggestions and Recommendations

NLS and other NLUs, which were described by PM Manmohan Singh ‘Islands of excellence in the midst of a vast ocean institutionalised mediocrity’, are also simultaneously criticised for being an elite institution catering to a very privileged set of students.⁹⁶

NLS is not alone in being criticized for being elite. Top-ranked universities in both the US and UK are often accused of being elitist and accessible only to the upper middle class and the rich. While the richer students may be able to afford the costs, many students opt for grants and student loans (spending quite a few years after college paying back this amount) to pay for their education. Traditionally Ivy League universities like Harvard have been criticised for catering mainly to rich families who could afford the high tuition costs. Their student bodies for long were made up of students who had the privilege to attend private expensive boarding schools.⁹⁷ The same situation prevails in England where most top Universities are dominated by students from independent schools although only 7% of the population went to these schools.⁹⁸ Other European countries particularly Scandinavian countries are much more democratic in this regard with lower tuition costs and better system of grants.⁹⁹

In India we have enjoyed a long tradition of reservation policies, since the colonial era which in India received constitutional status. A common criticism of caste based reservations is that students who are economically well off and have generally had a privileged background are entering universities as opposed to students who may be economically worse off. It is often seen as discriminating against general category students. A similar criticism has also levelled against

⁹⁶ Nikhil Kanekal, *Law Education: Islands of Excellence*, LIVE MINT (13 January 2012) available at <http://www.livemint.com/Politics/R3SB5J0qpaL20O78Y3k85K/Law-education-islands-of-excellence.html> (Last visited on: 18 April 2016).

⁹⁷ Edward N. Saveth, *Education of an Elite*, 28(3) HISTORY OF EDUCATION QUARTERLY 367, (1988).

⁹⁸ Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, *Elitist Britain?*, (2014), available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/347915/Elitist_Britain_-_Final.pdf (Last visited on: 17 February 2016).

⁹⁹ The Educational Policy Institute, *Global Higher Education Rankings: Affordability and Accessibility in Comparative Perspective*, (2005), available at <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED499856.pdf> (Last visited on: 17 February 2016).

affirmative action policies in the US. These policies however do not allow for a quota system of reservation. Factors such as race may be a consideration among many others during the admission process, however, it is against their idea of equality in the United States to reserve seats or give admission to students only on the basis of their coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.¹⁰⁰ Universities continue to carry out these policies, despite a very restrictive interpretation of equality by the US Judiciary. However, most are not transparent about the criteria and considerations that may affect the review process. Criticisms against forms of affirmative action, both in India and the West fail to account for the fact that despite the communities who are beneficiaries of these policies being better off than most in their communities, their socio-economic indicators are much worse than their general category peers. A look at family educational history and family income of SC/ST students at NLS when compared to that of general category students clearly indicates this.

These universities in US and UK also do not see much representation of students from lower income backgrounds probably attributable to the fact that only students with higher income can really afford to build the profile necessary and the training required for the entrance exam.¹⁰¹ The same situation exists in the UK as well. Even after affirmative action, the students who make it through these policies also are from middle class or rich families. In this sense both NLS and these universities appear to be exclusionary. The growth of private education in form of schools and coaching centres may be factor in the Indian context due to which students who can afford the training and access better quality material may be able to better prepare for the entrance exam. Since CLAT also has about 1/5th of the paper dedicated to testing one's knowledge of English, it again excludes a large number of students who may not be very fluent in the language.¹⁰²

Universities in the US have come under additional criticism for their process of legacy admissions where children of former students, particularly former students who continue to donate to the University are given preference in admissions.¹⁰³ The acceptance rate for legacy applicants is much

¹⁰⁰ See, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, 435 US 265 (Supreme Court of the United States).
Grutter v. Bollinger, 539 US 306 (Supreme Court of the United States).

¹⁰¹ Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, *True Merit*, (2016), available at, http://www.jkcf.org/assets/1/7/JKCF_True_Merit_Report.pdf (Last visited on: 17 February 2016).

¹⁰² See <https://clat.ac.in/paper-pattern-syllabus/> (Last visited on: February 28, 2016).

¹⁰³ See, Max Nisen, *Legacies Still get a Staggeringly Unfair College Admissions Advantage*, BUSINESS INSIDER (5 June 2013), available at <http://www.businessinsider.com/legacy-kids-have-an-admissions-advantage-2013-6?IR=T> (Last Visited on: 28 February 2016).

higher than those of other applicants. While it is criticised as going against the idea of merit, schools justify it on the basis that they require the funding to sustain themselves.¹⁰⁴ Private Indian colleges also have a ‘management’ quota which provides a large part of college funding.

The low accessibility to NLS and other NLUs is not entirely due to the high fees and English language culture, a lot of it is symptomatic of our education system at large (Chapter 5). While there may not be much one could do to make NLS more accessible, there are certainly steps which can be taken to make NLS more inclusive so that one’s background—who they are and where they come from, ought not to matter once admitted to NLS. Having conducted the Diversity Census 2015-16, twenty-eight rounds of interviews, two surveys and countless informal discussions, we came up with the following ideas which could certainly be considered and would go long way in making NLS into an even more equalising platform:

- 1. Compulsory English Language Credit Course-** The increase in diversity means that student batches are no longer homogenous. A growing number of students in the incoming batches expressed that they were not very fluent in English. It is a common sentiment felt by many students and faculty that there needs to be an English skill-building course for the incoming batches. We believe it could not be optional nor a non-credit course. As Prof. Sarasu recounts, having an optional English course in the 90s led to stigmatisation, over-burdening those who already found academics more difficult than others and eventual drop-out. Thus to avoid these issues, the course ought to be made compulsory and a full credit course, which would be in line with BCI Rules as well.¹⁰⁵ Noting the urgency, we have already submitted a letter of request and proposal for this to be implemented in January 2016;
- 2. Representation of Differently-abled on General Welfare Committees-** While interviewing differently-abled students, we were assured by all of them that they had never faced discrimination in NLS. However, they and other students too believe that NLS’s infrastructure still may not be friendly for all. There is negligible participation of differently-abled students

Josh Freedman, *The Farce of Meritocracy: Why Legacy Admissions May Actually be a Good Thing*, FORBES (14 November 2013), available at <http://www.forbes.com/sites/joshfreedman/2013/11/14/the-farce-of-meritocracy-in-elite-higher-education-why-legacy-admissions-might-be-a-good-thing/#870e4513b5a2> (Last visited on: 28 February 2016).

¹⁰⁴ Interview with the Dean of an Ivy League Law School, (NLSIU, Bangalore, 7 January 2016).

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Prof. Sarasu Thomas, batch of 1995 (NLSIU, Bangalore, 15 December 2015).

Part I(1)(a), Schedule II, BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA RULES PART IV-RULES OF LEGAL EDUCATION, 2008

on any student body, let alone hostel committees. General Welfare Committee which is incharge of hostels and general well-being of hostel residents perhaps due to low number of PWD students, overlook their needs unconsciously. Perhaps a mandatory representation on hostel committees, especially General Welfare Committee may be a desirable move. It would give differently-abled students a voice and sensitise other members of hostel committees towards their needs;

- 3. Academic Support Programme Reform-** A common observation based on interviews with faculty and students as well as the survey we sent out was that the ASP programme has become ineffective and inefficient in what it aims to do. Those with weaker academic performance fail to find ASP in its present form useful. While the Buddy system is a welcome change, other steps like changing the nature of ASP sessions from doubt-clearing sessions to actually helping students understand concepts and principles ought to be considered. One single session held just before exams is also seen as a reason of ineffectiveness. Perhaps reverting back to the original mandate could be considered by re-establishing a corpus fund and tutorial system for those facing difficulties in academics; If the same is not feasible atleast providing more individual attention in specific courses must be seriously considered.
- 4. Mentorship Program Reform-** Along the same lines as reforming the Academic Support Programme, the first year mentorship programme should also focus on how best to provide individualised attention to the students who need it most. The recent move of making the mentorship programme more effective by matching interests and backgrounds of mentors-mentees is appreciable and should continue be taken up by future SBA office bearers as well. However, despite the best efforts taken to ensure the best allotment of mentors, it is seen in several cases that mentors do not provide adequate support to the student they are assigned. A mid-year evaluation of allotted mentors should be considered in which inputs of faculty who have taught the first years by then also should be taken into account to determine if the existing mentor is fulfilling the role or needs to be reassigned;
- 5. Financial Assistance Policy-** The NLS administration plays a negligible role in deciding financial assistance for moots, debates and other competitions, apart from allocating the yearly budget. Majority of recipients of financial assistance for moots and debates are from privileged and financially secure backgrounds (Table 6-7). This is because until this year, need-based requirement was never a guiding principle while framing financial assistance policy.

Administration should lay down guiding principles, including need-based requirement as one of them, in order to democratise participation in moot court and debate competitions. Another suggestion is to create a permanent Financial Assistance Fund, akin to the newly created Scholarship Fund. Those who avail financial assistance could be similarly asked to contribute back to the Fund once they graduate. Finally, Financial Assistance for participating in competitive sports and cultural events should also be given more consideration as not only do they help in holistic development of individuals but also see participation from a more varied set of individuals;

- 6. Scholarships-** The adoption of the new Scholarship Policy (2015) not just helped to streamline the process of applications but its Scholarship Cell also helped to publicise and facilitate the same. As a result, there has been a tremendous increase in scholarship applications this year. But the corpus of scholarships remains limited. Strong efforts ought to be made to expand the corpus. It could be done by contacting like-minded foundations, but more importantly by involving alumni. The new Scholarship Policy in its present form is need-based only. This principle ought to be upheld and should not to be made into a merit-cum-means basis. Our research (Chapter 6) shows that it would be very unfair to expect a student from unprivileged background who needs a scholarship to sustain himself/herself to compete against a privileged peer;
- 7. Medals Rule-** In order to discourage students from skipping end-term examinations and writing only repeat papers, Exam Regulations were amended to bar any student who has ever appeared for a repeat examination from getting gold medals at the time of convocation.¹⁰⁶ However a fallout is that a person from a relatively weaker socio-economic background who may find it difficult in the initial years and is forced to write a repeat, can never get a medal even if he/she improves over the years. Perhaps instead of an absolute bar, the number of repeats can be capped at a reasonable number-those who exceed such number could be barred from getting gold medal at convocation;
- 8. Committees Selection Policy-** Coming from a privileged background not just has an impact upon one's performance in committee recruitment interviews, which are held in the first month (July) itself, but also with regard to committee points for activities. Schooling is a big factor

¹⁰⁶ Regulation IX (1), B.A.,LL.B. (HONS.) ACADEMIC AND EXAMINATION REGULATIONS, National Law School of India University.

which decides the kind of extra-curricular activities, if any, that students got to participate in. Students from better schools would have taken part in a wider host of activities and are therefore more likely to have more points in their committee applications in the first year, thereby making it easier for them to get in. While it is understandable that committees need experienced persons on board, it unduly gives an advantage to those who had quality schooling and as a result more opportunities than their peers. Perhaps the committee recruitment process for co-opts which thus far happens during the first month of the academic year should be shifted to the second trimester. It would help in giving all incoming first-years an equalising opportunity to perform and participate in committee activities and show their worth. All convenors and joint convenors interviewed barring one stated that such shift in recruitment process would not affect committees adversely. Additionally, not as a rule but as a directive perhaps, committees could be reminded to appreciate diversity while conducting interviews for recruitments.

Appendix 1: Diversity at NLSIU: A Census of 2015-16

-Supported by IDIA and CSSEIP, NLSIU.¹⁰⁷

NLSIU in its more than twenty-five years of existence has undergone tremendous change in terms of student demographics. What began as a small, perhaps even obscure university known in very small circles has now grown to being a consistently ranked one institution drawing the attention of over 30,000 candidates every year. Over the past two and a half decades, it has seen a remarkable change in the demographic of students attending it. While the ‘national’ diversity of NLS is taken pride in, we want to empirically study the real extent of this diversity.

Through the Census of 2015-16 the intention is to record data regarding the socio-economic and other indicators of diversity among the student body (undergraduate batches), as reflected in various activities such as academics, committee membership, moot court competitions, etc. The census shall consist of two sets of questions- the first set is to capture the socioeconomic and other diversity indicators of the student body and the second set is to determine the levels of participation of different students in different law school activities.

Through this study, we intend to answer the following **research questions**:

1. What is the current demographic break up of NLS?
2. Is there a correlation between the rank secured in the CLAT and performance at NLS? Is there a correlation between CLAT rank and CGPA?
3. Do socioeconomic factors affect academic performance and participation in extra-curricular activities in NLS?
4. How diverse is the demographic composition of ABCs and other student groups at NLS?
5. Do socioeconomic background affect students’ choices about the future?
6. How diverse is Law School with respect to other factors such as language, sexuality, fluency in English, schooling, etc.?

As it is possible that some may perceive the data collection to be intrusive, the questionnaire is designed such to maintain the anonymity of those who would prefer it that way. Kindly cooperate ☺

Category A (General Information)						
1. Which year did you join NLS?						
2. Rank in CLAT(1-10; 11-20; 21-30 etc)						
3. How did you procure admission to NLS?	General	PWD	SC	ST	Foreign	Others, please specify
Category B (Social background)						
4. Gender						
5. Family religion						
6. Home Town/Village, State (or country)						
7. Caste (or sect)						
8. Which languages are you fluent in?						

¹⁰⁷ A study by Chirayu Jain, Spadika Jayaraj and Tanmay D.

9. What is your parents' occupation?	Mother/ Guardian's	Father/ Guardian's
10. What are your parents' educational qualifications? (None/ Below 10 th / 10 th / 12 th / Undergraduate/ Post-graduate/ Doctoral)	Mother/ Guardian's	Father/ Guardian's
11. Where did you complete the majority of your high school (9 th -12 th) education? (Village/City, State)		

Category C (Economic background)

1. What is your total monthly expenditure at NLS? (In Rupees)	Below 3000	3001-6000	6001-10,000	10,001-15,000	Above 15,000
2. What is your parents' combined annual income? (In Rupees)	Below 3,00,000	3,00,001-6,00,000	6,00,001-12,00,000	12,00,001-36,00,000	Above 36,00,000
3. What was the price of your mobile phone when you purchased it? (In Rupees)	Did not purchase (Received as part of assistance/ award/ scholarship)	Below 3000	3001-10,000	10,001-20,000	Above 20,000
4. What was the price of your laptop computer when you purchased it? (In Rupees)	Did not purchase (Received as part of assistance/ award/ scholarship)	Below 20,000	20,001-45,000	45,001-65,000	Above 65,000

Category D (Other diversity criteria)

1. What would you define your sexual orientation as? (Straight/ LGBTQ/ Unsure)					
2. Are you differently abled? If yes, how? (Visually/ physically/ others)					
3. What was the primary language of instruction in your school?					
4. What would you categorise your high school as?	Government	Private	Reputed Private	Elite	Others, <i>please specify</i>
5. How much was the average yearly high school fees? (In Rupees)	Less than 5,000	5,001-30,000	30,001-1,00,000	More than 1,00,000	
6. How many generations before you are graduates in your family?	Mother's side		Father's side		
7. How fluent are your parents in English? (1-10, with 10 being preferred language of communication always)	Mother (Guardian)		Father (Guardian)		

8. How fluent are you in spoken English? (1-10, with 10 being most fluent)							
9. How fluent are you in written English? (1-10, with 10 being most fluent)							
Category E (Academics)							
1. What is your CGPA? (<i>for second years and above</i>)	3.00-3.49	3.49-3.99	4.00-4.49	4.49-4.99	5.00-5.49	5.50-5.99	Above 6
2. Are you the recipient of any scholarships at NLS? If yes, which ones? (List all, in case of multiple.)							
Category F (Extra-curricular activities)							
1. Have you ever been part of an ABC or Board?	Yes	No, but I had applied.	No, I have never applied.				
	If yes, which? (List all, in case of multiple.)						
2. Have you ever been part of an SBA Journal?	Yes	No, but I had applied.	No, I have never applied.				
	If yes, which? (List all, in case of multiple.)						
3. Have you ever been part of Hostel Committees?	Yes	No, but I had applied.	No, I have never applied.				
	If yes, which? (List all, in case of multiple.)						
4. Have you ever been Convenor/JC/ Chief Editor of an ABC, Board, Journal or Hostel Committee?	(List all, in case of multiple.)						
5. Have you ever been the Class Representative/ Library Representative?							
6. How many research papers have you published?							
7. How many research assignments have you been assigned by research centres and academicians?	0	1-3			More than 3		
8. Have you ever participated in debate tournament?	Never	Inside NLS (Includes Univs)	National		International		

9. Did you participate in a debate tournament in your first year?	Yes		No	
10. Have you ever participated in a moot court competition? <i>(For second years and above.)</i>	Never	University Rounds	Domestic	International
11. Did you participate in a moot court competition in your first year?	Yes		No	
12. Have you ever participated in LSC's activities? <i>(For second years and above.)</i>				

Category G (Placements and Career Options)

1. What do you plan to do immediately after graduation?	Academia	Civil services	Join family business/chambers	Litigate	Research and Policy Work	Start a business/venture	Take a law firm/consultancy job	Others, please specify
2. How important is your family's economic background when making career-related decisions? (1-10; 1-not a consideration and 10-only consideration)								
3. Are/were you a part of the batch RCC Class? <i>(For fourth years and above.)</i>								
4. Are/were you part of RCC Committee in fourth year? <i>(For fourth years and above.)</i>								
5. Have you secured a job/internship through the RCC? <i>(For fourth years and above.)</i>								
6. Which firm/Law Chamber/Organisation have you secured a placement OR interned with most recently? <i>(For fourth years and above)</i>								

Name (optional):	
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Appendix 2: Survey on Institutional Peer-to-Peer support in NLS

As part of the NLS Diversity Census, we are trying to understand whether there is an academic and personal mentorship program in place in Law School which is equally accessible by all students.

The survey is completely anonymous. It has been framed in a way to ascertain how helpful ASPs and SBA Mentors have been for each person and do they meet the expectations of everyone for the whole law school community.

ASP					
12. What do you think ASP's agenda, role and function is?					
13. On scale of 1-10, how effective do you think ASP has been in discharging its role and functions for whole student body? (10 being most effective)					
14. On scale of 1-10, how helpful has ASP been for you personally? (10 being most helpful)					
ASP Facilitators					
1. Were/are ASP sessions geared to your needs?	Yes, always	Yes, mostly	Yes, sometimes	Rarely	Never
2. How approachable have ASP facilitators been for you overall? (10 being most approachable)					
3. How much do you think ASP sessions have been helpful for everyone adequately? (10 being most adequate)					
Buddy System					
5. On the scale of 1-10, how helpful do you think History and Eco buddy system is for first years? (10 being most helpful)					
6. Are/were you comfortable enough to ask each and every doubt to your Buddy, irrespective of how silly the doubt is?	Yes I have been extremely comfortable, I could approach my buddies for any doubt	Yes I have been comfortable with them, but sometimes I hesitated	Only rarely did I approach to clarify my doubts	I never approached my buddies	Not applicable- we did not have buddy system in my year
7. How often did your buddy keep a regular check on you and follow up on your progress?	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Not applicable- we did not have buddy system in my year
SBA Mentors					

10. On the scale of 1-10, how helpful have SBA Mentors been for you personally? (10 being most helpful)						
11. In first and second year, how often do/did you talk to your Mentor(s)?	We are constantly in touch	As often as I thought necessary	A couple of times a trimester	Never/ Met him or her only a couple of times in total		
12. On the scale of 1-10, how comfortable are you in approaching your Mentor for help and advice? (10 being extremely comfortable)						
13. How effective do you think SBA Mentors system has been for student body? (10 being extremely effective)						
General Questions						
3. Which year did you join NLS?	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Before 2011
4. What is your CGPA?						
5. Any additional views and feedback regarding ASPs?						

Appendix 3: Survey on Perceptions and Performance

-Questionnaire prepared with contributions of Ms. Vani Sharma.

Part I					
1. According to you, how much influence do the following factors have on a person's CGPA?					
Family Income	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Caste	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Fluency in English	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Gender	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Quality of Schooling	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Size of hometown/village	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Parents' education and occupation	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
2. According to you, how much influence do the following factors have on a person's participation and performance in moots and debates?					
Family Income	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Caste	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Fluency in English	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Gender	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Quality of Schooling	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Size of hometown/village	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Parents' education and occupation	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
3. According to you, how much influence do the following factors have on a person's membership of a committee or a journal?					
Family Income	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Caste	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Fluency in English	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Gender	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Quality of Schooling	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Size of hometown/village	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Parents' education and occupation	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
4. According to you, what is the influence of the following factors on a person's likelihood of landing a law firm job?					
Family Income	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Caste	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Fluency in English	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Gender	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Quality of Schooling	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Size of hometown/village	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Parents' education and occupation	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Part II					
1. How much does peer pressure affect participation in the following?					
Moots	1 (Negligible Influence)	2	3	4	5 (Enormous Influence)
Debates	1	2	3	4	5

	(Negligible Influence)				(Enormous Influence)		
Committee Membership	1 (Negligible Influence)	2	3	4	5 (Enormous Influence)		
Journal Membership	1 (Negligible Influence)	2	3	4	5 (Enormous Influence)		
Taking up a firm job	1 (Negligible Influence)	2	3	4	5 (Enormous Influence)		
Part III							
1. In what year did you join NLS?	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Before 2011	
2. What gender do you identify as?							
3. Under what category did you obtain admission to NLS?	PWD	SC	Foreign National	ST	General		
4. What is your present approximate CGPA?	3.0 - 4.0		4.1 - 5.0		5.1 - 6.0		6.1 and above
5. Select the options appropriate to you about your participation in the following activities.	I have mooted.	I have debated.	I have been part of a committee	I have been a member of a journal's editorial board.	I have been part of my batch's RCC.	I have been (or will be) part of my batch's RCC Class.	