The Lex Monk

The Journey of a Law Student into an Advocate

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Preface

Every advocate begins as an ordinary person who decides, one ordinary day, to stop accepting the world as it is described and start asking why it is described that way at all?

This book is the record of one such decision — taken in 2021, in the era of the corona pandemic, tested through three years of law study at Navajeevan Law College, Nashik, affiliated with Savitribai Phule Pune University, and finally sealed in 2026 with enrolment as an Advocate under the Bar Council of Maharashtra and Goa.

It is called "The Lex Monk" because the black coat of an advocate is, in its own way, a monk's robe. Both are worn by people who have chosen ‘discipline’ over ‘comfort’, ‘patience’ over ‘eagerness’, and ‘quiet conviction’ over ‘easy applause’.

A monk renounces the world to seek truth in silence; an advocate enters the world to seek truth in argument.

The two paths cross more often than they appear to.

What follows is not only a timeline of degrees and enrolment numbers. It was an attempt to capture the restlessness of the classroom, the ache of the library chair, the nervous energy of the moot court, and the strange, proud loneliness of finally standing where seniors once stood — gowned, capable, and only just beginning.

Along the way, there are poems for the quiet hours, shayari for the heart's arguments, and a few jokes, because no one survives law school, or the law, without learning to laugh at it.



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Lex Monk

Chapter 1 — The Decision (2021)

It began, as most serious decisions do, with an ordinary conversation and an extraordinary restlessness. In 2021, while much of the world, for over a year, had sat indoors watching the pandemic rewrite the meaning of ‘normal', a decision was made in Nashik that would rewrite the next decade of one life: to study law. Not medicine, not engineering, not the safety of a familiar path — but the law, with its dusty statutes, its Latin maxims, and its promise that words, chosen carefully enough, could move the world.

It was the period of the corona pandemic. From 25.03.2020 the whole country observed social distancing and lockdown, with schools and colleges closed.

For twenty—nine years of my service at India Security Press, Nashik Road, my life had run on the clock. At India Security Press, Nashik Road, the day was a grid of shifts, and the grid did not bend for festivals or weather. Then the lockdown arrived and the clock simply stopped.

The press stayed shut for about three months. Afterwards we returned on a roster, alternating in small groups under the government’s social—distancing rules, and the old rhythm never quite came back.

The first month at home was, honestly, delightful. I read the books I had bought and never opened. I watched the films I had promised myself. I ate lunch at a civilised hour. For the first time in decades, I saw my own house in the daylight of an ordinary weekday.

By the second month the delight had gone stale. A mind that has worked for decades does not know how to rest; it only knows how to wait, and waiting turns quickly into restlessness. Books stopped absorbing me. Films ran together. What I felt was not boredom exactly. It was the uneasy sense of a room inside me that had been locked for years, with the key in my own pocket.

It was during this restless stretch that I came in contact with an old friend. His LL.B. result had just been declared. He had completed the three—year degree

successfully, and he spoke about it the way a person speaks after a long journey, tired and lit up at once.



I had wanted to study law for a very long time. The wish had never gone away; it had only been postponed by duty rosters, night shifts and the sheer gravity of family responsibility. That evening it stood up and cleared its throat. I asked my friend a hundred questions: How does the entrance work? What is the syllabus? Can a working man survive it?

He answered patiently and gave me the whole map: the CET for the three—year course, the form, the dates, the process of admission. I put down the phone and, for the first time in weeks, I felt awake. I decided to turn the pandemic from a crisis into an opportunity.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Friend: “Law is a three—year course, Chandrakant.”

Me: “I have done twenty—nine years in a time office. Three years is a coffee break.”

Fortune, I like to think, was on my side. Because of the pandemic, the last date for the three—years LL.B CET was extended. That one small extension was, quite literally, the gap through which my future walked. I submitted my application and began to prepare, in whatever hours the roster left me.

Preparing for an entrance examination after twenty years is a humbling business. Reasoning, English, general knowledge, law aptitude: I had to relearn how to sit still with a question paper. But effort, patiently applied, is rarely wasted. When the result came, I had scored 92 percentile. To a man who had not opened a test booklet since 2002, that number felt like a small miracle.

Then came the merit list, and a sobering look at the competition. A score of ninety—two percentile, I realised, was good, but so were the numbers next to mine. There would be a fight for seats.

I took part in the admission round, and with what I can only call a tough fight, I secured an unaided seat at Navajeevan Law College, Nashik, in the very first round.

I started my service at India Security Press, Nashik Road, in August 1997, when I was in the last year of my graduation. I completed my graduation in Economics from the University of Pune in 1998, a few months after joining India Security Press, Nashik Road.

Due to a busy work schedule, I took a two—year gap and in 2001 enrolled again for M.A. Economics at the University of Pune as an external candidate and completed my post—graduation in Economics in the year 2002.

And now, in 2021 — after about twenty years, at the age of forty—four — I was in line for admission to the three—year LL.B. degree course in Navajeevan Law College.

To complete the admission process, we were advised by the college authorities to visit the college early in the morning.

With great excitement, I stepped up the college stairs for admission. Walking through the grand iron gates of Navajeevan Law College at forty—four, I felt that the morning sun looked fundamentally different.



The First Step

I did not choose the easy road,

the one where answers come pre—owned;

I chose the one that asks me first

to prove the doubt before it's thrown.

A form, a signature, a fee,

a photograph pinned crooked, small —

and somewhere in that paperwork

a future learned to stand up tall.

There is a peculiar comfort in the first uncertainty of any journey — before the syllabus is known, before the seniors are met, before the first cold morning spent hunting for a photocopy shop that stocks bare acts. That comfort did not last long. But it was real, once.

रास्ते कई थे, मगर मैंने वो चुना

जहां हर मोड पे सवाल था, जवाब ना था !

— There were many roads, but I chose the one

where every turn held a question, not an answer.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

A first—year law student proudly told his father: 'Papa, I have decided — I will fight for justice!'

His father sighed: 'Beta, first fight for attendance, justice can wait till final year.'

After twenty years, I was entering a college again. It was not the blazing, invincible warmth of twenty—four—that incandescent confidence of youth that believes time is infinite and the world waits at one's fingertips. Instead, it was a softer, piercing glow that illuminates two decades of accumulated life: file folders stacked in dusty offices, monthly ledger entries, time clocks punched through decades of disciplined routine, and the quiet, unyielding weight of responsibilities met, fulfilled, and carried forward.

Around me stood people young enough to be my sons. They carried folders as lightly as if they held nothing, while I carried mine like a small, valuable animal.

The admission form for the three—year LL. B course at Navajeevan Law College was filled with the particular mixture of excitement and terror that belongs only to beginnings. Affiliated to Savitribai Phule Pune University, the college was one of the reputed names in Maharashtra, and it was about to become the most important address in one student's story.

I noticed that my hand shook slightly as I signed, and I noticed that I noticed. It is a strange thing to be nervous at forty—four in the same corridor where you would have been nervous at twenty—four.

A clerk stamped my documents without looking up and asked me to wait outside for further process.

In excitement, to make use of this opportunity, I walked through the college corridor to take a look at the college. The college corridors smell precisely as they did twenty years ago— an idiosyncratic, nostalgic alchemy of ageing paper, damp concrete, cheap cafeteria chai brewing in aluminium kettles, and the collective, electric anxiety of youth. Yet, beneath familiar aromas, the observer's perspective has undergone a profound tectonic shift.

Passing by the corridor mirrors, the contrast is stark. Surrounding me were faces smooth with the unbothered invincibility of early twenties—students worrying over upcoming weekend plans, gossiping in cliques, or debating moot court propositions with the casual, fiery zeal of novices.

I stood among them with silver lining my temples, carrying a heavy, worn leather bag instead of a light canvas backpack. In those opening moments, the familiar impostor syndrome whispered : “Do I belong here? Is this a second act, or an architectural mistake of time?”

We also visited the lecture hall and the college auditorium. At twenty—four, the primary anxiety inside a lecture hall is external: passing exams to secure employment, pleasing professors, and proving one's worth to a sceptical world. At forty—four, the stakes are entirely internal.

This was not a race for livelihood; it was a sacred pilgrimage of the soul—a quiet, long—delayed promise made to a younger self that had been postponed by the sheer gravity of adult obligations.

बीस साल बीत गए इस सफर की तलाश में,

मैं लौट के आया हूँ वही पहली किताब की तलाश में ।।

फर्क सिर्फ यह है, कल ख्वाब आँखों में पलते थे,

आज हम खुद एक कहानी लिए चलते हैं तलाश में ।।

Twenty years passed in the search of this journey,

I have returned to the same first book.

The only difference is: yesterday, dreams nestled in my eyes,

Today, we walk carrying a story of our own.

We sat for a while in the empty lecture hall, which had been closed for a few months because of the corona pandemic. To enrol in law college at forty—four was to accept that education was not merely a preparation for life, but life itself unfolding. In the days to come, these lecture halls will be filled with youth, but wisdom will sit quietly in the back row, listening intently, pen in hand, ready to write the most meaningful chapter of the entire volume.

Twenty years ago, there also existed a college campus at Bytco College, Nashik Road, which now exists only as a ghost in the archive of memory — trapped in sepia—toned photographs and faint echoes of lectures long concluded. It was a sanctuary where life was once paused before being hurled into the relentless machinery of adult survival, career establishment, and domestic duty. To return now, not as a youthful dreamer seeking direction, but as a seasoned adult carrying the silent scars, honours, and wisdom of a long professional career, is a surreal, almost out—of—body experience.



The wooden Bench

The wooden bench is harder than I recall,
Or maybe youth had better padding then.
Twenty years of answering the world's call,
And here I sit with ink and pen again.

They speak of statutes, precedents, and rules,
With fire in their chests and breathless speed.
I smile, remembering life's harsher schools—
Where loss and trial were the books I had to read.

A latecomer to law's grand, solemn rite,
I wear my years like armour, worn and deep.
The boy I was at twenty lost the light,
But forty—four has woken him from his sleep.

Chapter 2 — First Year : Learning to Speak a New Language (Semester I & II)

A law degree is not one long story; it has six semesters, each three—and—a—half months long, each ending in an examination hall under Savitribai Phule Pune University. During 2021 to 2024, thirty subjects passed through my hands at Navajeevan Law College, Nashik — some dry as old parchment, some alive with argument, a few that changed how I saw the world outside law entirely. What follows is a semester—by—semester account of that syllabus: what was taught, which cases mattered, and what it felt like to actually sit through it.

Six Semesters

Six terms, like six small rivers run
into the one wide sea of Law —
each brought its silt of sections, rules,
each left some certainty with a flaw.
I did not master all of them,
no student truly ever will —
but each one left a tool behind
for arguments I'd fashion still.

As a precautionary measure due to the corona pandemic, the policy of social distancing was adopted by the Government of India and, as a result, all schools and colleges were under lockdown. Officially, the colleges were open, but only online.

Regularly in office, I worked in two shifts i.e. day shift and night shift. My plan was simple, and I was rather proud of it. I would work at least three weeks of every month on the night shift, leaving my days free for lectures. A man who has spent decades on rosters knows that time is not made; it is only rearranged.

In practice, it meant a life turned upside down. Work through the night. Reach home as the city woke. Sleep, if one could call it that, in the hours when the neighbourhood was loudest. Log in for the lecture with a cup of tea gone cold beside me and eyes that did not quite agree with the screen. The online format, which so many of my classmates found tiresome, felt to me like a kindness, because a lecture that can be recorded can be watched again at midnight.

However, the college circulated the first—year timetable and instructed all of us to attend through online lectures. This was a big relief for students like me who were working professionals and were learning and earning at the same time.

The professors created Google Classrooms for each subject to interact with students, provide study material, and conduct online classes. The lectures were online, a quite different way of studying for middle—aged students like us. Although I was comfortable with technology, I managed, with some difficulty, to adapt to Google Classroom.

My first year of law was attended almost entirely through a screen. The college gates I had climbed so nervously to take admission stayed closed. Twice or thrice, out of pure curiosity, a few of us drifted towards the campus, and each time the staff turned us back with the same polite firmness: no one enters until the college says so.

So, the classroom came to me. It arrived as a Google Classroom notification, a link, a small grid of faces, and a professor's voice that sometimes froze mid—sentence when the network stumbled. I learned to mute and unmute. I learned that the "raise hand" button is the online equivalent of clearing one's throat. I learned, more painfully, that a mind trained on twenty—five years of paper registers and punch cards needed a few weeks to make friends with a shared document.

There was an odd equality in it. On the screen, a twenty—one—year—old fresh graduate and a forty—four—year—old shift supervisor were both just a small rectangle with a name under it. Nobody could see my silver hair. Nobody could see the leather bag. Nobody saw my nervousness, only my questions. It was, I sometimes think, the kindest possible way to begin.

During our regular education period, i.e., 1990–2002, education was purely offline. Now, due to corona, online studies, attending online classes, online group discussions and online tests were completely new for us.

Out of curiosity, two or three times we tried to visit the college; however, the college staff strictly warned us that, due to the corona pandemic, the policy of social distancing was in force and that, until instructed by the college, no one would be allowed to visit.

The first year of the LL.B. course taught me not only the law but also a new language of law wearing the mask of English. Suddenly, ordinary words changed their meaning.

Every profession is, in some way, a foreign country with its own dictionary. The first year of law was a crash course in vocabulary I thought I already owned.

Now **‘Consideration**' was no longer kindness — it was the price of a promise.

‘Void' was not empty space — it was a contract that had never truly lived.

‘Suit’ was not a garment — it was a civil case begun by plaint.

‘Cognizable’ was not something you can recognize – it was an offence for which police may arrest without warrant.

'**Consent**' was not merely saying "yes" — it was a "yes" that must be free of coercion, fraud and mistake.

Jurisprudence asked what law even was before anyone had learned a single section of it, which felt, at the time, deeply unfair.

लफ़्ज़ वही थे जो रोज़ की ज़ुबाँ में थे,
पर कचहरी में आकर उनके मायने बदल गए।
जो सीधा —सा शब्द था कल तक मेरी बात का,
आज वो धारा बनकर मेरे सामने खड़ा है।

The words were the same as in everyday speech,
but in the court their meanings changed.
A plain word from my everyday talk yesterday
now stands before me as a section of law.

At Navajeevan Law College, the first—year classroom was a mixture of fresh graduates, working professionals returning to study, and a few who had simply always wanted to argue for a living.

Lectures (Online) on the Constitutional History of India, Legal Methods, and the structure of the Indian judiciary built the scaffolding on which every later year would stand. Nights were spent underlining bare acts in three different colours, convinced — wrongly, as it turned out — that colour—coding alone would guarantee understanding.

It was also the year of small humiliations that would later become funny: mispronouncing ‘mens rea', calling a respondent a defendant in the wrong forum, and discovering that a moot court dock is far more terrifying empty than any courtroom is full.

First Year LL.B. — Semester I

The first semester was an ambush of foundations. At first it looked like five separate subjects. It was only later that I saw it as a single structure: history explains where our courts came from, family law shows the oldest relationships the law governs, contract shows the marketplace, crime shows the State's power, and equity shows the law's conscience.

History, family, contract, crime, and equity, all landing at once on students who, a few months earlier, had never read a bare act in their lives.

LC 0501 — Legal and Constitutional History

Dr. Samir Chavan Sir made this subject very interesting. Before the Constitution, there was the Company. This subject traced how a trading corporation — the East India Company — slowly became a sovereign administrator of Indian justice, through the Regulating Act of 1773, Pitt's India Act of 1784, and the Charter Acts that eventually planted Supreme Courts at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras.

We followed the thread further through the Government of India Acts of 1858, 1909, 1919 and 1935, watching the scaffolding of today's courts and legislatures being bolted together piece by piece, long before 1950 gave it a name: the Constitution of India.

The most memorable classes were the ones about jurisdictional turf wars — the Supreme Courts set up by Royal Charter constantly colliding with the Company's own Sadar Diwani and Sadar Nizamat Adalats, two parallel systems of justice trying to occupy the same colonial city.

📖 Landmark Cases

The Trial of Maharaja Nandakumar (1775)

More than two centuries later, the trial of Maharaja Nandakumar endures as a cautionary tale rather than a legal precedent. It is remembered less for any rule it established than for the questions it still forces students of law to confront: what happens when judicial power is captured by personal and political loyalty, when an alien law is imposed without regard to local notions of proportion and justice, and when no institutional safeguard exists to correct the result. Every subsequent reform of the Indian judiciary — from the Act of Settlement to the independence of the judiciary guaranteed under the Constitution — can be read, in part, as a response to the kind of failure that this single trial in 1775 so starkly exposed.

The Patna Case (1777–79)

The Patna Case is remembered today not for the fate of Nadirah Begum's inheritance, but for what it revealed about the fragile, overlapping, and largely improvised legal architecture of early British Bengal. It is a case about the cost of jurisdictional ambiguity, and about how even a legally defensible decision can produce disproportionate institutional harm when the boundaries of authority have not been properly settled in advance. The eventual legislative correction through the Act of Settlement, 1781 stands as an early, instructive example of a principle that recurs throughout Indian constitutional development: that judicial power, however well exercised in an individual case, functions properly only within a clearly defined jurisdictional framework.

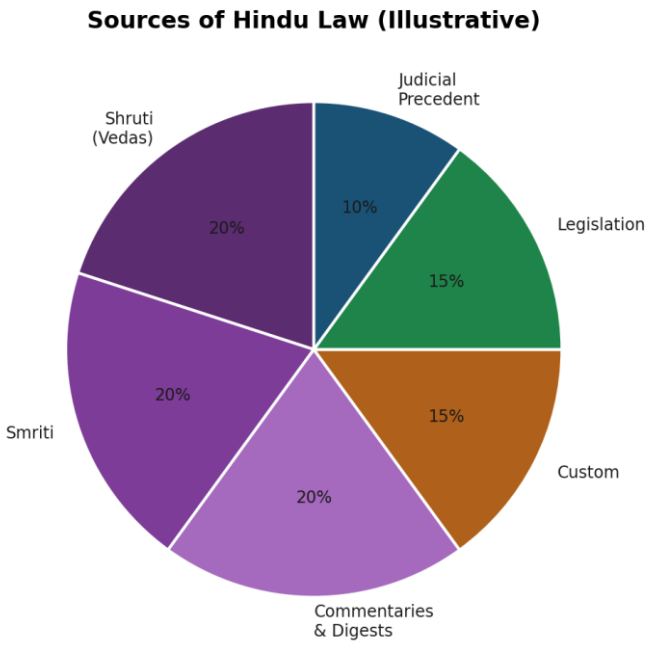
अंग्रेजों ने कानून दिया, साथ में ज़ंजीर भी दी,
आज़ादी के बाद हमने उसको अपनी पहचान दी !

— The British gave us law, and with it, chains as well —
after freedom, we gave that law our own identity to tell.

LC 0502 — Family Law-I

In Family Law – I, Dr. Shahista Inamdar Madam introduced the strange truth that India runs not one family law but several, running in parallel – Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Parsi – each with its own history and logic, held together only by a shared Constitutional promise of an eventual Uniform Civil Code.

We studied the requisites of a valid Hindu marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, the conditions of a Muslim Nikah as a contract rather than a sacrament, marriage under the Christian Marriage Act, 1872, and the secular bridge of the Special Marriage Act, 1954.



Where Hindu law actually comes from — older than any single statute.

📖 Landmark Cases

Mohd. Ahmed Khan v. Shah Bano Begum (1985)

Decades after it was decided, Shah Bano continues to occupy a unique place in Indian legal and political history, not merely for its holding on maintenance but for the national conversation it provoked about the proper boundary between religious personal law and the secular, welfare–oriented obligations the Constitution imposes

on the State and on individuals alike. It stands as an early and enduring demonstration that questions of gender justice within personal law cannot be neatly separated from questions of constitutional identity and political consensus — a tension that Indian law continues to negotiate, case by case, legislation by legislation, to this day.

Shayara Bano v. Union of India (2017) (2017) 9 SCC 1

Shayara Bano stands as one of the clearest modern illustrations of the Constitution's capacity to reach into even deeply rooted religious practice where that practice offends the basic guarantees of equality and dignity. By combining constitutional adjudication with a path that ultimately invited and received parliamentary legislative reinforcement, the case demonstrates a model of judicial—legislative dialogue in matters of personal law reform, and it remains essential reading for understanding both the limits of religious freedom under Article 25 and the expanding reach of the manifest arbitrariness doctrine under Article 14.

Sarla Mudgal v. Union of India (1995) (1995) 3 SCC 635

Sarla Mudgal remains essential reading for understanding how Indian courts approach the collision between religious freedom and the integrity of matrimonial statutes. By insisting that conversion cannot be used as a legal device to defeat an existing marriage's protections, the Supreme Court drew a firm boundary between the genuine exercise of religious freedom and its strategic misuse, while simultaneously keeping alive the constitutional conversation around a Uniform Civil Code that continues, decades later, to shape debate on personal law reform in India.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

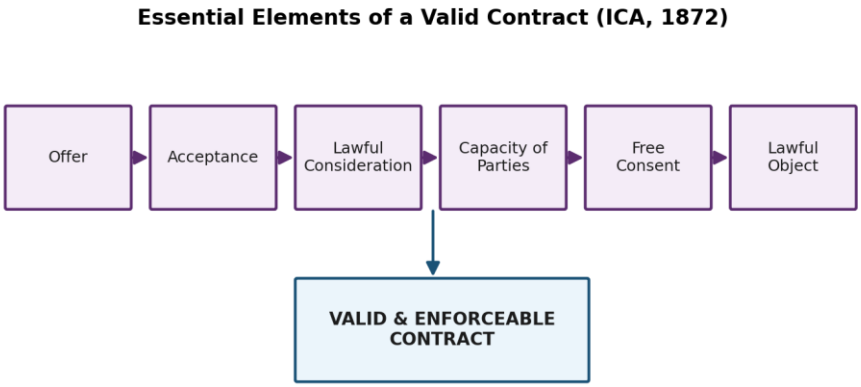
Professor: ‘What are the essential conditions of a valid Hindu marriage?'

Student: ‘Sir, first condition — parents must agree. Everything else is secondary.'

LC 0503 — Law of Contract I

Prof. Pandey Sir, made it clears that ‘every transaction in the world, reduced to its skeleton, is an offer meeting an acceptance, dressed in consideration, and signed by people the law considers capable of promising anything at all’.

This course took apart the Indian Contract Act, 1872 (Sections 1–75) and the Specific Relief Act, 1963, piece by piece: proposal, acceptance, consideration, capacity, free consent, and the circumstances — coercion, undue influence, fraud, misrepresentation, mistake — that can quietly poison an otherwise perfect—looking agreement.



Remove any one block, and the whole contract collapses.

Remove any one of these six blocks and the whole edifice wobbles. I found it easier to remember them by picturing an ordinary day at home: my son asks me for a new phone (proposal); I agree, with a condition about his marks (acceptance); the marks are the price (consideration); he is old enough to promise and I am sane enough to bargain (capacity); nobody is being forced or fooled (free consent); and the phone is a lawful thing to buy (lawful object). A contract, I realised, is a family negotiation with the paperwork made formal.

📖 Landmark Cases

Mohori Bibee v. Dharmodas Ghose (1903) (1903) 30 Cal 539 (PC); ILR (1903) 30 Cal 539

More than a century after it was decided, Mohori Bibee v. Dharmodas Ghose remains the starting point for any analysis of contractual capacity in India. By insisting that a minor's agreement is void from its inception, and by refusing to allow either restitution or estoppel to dilute that protection, the Privy Council established a rule that places the protection of minors above the countervailing interest in commercial certainty — a choice that continues to shape Indian contract law's treatment of capacity to this day.

Carlill v. Carbolic Smoke Ball Co. (1893) [1893] 1 QB 256

More than a century since it was decided, Carlill v. Carbolic Smoke Ball Co. continues to provide the clearest and most memorable illustration of how an offer to the world can create binding legal obligations once accepted through performance, and of how seriousness of intention — rather than the superficially promotional form of a statement — determines whether the law will hold a party to its word. It remains indispensable reading for understanding the architecture of offer, acceptance, and consideration that underlies all of contract law.

Balfour v. Balfour (1919) [1919] 2 KB 571

Balfour v. Balfour endures as the classical illustration that the law of contract rests on more than the mechanical presence of offer, acceptance, and consideration; it also requires that the parties genuinely intended to bind themselves in a manner the law will enforce. By recognising and articulating the strong presumption against enforceability in ordinary domestic arrangements between spouses, the Court of Appeal drew a durable and sensible boundary between the law of contract and the informal, trust—based understandings that properly belong to the private sphere of family life.

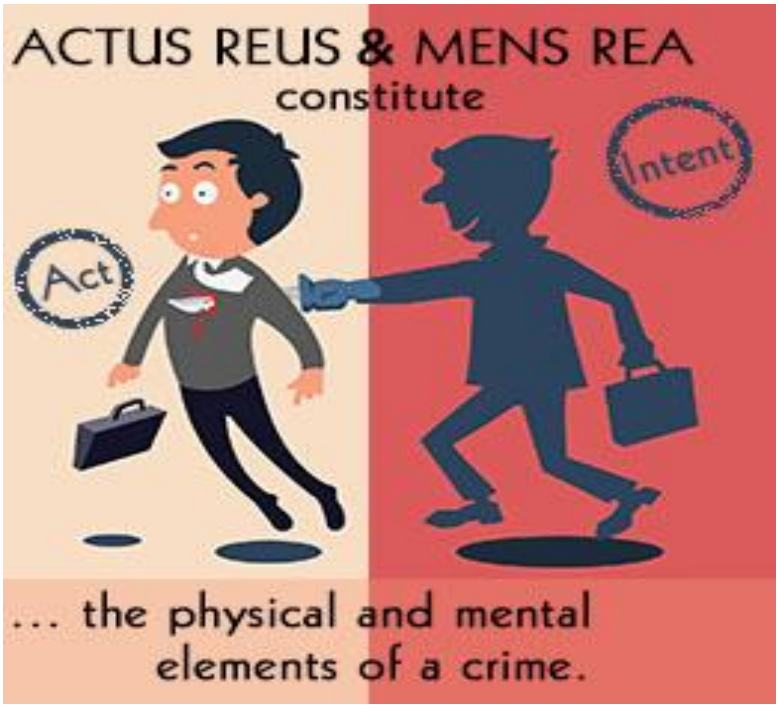
😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Professor: 'If I offer to sell you my pen for ₹1, is that a valid contract?'

Student: 'Sir, only if you actually own a pen — otherwise it's just a very confident lie.'

LC 0504 — Law of Crimes

Dr. Pradnya Sawarkar Madam made our basic concepts of criminal law very clear. Criminal law is where the State's power over an individual is at its most visible, so this course spent as much time on principle as on punishment: mens rea, actus reus, the General Exceptions in Chapter IV of the Indian Penal Code, and the stages of crime — intention, preparation, attempt, commission. We debated grave and sudden provocation, the boundaries of private defence, and the uneasy cases where the law punishes even without full guilty intent.



📖 Landmark Cases

K.M. Nanavati v. State of Maharashtra (1961) AIR 1962 SC 605

K.M. Nanavati v. State of Maharashtra remains indispensable for understanding how Indian criminal law draws the line between an act committed in a sudden, uncontrollable burst of passion and one that, however emotionally charged its origin, is carried out with the kind of deliberation and premeditation that the law will not excuse as mere provocation. Its rigorous, fact—based test for 'suddenness' continues to guide Indian courts in assessing claims of provocation, while its broader legacy in reshaping India's approach to jury trials makes it one of the most consequential criminal cases in the country's legal history.

State of Maharashtra v. M.H. George (1965) AIR 1965 SC 722

State of Maharashtra v. M.H. George stands as the counterpoint to cases requiring proof of mens rea, demonstrating that Indian criminal law recognises a distinct category of strict liability offences where the legislature's evident regulatory purpose outweighs the ordinary requirement of a guilty mind. By holding that mere physical entry into Indian territory with prohibited goods was sufficient for conviction, irrespective of George's actual knowledge or ultimate intentions, the Supreme Court underscored how economic offences of this nature are interpreted and enforced with a rigour calibrated to protect the larger public interest they are designed to serve.

🧐 A Small Paradox

The law punishes the guilty mind, mens rea, yet a person who tries to kill using sugar believing it to be poison is guilty of attempt — punished for a mind that intended a crime the world could never actually let him commit. Is that punishing thought, or punishing danger?

LO 0506 — Equity and Trust Law

Equity is the law's conscience — the set of principles that step in when rigid legal rules would otherwise produce an unconscionable result. This course studied the maxims of equity (he who seeks equity must do equity; equity looks to intent, not form), the anatomy of a trust under the Indian Trusts Act, 1882, and the distinctions between express, implied, and constructive trusts, along with the special law governing public charitable and religious trusts.

📖 Landmark Cases

Keech v. Sandford (1726) (1726) Sel Cas Ch 61; 25 ER 223

Keech v. Sandford remains the starting point for understanding the strict demands equity places on those who occupy a fiduciary position. By holding a trustee accountable for a benefit, he obtained personally even in circumstances where the trust itself could never have secured that same benefit, the Court of Chancery established a rule whose uncompromising rigour has, for nearly three hundred years, protected the integrity of fiduciary relationships far beyond the modest facts of a single market lease in eighteenth—century England.

Attorney—General for Hong Kong v. Reid (1994) [1994] 1 AC 324

Attorney—General for Hong Kong v. Reid stands as one of the most important modern developments in the law of fiduciary obligations, extending the strict anti—profit principle first articulated in Keech v. Sandford to the specific and increasingly significant context of bribery and corruption. By insisting that a corrupt fiduciary can never retain any benefit — including any appreciation in value — flowing from a breach of trust, the Privy Council reinforced equity's foundational commitment to the proposition that a fiduciary must act solely in the interests of the person to whom his duty is owed, with no room for personal profit from betrayal of that trust.

Equity

The law is a river with fixed banks,
but equity's the water finding room —
it does not break the ancient walls,
it simply softens rigid gloom.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Student: “Sir, is equity the same as equality?”

Professor: “No, beta. Equality is when everyone gets a chair. Equity is when the short one gets a bigger chair.”

First Year LL.B. — Semester II

The second semester turned toward the Constitution itself, deepened family and contract law, and introduced two entirely new worlds: the civil wrongs of tort law, and the commercial machinery of banking and insurance.

We studied the entire second semester online. Except for a few days, in keeping with the social—distancing guidelines of the corona pandemic, we attended college for the necessary practical and written examinations. This was our first actual physical presence in the college.

For an entire first year I had known my college only as a link. Then, for the practical and written examinations of the second semester, the gates finally opened for a few days, under strict rules of social distancing and masks, and the building I had climbed towards on admission day became real.

I stood in front of it for a moment longer than necessary. The corridor was exactly as I had imagined, except for the smell, which I had not imagined at all: floor cleaner, old paper, chalk dust, and, faintly, chai. Young faces that I knew only as small squares on a screen now had heights, voices and shoes. Somebody I had never met greeted me by name.

It was here, I think, that my long—delayed return began to feel real. I stood in a real corridor, among real desks, and heard the old question again: Do I belong? A number of familiar strangers turned round to look, and the question quietly answered itself.

LC 0601 — Constitutional Law I

Dr. Samir Chavan made us feel the law. This was, for many of us, the semester that made law feel important rather than merely technical. We studied the Preamble, the architecture of Fundamental Rights in Part III, the Directive Principles of State Policy in Part IV, and the long judicial conversation between the two — a conversation that has shaped, and reshaped, the meaning of liberty in India.

📖 Landmark Cases

A.K. Gopalan v. State of Madras (1950) AIR 1950 SC 27

A.K. Gopalan v. State of Madras occupies a unique place in Indian constitutional history: a decision whose central holdings have been substantially overturned, yet whose careful articulation of the narrow, exclusivist approach to fundamental rights provides the indispensable contrast against which the Supreme Court's later, more expansive jurisprudence must be measured. It remains essential reading not for the law it continues to establish, but for the trajectory of constitutional interpretation it set in motion — a trajectory that would be decisively redirected in Maneka Gandhi's case nearly three decades later.

Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978) AIR 1978 SC 597

Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India stands as the decisive moment at which Indian constitutional law moved away from a narrow, textually literal conception of personal liberty toward a substantive, dignity—centred understanding of what Article 21 demands. By insisting that the procedure depriving a person of life or liberty must itself be fair, just, and reasonable, and by reading the fundamental rights chapter as an integrated whole rather than a set of isolated provisions, the Supreme Court set Indian constitutional jurisprudence on a trajectory of continual expansion that remains very much alive in the decisions of the Court to this day.

Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973) AIR 1973 SC 1461

Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala remains the cornerstone of Indian constitutional law, not for resolving a dispute over the property of a religious mutt in Kerala, but for establishing, through the narrowest of majorities, the principle that the Constitution possesses an essential identity that survives even the most formally correct exercise of the power to amend it. Decades after it was decided, the Basic Structure Doctrine continues to function as the ultimate judicial check on constitutional amendment, ensuring that the fundamental character of India's

Constitution cannot be dismantled through the very process designed to allow it to grow and adapt.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Student: 'Sir, are Directive Principles enforceable in court?'

Professor: 'Beta, they are like your mother's advice — not enforceable, but ignore them at your own peril.'

Every student has one lecture that turns a subject into a conviction. For me it was Maneka Gandhi. The Constitution says no one may be deprived of life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.

In A.K. Gopalan the Court once read that phrase narrowly: if a law prescribes a procedure, any procedure, it is enough. In Maneka Gandhi the Court refused to accept an empty formality and insisted that the procedure itself must be fair, just and reasonable.

I understood it instantly, because I had lived a small version of it at work. A rule applied without hearing the person it affects is not fair, however neatly it is written. A notice that arrives without a chance to reply is a rule with its eyes closed. Sitting at my desk with the recorded lecture paused on the screen, I felt the subject stop being a syllabus and become a principle I already believed.

LC 0602 — Family Law II

Dr. Shahista Inamdar Madam described the various aspects of family law very interestingly. If "Family Law I" was about entering relationships, "Family Law II" was about property and its passage across generations — the Hindu Undivided Family, coparcenary, intestate and testamentary succession across religions, and the Muslim law of wakf and hiba (gift).

I first came to know that in Hindu law there are different schools governing Hindu personal law relating to succession. The types of marriage in Hindu and Muslim law — everything was simply interesting. The most striking classes examined how personal succession laws, though rooted in very different religious philosophies, are gradually being pulled toward constitutional equality.

📖 Landmark Cases

Vineeta Sharma v. Rakesh Sharma (2020) (2020) 9 SCC 1

Vineeta Sharma v. Rakesh Sharma brought long—overdue certainty to one of the most consequential reforms in modern Hindu personal law, confirming that a daughter's right to stand as an equal coparcener in her family's ancestral property is a right that attaches to her from birth, immune from the accident of when, relative to a particular legislative date, her father happened to pass away. By resolving the conflict between Prakash v. Phulavati and Danamma v. Amar decisively in favour of the broader, more inclusive reading, the Supreme Court ensured that the promise of equality underlying the 2005 amendment would be realised in practice, not merely in principle.

Danamma @ Suman Surpur v. Amar (2018)(2018) 3 SCC 343

Danamma @ Suman Surpur v. Amar stands as an important, if transitional, staging post in the Supreme Court's journey toward the full and unconditional recognition of daughters' coparcenary rights under Hindu law. While its precise reasoning was

substantially overtaken and clarified by the later decision in Vineeta Sharma, the case's practical outcome — securing the daughters an equal share notwithstanding their father's earlier death — anticipated, and ultimately aligned with, the broader principle of birthright equality that the Supreme Court would go on to affirm unambiguously two years later.

बेटी भी वारिस है, यह कानून ने माना है,
पुरानी रिवायत को इंसाफ ने झुकाया है !

— The daughter too is an heir, the law now clearly shows —
an old tradition finally bends where justice grows.

LC 0603 — Law of Contract II

Through this subject Prof. Pandey Sir moved us from general contract principles to the specialised chapters of the Indian Contract Act — indemnity, guarantee, bailment, pledge, and agency — alongside the Sale of Goods Act, 1930 and the Indian Partnership Act, 1932. These are the transactions that actually run the marketplace: a shopkeeper pledging stock for a loan, a surety guaranteeing a friend's debt, an agent signing on behalf of a principal who may never even meet the other party.

📖 Landmark Cases

Bank of Bihar v. Damodar Prasad (1969) AIR 1969 SC 297

Bank of Bihar v. Damodar Prasad remains the clearest and most frequently invoked statement of the basic principle that a surety's liability, once undertaken, stands shoulder to shoulder with that of the principal debtor, immediately enforceable by the creditor without the delay of first pursuing the principal obligor. By insisting that

any limitation on this co—extensive liability must be found expressly within the guarantee itself, the Supreme Court preserved the essential commercial function of the guarantee as a reliable and immediately enforceable form of credit security.

Lickbarrow v. Mason (1794) (1794) 5 TR 683; 2 TR 63

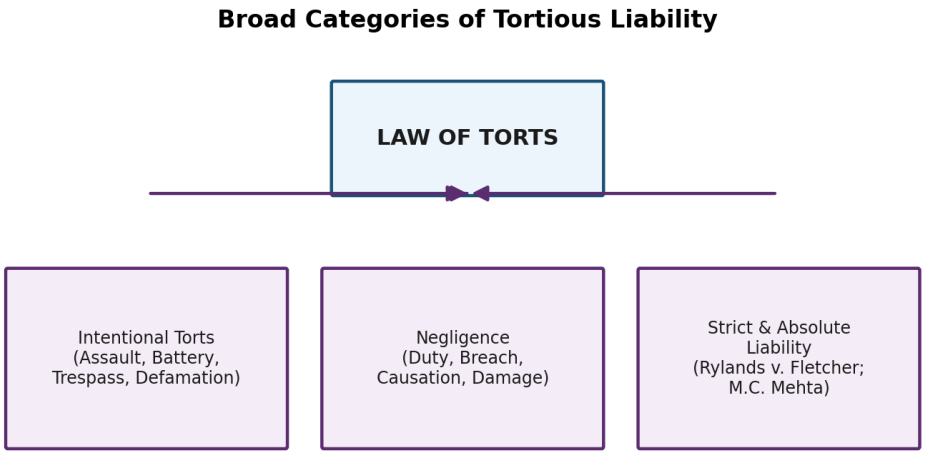
More than two centuries after it was decided, Lickbarrow v. Mason remains a foundational authority on how the law accommodates the practical realities of commerce, recognising that goods in transit or storage can be bought, sold, and financed through the transfer of a document representing them, and protecting those who deal honestly and for value with such documents. Its enduring relevance lies in the enduring commercial need it addressed: enabling trade in goods that cannot be physically handed over at the moment of sale.

📜 Short Tale — The Surety Who Learned Too Late

A shopkeeper stood guarantee for his nephew's loan, certain it was a mere formality among family. When the nephew vanished and the bank came knocking, the shopkeeper protested that the debtor should be chased first. The court's answer, echoing centuries of contract law, was gentle but firm: a guarantee is not a spare wheel, kept for emergencies — it is a second engine, equally responsible from the very first mile.

LC 0604 — Tort and Consumer Protection Law

Dr. Pradnya Sawarkar explained that, unlike contract, nobody signs up for a tort — it simply happens to you, on the road, in a hospital, or standing under someone else's leaking water tank. This course covered negligence, defamation, trespass, nuisance, and the special heads of strict and absolute liability, then connected them to the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, which give ordinary victims practical, faster remedies.



Not all civil wrongs are punished the same way.

📖 Landmark Cases

Donoghue v. Stevenson (1932) [1932] AC 562

Nearly a century after a snail was found in a bottle of ginger beer in a small Scottish café, Donoghue v. Stevenson remains the single most important building block of negligence law across the common law world. Lord Atkin's neighbour principle transformed tort law from a patchwork of specific, narrowly recognised duties into a coherent and adaptable framework capable of responding to the ever—changing circumstances in which one person's carelessness may foreseeably cause harm to another, a transformation whose influence is felt in virtually every negligence case decided since.

Rylands v. Fletcher (1868) (1868) LR 3 HL 330

Rylands v. Fletcher endures as the foundational case establishing that fault is not always a necessary ingredient of liability in tort; where a person chooses to introduce an extraordinary risk onto his land for his own purposes, the law may properly require him to bear the consequences of that risk materialising, regardless of the presence or absence of personal negligence. Its influence extends well beyond its own modest facts of a flooded coal mine, continuing to shape the law governing liability for hazardous activities across common law jurisdictions, including through its direct lineage into India's own, even stricter, doctrine of absolute liability.

M.C. Mehta v. Union of India (1987) — The Oleum Gas Leak Case AIR 1987 SC 1086

M.C. Mehta v. Union of India stands as one of the most consequential tort law decisions in Indian legal history, marking the point at which the Supreme Court consciously chose to move beyond an inherited English rule it judged inadequate to Indian conditions, and to fashion, in its place, a doctrine of absolute liability calibrated specifically to the scale of risk that modern hazardous industries pose to the communities among which they operate. Its insistence that compensation must be proportionate to an enterprise's capacity, so as to function as a genuine deterrent, continues to shape how Indian law holds hazardous industries accountable for the safety of those who live and work in their shadow.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Client: 'My neighbour's tree fell on my car. Is that tort or an act of God?'

Lawyer: 'Depends — did the neighbour know the tree was dying for the last five years, or did God act with no warning at all?'

LO 0606 — Banking and Insurance Law

This was an interesting subject. Behind every EMI, cheque, and insurance premium sits an entire body of law most people never think about. This course examined the banker—customer relationship, negotiable instruments (with special focus on cheque dishonour under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act), and the insurance contract's core requirement of utmost good faith — uberrimae fidei — where even innocent non—disclosure can void a policy.

📖 Landmark Cases

Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Ltd. v. Galaxy Traders & Agencies Ltd. (2001) (2001) 6 SCC 463

Dalmia Cement v. Galaxy Traders remains a key practical authority on the computation of limitation under the cheque—dishonour provisions of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881, confirming that payees retain meaningful flexibility in how and when they choose to enforce a dishonoured cheque, without being unduly penalised for giving a defaulting drawer a further opportunity to make good on payment before resorting to a criminal complaint. The decision continues to inform how banks, businesses, and courts approach the practical sequencing of cheque presentation, notice, and complaint under this frequently invoked provision of commercial law.

Life Insurance Corporation of India v. G.M. Channabasamma (1991) AIR 1991 SC 392

LIC v. G.M. Channabasamma stands as an important safeguard for policyholders and their beneficiaries against the unjustified repudiation of life insurance claims, affirming that while the law expects complete good faith from an insured at the time a policy is taken out, it expects no less rigour from an insurer that later seeks to disown its obligations under that same policy. By placing the burden of proving suppression or misrepresentation squarely on the insurer, the Supreme Court ensured that the principle of utmost good faith in insurance law operates as a

genuine mutual obligation, rather than as a one—sided tool for insurers to avoid honouring valid claims.

🫨 A Small Paradox

A cheque that bounces is, on paper, a mere refusal by a bank to pay — yet the law treats it seriously enough to be a criminal offence. Is dishonouring a cheque a broken promise, or a broken trust in the currency of commerce itself?

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Student: "Sir, what is the punishment for a bounced cheque?"
Professor: "Two years, or twice the amount, or both."
Student: "And for a bounced friendship?"
Professor: "No section for that, beta."

By the end of the second semester, I had written ten examinations, read more than ten bare acts more closely than I had ever read anything, and made friends with a professor's voice long before I met his face.

I had also, without intending it, learned three habits that would stay with me: to ask on what basis, to read the section before believing the summary, and to write my working, not only my answer.

A man of forty—four learns differently from a boy of twenty—four. He remembers less quickly and understands more deeply. He does not learn a rule; he recognises it, like an old acquaintance he has met before under another name. That, I decided, would be my advantage, and I would stop apologising for my grey hair.
The entire year passed online.

End of Year One

Ten papers written, ten doors unlocked,

a language half—learned, half—lived;

I came a stranger to the court

and left with a little I could give.

The screen was my first classroom wall,

the night shift was my bell;

and somewhere between the two I heard

a small voice whisper: you may as well.

Chapter 3 — Second Year: The Grind (Semester III & IV)

Halfway through the third semester the government's orders relaxed, and the college opened its doors to the second— and third—year students, beginning with the practical subjects.

After a year and a half of a small rectangle on a screen, I would now sit on a real bench, in a real room, beside people whose hands I could see.

I decided at once to keep at least three weeks of every month on the night shift, so that my mornings would belong to lectures. It was a bargain with myself: the press could have my nights, but the college would have my mornings, and sleep would have whatever remained.

However, the reality of returning settled not in grand epiphanies, but in small, poignant realizations during the opening lectures:

1. Theory Meets Lived Reality: When the professor opens the Code of Civil Procedure and begins dissecting jurisdiction, summons, and procedural history, the twenty—year—olds around me frantically scribble notes to memorize sections for an upcoming exam. For me, those dry sections are not abstract legal fiction; they map directly onto real—world disputes, employer—employee frictions, workplace administration, and contracts I have witnessed or managed over decades. The law is no longer ink on paper—it is the codified skeleton of human conflict.

2. The Alchemy of Criticism: In the first college stint, a sharp professorial critique or a harsh grade felt like a devastating personal indictment. Sitting in the back row today, listening to rigorous academic cross—examination, criticism is felt differently. It is no longer a hammer breaking glass, but a sculptor's chisel shaping stone. Age grants an unshakeable emotional anchor.

3. The Silent Handshake Across Decades: Opening a pristine, blank notebook on the very first day, a profound wave of gratitude washes over the chest. The ambitious young man who walked out of these gates two decades ago finally hands the baton to the mature man sitting here today, whispering across the chasm of time: 'We took the long road, but we made it back.'

If the first year teaches the vocabulary of law, the second year insists that you use it under pressure. This was the year of Professional Ethics and Contempt of Court Law, and also of practical training in the Alternative Dispute Resolution system.

4) Subjects grew teeth: the Indian Penal Code with its endless sections, the Code of Civil Procedure with its endless order—and—rule numbers, the Law of Evidence that seemed determined to make even truth complicated. Group study sessions turned into debates that outlasted the syllabus. Friendships were tested by shared notes, borrowed bare acts, and the eternal question of who would photocopy what.

The Grind

Somewhere between the CPC's rules
and evidence that must be led,
I found a version of myself
that argued softly in my head.

The dock was small, my hands would shake,
the judge—in—mock would raise a brow —
but every stumble taught me this:
the fear gets smaller, standing now.

There was exhaustion in this year, the kind that comes only from genuinely trying. But there was also the first taste of competence — the first time an argument actually landed, the first time a senior advocate nodded instead of correcting, the first time ‘I don't know' was replaced with ‘I'll find out and tell you.'

मेहनत की रातों ने सिखाया यह हुनर,

कि डर के सामने भी खड़ा रहा जाये, मगर ,

— Nights of effort taught me a quiet craft —

to stand before fear, and yet not falter or drift.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Intern: ‘Sir, I have read the whole file overnight!'

Senior Advocate: ‘Good. Now forget the file and tell me what the client actually wants — that's the real case.'

Second Year LL.B. — Semester III

Second year opened with the deeper architecture of the Constitution, the law of property, the world beyond India's borders, and — for the first time — a practical training paper that made us think seriously about what kind of advocates we wanted to become.

LC 0701 — Constitutional Law II

Where "Constitutional Law I" dealt with rights, "Constitutional Law II" dealt with structure, viewed through the Union, State and Concurrent Lists, the division of legislative and executive power, Centre—State relations, and the emergency provisions that can, temporarily, bend that federal balance entirely toward the Centre.

📖 Landmark Cases

State of West Bengal v. Union of India (1963) AIR 1963 SC 1241

State of West Bengal v. Union of India remains foundational to understanding why Indian federalism cannot simply be analysed through the lens of American constitutional theory, having established, at an early and formative stage of the Republic's constitutional history, that India's Union enjoys a degree of primacy over its constituent States that would be unfamiliar within a more classically federal system. The decision's quasi—federal characterisation continues to shape how Indian courts resolve disputes over the proper boundary between Union and State authority to this day.

S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994) AIR 1994 SC 1918

S.R. Bommai v. Union of India transformed Article 356 from a provision that had been serially abused for partisan advantage into one meaningfully constrained by judicial oversight, objective procedural safeguards, and a clear anchoring in the

Constitution's basic structure. By insisting that a government's majority be tested on the floor of the House, and that proclamations imposing President's Rule remain open to judicial scrutiny, the Supreme Court restored a measure of genuine federal balance to a provision that had, for decades, threatened to become an instrument of unchecked central power over India's States.

केंद्र और राज्य के बीच एक डोर बंधी है,
संविधान ने दोनों की एक जोड़ी जोड़ी है !

Between the Centre and the States, a thread is tied so fine —
the Constitution binds them both along a single line.

There were three Lists, One Country;

Union List – Parliament alone makes laws – defence, foreign affairs, railway etc.
State List — State Legislatures make laws – Police, Public Order, Agriculture etc.
Concurrent List: Both; union law prevails on conflict – Criminal Law, Marriage, Education etc.

My classmates memorised the lists. I found it easier to picture them as the divisions in a large office: some decisions are taken at headquarters, some at the plant, and some are joint. When the two disagree, headquarters wins, which every employee will find familiar.

LC 0702 — Property Law and Easement

The Transfer of Property Act, 1882 turned out to be one of the most quietly powerful statutes in the entire syllabus — it governs how sale, mortgage, lease, exchange, and gift of immovable property actually function, and how actionable claims (like the right to recover a debt) can themselves be transferred. Alongside it, the Indian Easements Act, 1882 covered the more modest but constantly litigated right to use a neighbour's land — a right of way, of light, of water.

📖 Landmark Cases

Probodh Kumar Das v. Dantmara Tea Co. Ltd. (1940) AIR 1940 PC 1

Probodh Kumar Das v. Dantmara Tea Co. Ltd. continues to define the precise and limited boundaries of the doctrine of part performance in Indian property law, more than eight decades after it was decided. By holding that Section 53A operates only to shield a transferee's possession and confers no active title capable of being asserted as a sword, the Privy Council drew a clear and lasting line between the qualified statutory protection Indian law affords to incomplete transfers and the broader equitable doctrine from which that protection was deliberately, and only partially, drawn. licence

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Client: ‘I have been using my neighbour's path for twenty years without asking.'
Lawyer: ‘Congratulations, you may have just earned a prescriptive easement — the law's way of rewarding polite trespassing.'

There are five ways property moves;

‘Sale’ — Ownership passes for a price — Buying a flat

‘Mortgage’ — An interest is given as security for a debt — Home loan

‘Lease’ — Right to enjoy property for a time, for rent — Rented shop or house

‘Exchange’ — Property swapped for property — Plot for plot

‘Gift’ — Voluntary transfer without return — A parent giving land to a child

LC 0703 — Public International Law

This course pulled our gaze up from Indian statutes to the wider world — the sources of international law under Article 38 of the ICJ Statute, the recognition of states and governments, the law of treaties, and the role of the United Nations. It also examined how international obligations quietly enter Indian courtrooms even without a specific domestic statute.

📖 Landmark Cases

North Sea Continental Shelf Cases (Federal Republic of Germany v. Denmark; Federal Republic of Germany v. Netherlands) (1969) ICJ Reports 1969, p. 3

The North Sea Continental Shelf Cases remain indispensable to the study of public international law, not merely for resolving a specific maritime boundary dispute between three European states, but for supplying the enduring methodological test by which international lawyers and tribunals continue to distinguish genuine customary international law from mere widespread practice or treaty—based convenience. Its insistence on both extensive state practice and a genuine sense of legal obligation continues to discipline and guide the identification of binding customary rules more than half a century after the judgment was delivered.

Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (1997) AIR 1997 SC 3011

Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan stands as one of the most consequential examples of the Indian judiciary stepping into a legislative vacuum to protect fundamental rights, and of the creative use of international legal instruments to give meaning and force to domestic constitutional guarantees. Born out of a profound failure of justice in a Rajasthan village, the case produced a framework that protected working women across India for well over a decade, and its methodology for drawing on international

conventions continues to influence Indian constitutional interpretation long after Parliament finally legislated on the specific subject that gave rise to the case.

📜 Short Tale — The Borrowed Guideline

In a courtroom with no statute to answer a growing wrong, the judges reached not inward but outward — to a convention signed in another country, for another purpose — and built from it a shield for working women across India. It was a reminder that law, like water, finds a way through even where no channel yet exists.

LP 0704 — Practical Training Paper I — Professional Ethics and Contempt of Court Law

This was the first paper that looked directly at the profession itself — not the law we would argue, but the conduct expected of us while arguing it. We studied the history of the legal profession in India, the Advocates Act, 1961 (admission, enrolment, and the limits on the right to practice), and the disciplinary machinery that keeps advocates accountable to something larger than their own client's interest.

Alongside it ran the law of contempt of court — civil and criminal — and its uneasy relationship with the freedom of speech guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a). Where does fair criticism of a judgment end, and scandalising the court begin? The syllabus gave us ten cases on each theme; a few stayed with me long after the exam.

📖 Landmark Cases

Ex—Capt. Harish Uppal v. Union of India (2003) AIR 2003 SC 739

Ex—Capt. Harish Uppal v. Union of India remains the clearest and most authoritative judicial statement that the legal profession's own internal grievances, however legitimate, cannot be allowed to override the fundamental public interest in the continuous and uninterrupted administration of justice. By denying advocates any right to strike, while placing both individual professional accountability on lawyers and an institutional responsibility on courts to resist disruption, the Supreme Court sought to ensure that the courtroom, and the litigants who depend upon it, are never held hostage to disputes that properly belong to a different forum altogether.

D. Saibaba v. Bar Council of India (2003) AIR 2003 SC 2502

D. Saibaba v. Bar Council of India remains an instructive illustration of how Indian courts balance the general flexibility accorded to procedural law against the need

to protect proceedings and rights that have already validly come into existence under an earlier procedural regime. By declining to allow a subsequently introduced limitation period to retrospectively defeat a disciplinary complaint against an advocate, the Supreme Court reinforced the principle that fairness, and not merely the formal characterisation of a rule as 'procedural', must guide the question of whether a legal change should operate retrospectively.

In Re Arundhati Roy (2002) AIR 2002 SC 1375

In Re Arundhati Roy remains an important touchstone for understanding how Indian courts draw the line between protected criticism and punishable contempt, illustrating both the judiciary's willingness to tolerate searching scrutiny of its own decisions and its insistence that attacks on the integrity and good faith of the institution itself cross into a different and more serious category of conduct. The case continues to inform how public figures, commentators, and litigants alike calibrate the boundaries of permissible criticism of the courts in India.

Pushpaben v. Narandas V. Badiani (1979) AIR 1979 SC 1536

Pushpaben v. Narandas V. Badiani continues to anchor the Indian law of civil contempt in a standard that properly respects both the need to uphold the authority and reliability of court orders and undertakings, and the serious consequences that can follow from a finding of contempt. By insisting that wilful and deliberate disobedience is an essential ingredient of civil contempt, the Supreme Court ensured that this quasi—criminal jurisdiction would be reserved for genuine defiance of judicial authority, rather than extended mechanically to every instance of technical or inadvertent non—compliance.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Junior: ‘Sir, can I criticise a judgment I disagree with?’

Senior: ‘Freely — in a law review article. Loudly, on the court steps, and you’ll be studying contempt law from the inside.’

To Whom Does an Advocate Owe a Duty?

‘The Court’ — Be truthful, respectful and never mislead the bench

‘The Client’ — Serve with honesty and protect confidences

‘The Opponent’ — Be fair and courteous; no sharp practice

‘Colleagues’ — Act with dignity; no unfair competition

This paper affected me more than I expected. In twenty—nine years of service, I had answered to a hierarchy. In law I would answer to something larger: the court, the profession and my own conscience. The idea that an advocate’s first loyalty is not to the client’s wishes but to the truth, delivered honestly and within the rules, felt less like a regulation and more like a vow.

LO 0707 — Criminal Minor Acts

The Indian Penal Code is famous, but it is far from the only criminal law that actually gets used on the ground. This paper introduced the special legislations that police and trial courts rely on daily: the Maharashtra Police Act, 1951, the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA), 1999, the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, and an early look at cyber offences under the Information Technology Act, 2000.

📖 Landmark Cases

State of Punjab v. Baldev Singh (1999) (1999) 6 SCC 172

State of Punjab v. Baldev Singh remains the definitive statement that the stringent penal consequences attaching to offences under the NDPS Act must be matched by equally stringent procedural safeguards at the point of search and seizure, and that courts will not allow a conviction to rest on evidence obtained in disregard of a safeguard the legislature specifically intended to be mandatory. The decision continues to discipline how narcotics enforcement is conducted across India, ensuring that the serious power to search a person's body for contraband is exercised only within the bounds Parliament itself prescribed.

Subramanian Swamy v. Manmohan Singh (2012) (2012) 3 SCC 64

Subramanian Swamy v. Manmohan Singh addressed a structural gap in India's anti-corruption enforcement framework that had, for years, allowed sanctioning authorities to neither grant nor refuse sanction, leaving genuine corruption complaints in indefinite limbo. By imposing a firm and specific outer time limit on the sanctioning decision, the Supreme Court ensured that the sanction requirement, intended as a safeguard against frivolous prosecution, could not be turned into an

instrument of unaccountable delay that defeats the prosecution of genuine wrongdoing.

🤔 A Small Paradox

A statute meant to control 'organised crime' can, in careless hands, be used against ordinary disputes dressed up as conspiracies. The stronger the special law, the greater the temptation to reach for it even where the ordinary law would do — a paradox every criminal lawyer eventually meets.

Second Year LL.B. — Semester IV

By the fourth semester, the restrictions of social distancing due to the corona pandemic were completely relaxed. We started attending lectures regularly. After twenty years, I was a regular college student who worked on the night shift and attended college in the morning.

However, I missed the ghosts of yesterday's friendships amidst today's classrooms. To return to college at forty—four was to walk accompanied by invisible companions.

While the lecture halls were filled with bright, eager faces belonging to a new generation, my heart was constantly reaching backward across a chasm of twenty years, searching for the laughter, the careless banter, and the inseparable comrades who once shared these very benches with me.

During the midday break, when the campus canteen fills with the cheerful clamour of students ordering tea and sharing snacks, I sit quietly in the corner with a cup of black coffee. In that exact same spot, two decades ago, we sat huddled over cracked wooden tables — dreaming impossibly big dreams, debating politics and life with reckless passion, invincible and unaware of how swiftly time would scatter us across the winds of career, family, and survival.

Today, looking at the empty space beside me where they used to sit, a sudden, heavy wave of nostalgia tightens the chest.

वही चाय की प्याली है, वही नुक्कड़ का साया है,

मगर इस बार महफिल में कोई पुराना यार नहीं आया है ।

कहाँ गुम हो गए वो लोग जो जान हुआ करते थे

सफर तनहा हुआ मेरा बस उनका नाम आया है ।

The cup of tea is the same, the shaded corner remains,
Yet this time, in the gathering, no old friend has come.
Where did those people vanish who once were our very breath?
My journey has turned solitary; only their memory remains

The students around me share inside jokes on smartphones and laugh freely, their bonds fresh and unburdened by years. I smile at their joy, but inside, my mind wanders to the unspoken telephone calls and drifted addresses of my old college crew.

Where are they now? One is managing a factory plant hundreds of miles away; another is buried under corporate files; some are lost to the quiet drift of time that turns once—daily talk into yearly holiday greetings.

When a difficult legal problem is posed on the blackboard, my instinctive reaction is to turn to my left and whisper a sarcastic, witty remark to my bench mate—just as we used to do twenty years ago to break the monotony of a dry lecture. Instead, my left shoulder touches empty air. The realization hits with a poignant sting: I am sitting in the college, but I am walking the halls as a solitary pilgrim of memory.

कलम हाथ में है, पर वो कंधा नहीं है,
जिस पर सर रख के हसीन सपने देखे थे कभी ।
वक़्त ने छीन लिया वो बचपना सा रास्ता,
हम लौट आए हैं वहीं, पर वो साथी नहीं है अभी ।

The pen is in my hand, but that shoulder is no more,
Upon which we once rested our heads and wove beautiful dreams.
Time has snatched away that childlike path of ours,
We have returned to the very same place, but those companions are here no longer.

Yet, in the quiet sanctuary of reflection, absence transforms into a strange form of companionship. As I open my notebook to write down the evening's legal notes, I feel as though my old friends are whispering from the margins of the pages. They are cheering for me from afar, proud that even after twenty years, the boy they knew has finally returned to claim the dream they once whispered about under the campus banyan tree.

The loneliness of missing them is gently cushioned by the gratitude of having known them. They taught me how to bear the burdens of youth, just as this new chapter teaches me how to carry the wisdom of age with grace. Closing the notebook, I look up at the evening sky turning amber over the college gates, whispering a silent thank you to the friends of yesterday who still live inside my heart.

To miss old friends in the midst of a new beginning is the price of living deeply. The classrooms may hold new faces, and the benches may bear new names carved into their wood, but the spirit of college remains eternal—bonded by the timeless truth that true friendship and early dreams never truly graduate; they simply wait for us to remember them.

The fourth semester balanced the workplace, the philosophy of law itself, the rules of proof, and — for the first time — dispute resolution outside the courtroom, alongside a serious look at India's most vulnerable communities.

LC 0801 — Labour and Industrial Law

Behind every factory gate and office door lies a body of law built, quite literally, out of struggle — the labour movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This paper covered the constitutional provisions on labour, the settlement of industrial disputes, unfair labour practices, the Factories Act, 1948, the Employees' Compensation Act, 1923, the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970, and the various wage laws that together define the employer—employee relationship in India.

📖 Landmark Cases

Workmen of Firestone Tyre & Rubber Co. of India (P) Ltd. v. Management (1973) (1973) 1 SCC 813

Workmen of Firestone Tyre & Rubber Co. of India (P) Ltd. v. Management remains foundational to Indian labour law's treatment of workplace discipline, establishing a framework that insists on genuine procedural fairness before a workman can be dismissed, while preserving a meaningful avenue for the underlying merits of a disciplinary matter to be properly examined even where the original process falls short. More than fifty years after it was decided, its enumeration of natural justice principles continues to shape how domestic enquiries are conducted across Indian workplaces.

Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board v. A. Rajappa (1978) (1978) 2 SCC 213

Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board v. A. Rajappa remains the single most consequential decision on the scope of industrial law's application in India, having, through its expansive triple test, drawn an extraordinarily wide range of statutory bodies, public utilities, and service organisations within the protective ambit of the Industrial Disputes Act. Despite Parliament's later, unimplemented attempt to narrow this scope through legislative amendment, the decision's broad test continues, nearly half a century later, to determine which employer—employee relationships in India fall within the reach of industrial dispute resolution machinery.

मजदूर के पसीने में भी एक कानून छुपा है
हर हक़ के पीछे कोई न कोई कानून खड़ा है !
— Even in a labourer's sweat, a law lies hidden and true —
behind every right claimed, some statute stands its due.

No subject in the whole degree spoke to me so directly. For twenty—nine years the pages of the Factories Act were not a syllabus but a description of my working day: hours of work, weekly holidays, overtime, leave with wages, safety and welfare. I had never thought of a duty roster as a statutory document. It is.

When the professor came to the requirement of a fair enquiry before dismissing a workman, the principle laid down in the Firestone case, I did not have to imagine a factory floor. I had seen the notice, the reply, the enquiry officer and the anxious wait. I knew that a worker who is given a chance to explain is a worker who accepts a decision, even a hard one.

LC 0802 — Jurisprudence

If every other subject taught us the law's rules, Jurisprudence asked the far more uncomfortable question: what actually is law, and why should anyone obey it? We moved through Natural Law, Austin's command theory of positivism, Kelsen's pure theory (the Grundnorm), Hart's rule of recognition, and the sociological and realist schools, alongside foundational concepts — rights, ownership, possession, and legal personality.

The famous Hart–Fuller debate — whether a Nazi—era law that was 'valid' by its own system's rules could still be called 'law' at all — was the single most electric classroom discussion of the entire degree.

📖 Landmark Cases

Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation (1985) (1985) 3 SCC 545

Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation endures as a defining illustration of how constitutional courts can give substantive, socially grounded meaning to spare constitutional text, recognising that for many of society's most vulnerable members, the right to life is inseparable from the right to earn a livelihood. By affirming this right while simultaneously insisting on a fair procedure and acknowledging legitimate competing public interests, the Supreme Court modelled an approach to constitutional interpretation that remains deeply influential in Indian jurisprudence on the ever—expanding content of Article 21.

What Is Law?

Is law a rule some ruler made,
or something older, buried deep —
a conscience written into stone
that even rulers cannot keep?

I found no single, final truth,
only better ways to frame the doubt —
and learned that asking 'what is law'
is half of what the law's about.

The Debate That Split the Room

H.L.A. Hart	'Law is what the proper procedure produces, whatever its moral quality'
Lon Fuller	'Law has an "inner morality"; a monstrous rule is not really law'
H.L.A. Hart	'Separate law as it is from law as it ought to be'
Lon Fuller	'Law and morality cannot be cleanly separated'
H.L.A. Hart	'Wicked laws can be valid, and should be openly criticised'
Lon Fuller	'A system without minimum fairness is no legal system'

I remember the room dividing like a court. On one side sat those who said a rule, however cruel, is still a rule if it was properly made. On the other sat those who said a law that offends conscience deserves no obedience. I found myself in the middle, convinced that both professors were right and that the argument itself was the education.

LC 0803 — Law of Evidence

A case is only as strong as what can be proven inside a courtroom, and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 is the rulebook for that proof. This course drew the crucial line between relevancy and admissibility, examined the burden of proof in civil and criminal matters, the weight given to dying declarations and expert evidence, and — increasingly important — the special conditions for admitting electronic evidence under the Information Technology Act, 2000.

📖 Landmark Cases

Khushal Rao v. State of Bombay (1958) AIR 1958 SC 22; 1958 SCR 552

Khushal Rao v. State of Bombay remains foundational to the Indian law of evidence concerning dying declarations, establishing that such declarations, properly scrutinised for truthfulness and voluntariness, can stand on their own as sufficient proof to sustain even the gravest of convictions. Its carefully structured test for assessing reliability continues to guide Indian courts, more than six decades later, in determining how much weight a final statement made in the shadow of death should be given in the pursuit of justice for that same death.

Anvar P.V. v. P.K. Basheer (2014) (2014) 10 SCC 473

Anvar P.V. v. P.K. Basheer fundamentally reshaped the Indian law of electronic evidence, establishing the mandatory and exclusive character of the Section 65B certificate requirement for secondary electronic records at a moment when such evidence was becoming an increasingly central feature of litigation across India. Though its strict approach generated practical challenges later addressed through further clarification in Arjun Panditrao Khotkar, the decision's core holding — that Section 65B constitutes a complete code specifically governing the admissibility of electronic records — remains the settled and controlling position in Indian evidence law today.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Professor: ‘What is the difference between relevancy and admissibility?'

Student: ‘Sir, relevancy is what actually helps my client's case; admissibility is whether the judge will let me say it out loud.'

LP 0804 — Practical Training Paper II — Alternate Dispute Resolution System

Not every dispute needs a judge, a gown, and eight years of litigation — sometimes it needs a good mediator and a cup of tea. This paper studied the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 (and the Lok Adalat mechanism it creates), and the growing international preference for resolving commercial disputes without ever entering a courtroom through Alternate Dispute Resolution System. This was the one of the most interesting subject.



During our visit to Bombay High Court, Bench Aurangabad, we observed in detail the functioning of ADR Centre of Hight Court of Bombay, Bench Aurangabad.

However, I think that the "A" in ADR should stand for "Appropriate" rather than "Alternative". This is because the British-style adversarial courtroom setup is actually the historic "alternative" to traditional Indian dispute resolution. For centuries, indigenous systems like the Panchayat (village council) and Mahajan’s served as the primary, community-led mediation systems.

India features a unique statutory ADR forum called the Lok Adalat (People's Court), established under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. Lok Adalats have zero court fees, are presided over by sitting or retired judicial officers alongside social

workers, and handle millions of cases in a single day during "National Lok Adalats." Remarkably, an award passed by a Lok Adalat is deemed a decree of a civil court, is final, and allows no provision for appeal.

To combat severe court backlogs, India has made ADR aggressive and proactive. Under Section 12A of the Commercial Courts Act, corporate parties cannot jump straight into litigation. Unless they urgently require interim relief, businesses must mandatorily exhaust pre-institution mediation before they are even allowed to file a commercial suit in court.

Unlike traditional courtroom litigation that can drag on for decades, Indian law sets a strict countdown on corporate arbitration. Under current mandates within the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, an arbitral tribunal must pass its final award within 12 months from the completion of the formal pleadings, with a maximum 6-month extendable grace period only if both parties agree.

Historically, large Indian public sector undertakings or private corporations would insert clauses into contracts stating that if a dispute arose, the arbitrator would be chosen from a pre-selected panel of their own retired employees. The Supreme Court of India stepped in to declare that narrow panels consisting solely of one party's ex-employees are invalid, cementing absolute neutrality as a fundamental pillar of Indian ADR.

ADR in India is deeply tied to social justice. Article 39A of the Constitution of India mandates that the State must provide free legal aid and ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen due to economic or physical disabilities. ADR acts as the statutory vehicle to deliver this constitutional promise, providing accessible, cost-free, and jargon-free settlement systems to rural and marginalized populations.

📖 Landmark Cases

Afcons Infrastructure Ltd. v. Cherian Varkey Construction Co. (P) Ltd. (2010) (2010) 8 SCC 24

Afcons Infrastructure Ltd. v. Cherian Varkey Construction Co. (P) Ltd. remains essential reading for understanding how Indian civil courts are meant to engage with alternative dispute resolution as an integral part of the ordinary litigation process, rather than as a separate or exceptional track. By correcting a significant drafting error and supplying a practical framework for identifying which disputes belong in which forum, the Supreme Court transformed Section 89 from a provision of considerable textual confusion into a workable and widely applied tool for channelling appropriate disputes away from protracted litigation and toward more suitable forms of resolution.

Bharat Aluminium Co. v. Kaiser Aluminium Technical Services Inc. (2012) (2012) 9 SCC 552

Bharat Aluminium Co. v. Kaiser Aluminium Technical Services Inc. marked a decisive and internationally significant turning point in Indian arbitration law, replacing a period of considerable uncertainty and excessive domestic court intervention with a clear, predictable, and internationally aligned territoriality principle. By firmly distinguishing the seat of arbitration from its mere venue, and by confining Indian courts' supervisory role to arbitrations genuinely seated within India, the Constitution Bench's decision has done much to restore and strengthen India's credibility as a forum for the conduct and enforcement of international commercial arbitration.

📜 Short Tale — The Panch and the Two Farmers

Two farmers argued for a decade over a boundary stone, each certain the other had moved it in the night. A village panch, asked to mediate, did not measure the field — he measured their pride instead, and quietly asked each what he would lose by conceding one foot of soil for peace of a lifetime. Neither farmer got everything. Both farmers, finally, got to sleep at night. It is the oldest form of ADR India ever had.

LO 0807 — Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Groups and Criminal Law

Since colonial times, criminal law in India has been used deliberately as a tool of social change — to protect groups that structural inequality leaves exposed: women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and children. This course studied the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, the POCSO Act, 2012, the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, and the PCPNDT Act, 1994 addressing sex–selective practices.

📖 Landmark Cases

Independent Thought v. Union of India (2017) (2017) 10 SCC 800

Independent Thought v. Union of India stands as an important corrective to a glaring inconsistency in Indian criminal law, ensuring that the special protection Parliament extended to every child under the POCSO Act could not be undermined by an

outdated marital exception buried within the Indian Penal Code. By reading down Exception 2 to Section 375 while carefully preserving the separate and unresolved question of marital rape involving adult wives for Parliament's consideration, the Supreme Court balanced judicial intervention against institutional restraint in a manner that continues to shape the ongoing legal and policy conversation on this deeply sensitive area of law.

State of Maharashtra v. Madhukar Narayan Mardikar (1991) (1991) 1 SCC 57

State of Maharashtra v. Madhukar Narayan Mardikar remains an important and enduring affirmation that the law's protection against sexual assault, and its assessment of a woman's consent, cannot be made to depend on generalised and prejudicial assumptions about her character or past conduct. By insisting that every woman retains an unqualified right to refuse any unwanted sexual advance, regardless of her reputation, the Supreme Court placed the dignity and bodily autonomy of every woman beyond the reach of character—based defences that might otherwise be used to excuse or minimise sexual violence.

This subject carried a weight the others did not — it was less about arguing a case well, and more about remembering, always, who the law is actually meant to protect.

Overview of Second Year

Compare to first year, the second year was busier. To attend the maximum lectures mostly I worked in night shift. There was big exercise for me to attend the duty in night shift and after that in early morning attend the lectures in college.

However, it was not so easy for me to adjust with other students in college as, we were the mix—ups of working middle aged student and young Gen Z students.

To be forty—four in a college classroom is to inhabit a curious paradox. The students around me—energetic, fluent in digital shorthand, and bubbling with the uncontainable optimism of twenty—one—could easily be my children. When we board the bus for the college's annual educational tour, I find myself standing quietly at the edge of the group, holding a flask of warm tea, watching them laugh over shared memes and debate moot court memorials with theatrical passion.

At first, there was an acute awareness of the generational chasm. They call me 'Sir' out of instinctive reverence before being corrected to 'classmate.' Yet, as the miles roll on and the practical training begins—stretching from simulated courtrooms to grim police lockups and soaring high court pillars—this apparent divide dissolves into a profound, reciprocal alchemy. They bring unbridled fire; I bring quiet anchor.

उम्र का फासला सही , पर जज़्बा एक जैसा है,
उनकी आँखों में सपना है, मेरे दिल में तजुर्बा है।
वो दौड़ते हैं जीतने को, हम समझने आए हैं ,
इस सफर—ए—ईल्म में देखों, क्या गज़ब का संगम आया है ।

The gap of age is real, yet the passion is identical,
In their eyes lies a dream, in my heart lives experience.
They race to win, we have come to comprehend,
Look upon this journey of knowledge, what a wondrous confluence has arrived.

The first major test of integration comes during the intramural moot court sessions. The younger batchmates, armed with glossy memorials and lightning—fast case citations, pace the podium with dramatic flair, eager to impress the judges. Sitting quietly in the back row, observing their youthful anxiety, I recognize the exact mirror of my own forgotten ambitions from decades ago.

When my turn arrives to stand at the podium in formal bands and black coat, the initial hesitation vanishes. While my delivery lacks the theatrical shouting of youth, it carries the gravitas of a man who has negotiated real—world crises, managed industrial disputes, and understood human frailty outside textbooks. When I address the bench—'My Lords'—the courtroom falls into a respectful stillness. The student opponents, who moments before viewed me as an elderly anomaly, listen with wide—eyed attention. In that room, age ceases to be a barrier; it becomes an instrument of persuasion.

In the first year the university conducted the Semester I & II examination online. However, for the second year due to relaxation in social distancing policy of Government, the examinations were conducted in offline i.e. paper —pen mode; It was a Romance with the Examination Hall After Two Decades.

Twenty years was a quiet eternity. In that span, hands had learned the weight of office seals, steering wheels, ledger pens, and the heavy steel keys of industrial gates. They have signed agreements, balanced accounts, and weathered life’s quiet storms. Yet, stepping across the wooden threshold of Examination Hall B on a crisp winter morning, those same hands suddenly feel feather—light, trembling with an exquisite, long—forgotten vulnerability.

The room smells of a familiar, sacred geometry: floor wax, chalk dust floating in slanting beams of amber sunlight, and the collective, rustling heartbeat of aspirants bound by a single trial.

At forty—five, entering this hall was not merely an academic test; it was an intimate, breathless rendezvous with a ghost—the ambitious youth left behind two decades ago, waiting patiently at desk number fourteen.

बीस साल बीत गए जिसे मिलने की चाह में,
वो इम्तिहान की घड़ी आज आ गयी निबाह में ।
कल कलम थी नादान, आज तजुरबा है हमसफर ,
मोहब्बत तो वही है पुराने कागज़ की राह में

Twenty years passed desiring this very meeting,
That hour of test has finally arrived to fulfil its vow.
Yesterday the pen was naive, today experience is the companion,
The love remains the same upon the path of aged paper.

Walking down the centre aisle, eyes scanned the wooden desks until they find it—desk fourteen, bearing a scratched ink stain that looks startlingly like a map of old memories. Setting down the transparent pouch containing pens, identity cards, and a heavy, worn bare—back copy of the Indian Contract Act, a profound wave of tenderness washes over the chest.

At twenty—four, the examination desk was an altar of anxiety—a tribunal where worth was measured by how fast one could recall a section under the ticking clock. At forty—five, the perspective has turned entirely romantic. The desk was no longer a site of judgment; it was a velvet—draped table set for two across time: the man I am today meeting the boy I used to be. Every scratch on the wooden grain tells a story of sleepless nights, unfulfilled promises, and a delayed destiny finally converging in this single room.

The bell rings. The metallic chime echoes off the high, arched ceilings, vibrating through the floorboards. The invigilator distributes the answer booklets—rough, cream—colored pages waiting to be inscribed with reason, logic, and life.

My fingers pick up the blue ballpoint pen. For a fleeting second, time folds in upon itself. When the pen touches the paper to write the roll number, it doesn't scratch; it glides like a lover's whisper across skin. The first word of the answer—

Jurisdiction—flows outward. But beneath the formal legal terminology lies the true subtext: every sentence is a love letter to endurance, a testament that dreams do not expire with age, they simply mature into gold.

The clock on the wall ticks a measured beat,
As two decades vanish between line and line.
No longer a race for a hurried defeat,
The paper is blank, and the moment is mine.

The ink meets the page like a long—silent kiss,
Awakening passions I thought were resigned.
At forty—five, writing holds magic like this—
A dialogue sweet between present and mind.

As the hours unfold, the chaotic restlessness of the younger students around me contrasts sharply with my internal stillness. While they panic over word counts and time management, I find myself savouring every paragraph. When citing a Supreme Court precedent on consideration and free consent, I don't just quote the judgment; I feel its weight through the lens of a life lived through real contracts, broken promises, and hard—earned reconciliations.

The paper fills up—page after page of steady, cursive script. There was no trembling in the hand, no hollow panic in the stomach. Instead, there was a deep, intoxicating romance in the realization that learning is an infinite courtship. The mind and the law were dancing under the soft amber sunlight, wrapped in an embrace that took twenty years to consummate.

When the final bell sounds, signalling the end of the three—hour paper, the students hastily bundle their booklets and rush toward the exit. I remain seated for a moment longer, closing the pen cap with a soft, definitive click.

Stepping out of the hall into the afternoon breeze, the air tastes sweeter. The man who walked in carrying the nervous shadows of twenty years walks out lighter, his soul kissed by ink, his heart wedded once more to the magnificent pursuit of knowledge.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Junior: “Sir, how do I win a case?”

Senior: “First, read the file. Second, read the law. Third, read the judge’s face.”

By the end of the second year, I had discovered something that no bare act mentions: exhaustion has a texture. There is the tiredness of a night shift, the tiredness of a lecture, and the third kind, which belongs only to those who do both and refuse to quit. I met all three, and I am grateful that I did. They taught me that talent decides very little in a profession like this. What decides most is showing up.

I also learned something gentler. The young people around me were not competitors. They were, in their loud, fast, generous way, the family I did not know I was joining. They gave me their notes, their jokes and, occasionally, their seat on the bus. I gave them a steady hand on the shoulder and, once or twice, a sensible word before an exam. It seemed a fair exchange.

End of Year Two

The night shift taught me how to wait,
the lecture taught me how to ask;
and in between, on buses, benches,
I learned to lay aside the mask.
Two years have passed, and one remains,
the coat is nearly mine to wear;
I did not know that fatigue could be
the quiet, honest form of prayer.

Chapter 4 — Final Year: Standing at the Edge (Semester V & VI)

The final year of the LL.B. course arrives with a strange weight — not the weight of new subjects, but the weight of an ending that is also a beginning. Civil Procedure, Administrative Law, Company Law, Drafting, Pleading and Conveyancing and the Moot Court paper — each subject seemed to whisper the same warning : soon, this will not be theory anymore.

At Navajeevan Law College, the final year was also the year of looking outward — towards the Bar exam, towards enrolment, towards the very real question of what kind of advocate one wanted to become. Practical training and clinical courses placed students inside courtrooms not as tourists but as apprentices, watching cross—examinations unfold, watching senior advocates turn silence into strategy.

The Edge

Three years compressed to ninety days,
each subject sharpened like a blade;
I wrote until my fingers ached,
and hoped the effort would be weighed.

Outside the hall, the seniors passed,
already gowned, already sure —
I told myself, one day quite soon,
that certainty would be my cure.

This was the year of moot courts, where the dock stopped being a piece of furniture and became a small, unforgiving stage. It was the year of internships, when the theory of the classroom met the paperwork of the real world — Vakalatnamas, cause lists, and the particular chaos of a district court corridor at ten in the morning.

For the first—time visitor, the corridor of a district court is a foreign country with its own vocabulary. Here are the words I heard that first morning, translated the way I would explain them to a friend from the press.

'**Vakalatnama**' — The signed document by which a client authorises an advocate to appear on his or her behalf.

'Cause list' — The court's list of matters to be heard that day, in order

'Plaint' — The written statement by which a civil case begins

'Written statement' — The defendant's reply to the plaint

'Adjournment' — A postponement, the most common word in any court

'Bench / Bar' — The judges / the advocates

किनारे पे खड़ा था, समुंदर सामने था,
हर लहर में एक नया सबक़ छुपा था

— I stood at the shore, the ocean lay ahead,
in every wave, a new lesson was instead.

Examinations under Savitribai Phule Pune University carried their own particular pressure — the university's scale meant thousands of answer sheets, hundreds of law colleges, and one small, determined name among them all, writing as clearly and as fast as three years of practice would allow.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Final year student: ‘I have finished the entire syllabus in one night.'

Friend: ‘That's not called studying, that's called speed—reading your own funeral.'

Third Year LL.B. — Semester V

Third year opened the door to procedure in earnest — how courts actually work, how statutes are actually read, how the earth beneath our feet is actually owned — alongside the environmental crisis no law student can any longer ignore, and the first real drafting skills of the profession.

LC 0901 — Civil Procedure Code

If substantive law tells you what your rights are, the Civil Procedure Code, 1908 tells you how to actually walk into a civil court and claim them. This paper worked through the anatomy of a civil suit — jurisdiction, pleadings, framing of issues, res judicata, execution of decrees, and the layered system of appeal, revision, and review — the plumbing that keeps the entire civil justice system from collapsing under its own procedure.

📖 Landmark Cases

Satyadhyan Ghosal v. Deorajin Debi (1960) AIR 1960 SC 941

Satyadhyan Ghosal v. Deorajin Debi remains foundational to understanding how the policy of finality that animates the doctrine of res judicata operates not only between separate suits, but within the internal architecture of a single piece of litigation itself. By holding that an unchallenged interlocutory decision on a substantive question binds the parties for the remainder of that proceeding, the Supreme Court reinforced the broader principle that litigants must exercise their rights of challenge when the opportunity to do so is available, rather than holding issues in reserve for indefinite future reagitation.

Sopan Sukhdeo Sable v. Charity Commissioner (2004) (2004) 3 SCC 561

Sopan Sukhdeo Sable v. Charity Commissioner remains essential reading for understanding the disciplined and narrowly confined character of the power to reject a plaint under Order VII Rule 11 of the Code of Civil Procedure. By insisting that this power be exercised with reference to the plaint alone, without regard to the defendant's defence, the Supreme Court preserved the fundamental right of a plaintiff to have his claim properly tried on its merits, reserving the drastic remedy of threshold rejection for only the clearest cases where the plaint itself discloses no sustainable cause of action.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Client: ‘How long will my civil suit take?'

Lawyer: ‘Long enough that your grandchildren might inherit either the property, or the case.'

The Life of a Civil Suit

Plaint	Summons	Written reply	Issues	Evidence	Arguments	Judgment	Appeal
Case begins	Court calls the defendant	Defendant replies	Court fixes what must be decided	Both sides prove	Both sides submit	Court decides	Challenge or enforce

LC 0902 — Interpretation of Statutes

Words on paper mean nothing until a judge decides what they mean, and this course studied the rules that guide that decision — the literal rule, the golden rule, the mischief rule, and the internal and external aids (preambles, marginal notes, dictionaries, Parliamentary debates) courts use to fill the gaps that even careful drafting leaves behind.

📖 Landmark Cases

Heydon's Case (1584) (1584) 3 Co Rep 7a; 76 ER 637

Heydon's Case endures as one of the most historically significant and consistently cited authorities in the entire field of statutory interpretation, its four—point

framework for discerning and giving effect to a statute's remedial purpose having outlived, by centuries, the specific tenancy dispute that occasioned it. The mischief rule it established continues to offer courts a disciplined method for ensuring that the evident purpose behind remedial legislation is not defeated by narrow or overly technical readings of its text, and its influence persists wherever a modern court, faced with an ambiguous or incompletely drafted statute, looks past the bare words of the text to ask what defect in the prior law Parliament was actually seeking to cure.

R.M.D. Chamarbaugwala v. Union of India (1957) AIR 1957 SC 628

R.M.D. Chamarbaugwala v. Union of India remains a classic illustration of purposive statutory construction operating in service of constitutional rights, demonstrating how a court can narrow the literal scope of a regulatory statute to align with its evident legislative purpose, thereby protecting a legitimate trade activity from an unintended and constitutionally impermissible regulatory burden. Its skill—versus—chance distinction continues to resonate well beyond the specific prize competitions the case originally concerned, informing ongoing legal and regulatory debates in India's rapidly evolving gaming and competition industries.

🧐 A Small Paradox

A statute's words are fixed the day it is passed, yet the world it governs keeps changing every single day after. Interpretation is the law's quiet way of admitting that no legislature can ever write a sentence long enough to anticipate the future — and asking judges to finish the sentence for them.

For a man who had spent decades reading circulars and standing orders, this subject was a revelation. I had always known that a rule and its purpose can drift apart. I had never known it had a name, or that judges study it as a craft.

Four Ways to Read a Sentence

Imagine a sign at a park gate: “No vehicles allowed.” Does it stop a bicycle? A child’s toy car? An ambulance carrying a patient? The four rules of interpretation are four ways of answering.

Rule	Method	The park—gate answer
Literal	Read the words as they stand	Everything with wheels is out, ambulance included
Golden	Read literally, but avoid an absurd result	Ambulance allowed, because banning it is absurd
Mischief	Ask what problem the rule was meant to cure	The aim was safety and quiet; only noisy or dangerous vehicles are barred
Purposive	Read to serve the law’s overall purpose	Whatever protects the park’s peaceful use is barred

LC 0903 — Environmental Law

This was the subject that made the classroom feel urgent in a way few others did. We studied Articles 48A and 51A(g) of the Constitution, the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, the Air Act, 1981, and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, alongside the judicially evolved principles — polluter pays, the precautionary principle, inter—generational equity, and sustainable development — that have made Indian environmental jurisprudence some of the most activist in the world.

📖 Landmark Cases

M.C. Mehta v. Union of India (1988) — The Ganga Pollution (Kanpur Tanneries) Case AIR 1988 SC 1037

M.C. Mehta v. Union of India, the Ganga Pollution Case, remains a landmark in the development of Indian environmental law, establishing early and firmly that the constitutional right to life includes the right to a clean environment, and that this right can be enforced against polluting industries regardless of the financial cost of compliance. The case's insistence that industries bear full responsibility for the pollution they generate laid important groundwork for the more elaborate environmental jurisprudence, including the precautionary principle and the polluter pays principle, that the Supreme Court would go on to develop in the years that followed.

Vellore Citizens Welfare Forum v. Union of India (1996) (1996) 5 SCC 647

Vellore Citizens Welfare Forum v. Union of India stands as a defining moment in the maturation of Indian environmental law, transforming the precautionary principle and the polluter pays principle from broader international policy concepts into concrete, binding features of Indian constitutional and environmental jurisprudence. By insisting that industries bear the true cost of the pollution they

cause, and by establishing a practical mechanism for enforcing this responsibility, the Supreme Court gave lasting, operative substance to the principle that genuine development must be environmentally sustainable, not merely economically expedient.

The River's Complaint

I did not ask to carry dye,
or ash, or waste from human hands —
I only asked to reach the sea
the way I've always reached its sands.

The law has heard me, slow but sure,
and written rules to keep me clean —
now let the rules be more than ink,
and let the river stay as green.

LP 0904 — Practical Training Paper III — Drafting, Pleading and Conveyance

This was the paper where theory finally had to become a document. We practised drafting plaints, written statements, legal notices and petitions, and learned the conveyancing skills behind sale deeds, gift deeds, and leases — discovering, painfully, that clarity and precision in legal drafting are far harder to achieve than they look in a printed textbook example.



😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

New drafter's first plaint: 'The Plaintiff, hereinafter referred to as the Plaintiff, states that the Plaintiff...'

Senior, reading it: 'Beta, we know it's the Plaintiff. You don't have to remind the court every four words.'

Anatomy of a Plaint

Part	What it must contain
Title	Name of the court and the case
Parties	Who is suing whom, with addresses
Facts	The story, in numbered paragraphs, in order
Cause of action	The legal reason the suit exists and when it arose
Jurisdiction and limitation	Why this court, and why the suit is in time
Valuation	The value for court fee and jurisdiction
Prayer	Exactly what relief is asked
Verification	The party's signed statement that the facts are true

LO 0908 — Land Laws I

Maharashtra's urban land is governed by a dense and very state—specific set of statutes, and this paper mapped them out: the Maharashtra Ownership Flats Act, 1963, the Maharashtra Apartment Ownership Act, 1970, the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 with its Maharashtra Rules of 2017, the Maharashtra Regional and Town Planning Act, 1966, and the Maharashtra Rent Control Act, 1999 — the laws that quietly govern every flat purchase and rental agreement in the state.

📖 Landmark Cases

Neelkamal Realtors Suburban Pvt. Ltd. v. Union of India (2017) 2017 SCC OnLine Bom 9302

Neelkamal Realtors Suburban Pvt. Ltd. v. Union of India provided crucial early judicial validation for one of the most significant consumer—protection reforms in Indian real estate law, confirming that the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 could validly apply to ongoing projects without offending

constitutional protections against retrospective legislation. The decision's affirmation of RERA's core regulatory architecture — registration, escrow accounts, and mandatory disclosure — helped secure, at a critical early stage, the practical and legal foundation on which the Act's protections for Indian homebuyers continue to rest.

एक चाहत के सपने को कानून ने सहारा दिया,
रेरा ने हर खरीदार को भरोसा दिया !

— To the dream of one's own roof, the law gave a helping hand —
RERA gave every buyer some ground on which to stand.

Third Year LL.B. — Semester VI

This was the busiest semester of the LL.B., I struggled a lot to balance my service and my college studies. However, my family provided me with full support during this period.

When my wife and college—going sons looked at a forty—six—year—old law student like me, I saw great excitement, with a touch of comedy, in their eyes.

In any normal Indian household at 7:00 AM, the kitchen is a war zone of whistling pressure cookers, breakfast parathas being flipped, and kids rushing for their college buses. But in our house, since I enrolled in LL. B at forty—four, the morning routine has escalated into a full constitutional bench trial.

There I stand before the hallway mirror, struggling with my white advocate neckbands like a toddler trying to tie shoelaces for the first time. My wife, rolling her eyes with twenty—two years of professional domestic patience, marches over, snatches the bands from my trembling fingers, and fixes them with surgical precision. “For heaven’s sake, Chandrakant,” she sighs, “you manage industrial time offices and complex accounts all day, but put a strip of white cotton around your neck and you look like you’re being choked by the Constitution of India.” Behind her, my college—going sons lean against the doorframe, sipping tea and recording my trial prep on their smartphones with unconcealed amusement.

The neckbands that give my wife such trouble are not decoration. Black coat and white bands are the prescribed dress of an advocate in court. I came to like their plainness. Black, the colour of seriousness and of humility; white, the colour of clarity. Together they turn any man into an instrument of the court, and that, perhaps, is the point: for the length of a hearing the person disappears and the office remains.

It is also, I realised while standing in front of the hallway mirror, the closest thing the modern world has to a monk's robe. Nobody who puts it on remains quite the same person, even if the neckbands are tied by his wife.

सुबह सुबह घर में एक नया ही कोर्ट लगता है,
बीवी मुनसिफ़ बनती है, बच्चों का बेंच सजता है,
पूछते हैं हमसे वो कानून के हर एक सवाल,
कहीं स्टूडेंट बन के घर ना आ जाए कोई नया हाल !

Every morning a brand—new court convenes right at home,
The wife becomes the judge, the children form the bench.
They quiz me on every single clause and legal rule,
Lest a grown student turn the whole house into a law school!

The final semester closed the circle: the procedure behind every criminal trial, the law governing the government itself, the machinery of the modern company, and — fittingly — the moot court and internship paper that turned three years of theory into something resembling practice.

The real comedy begins at night on the study table. At forty—six, memorizing sections of the Indian Contract Act or the Code of Civil Procedure is no easy feat, especially when my teenage children—who are currently breezing through their own college semesters—appoint themselves as my strict academic supervisors.

My son walks into my study holding a highlighter like a baton. "Papa, close your book," he commands with mock—academic severity. "Tell me Section 10 of CPC. If you fail, no Wi—Fi password for you tonight!" There I sit, a middle—aged father with greying temples, stammering out definitions of "res sub judice" while my son evaluates my posture. "Papa, your presentation is too stiff! If you argue like that in front of the judge, the judge will ask you to retire early, not pass your exam."

They grade my mock viva voce with ruthless humour, while my wife walks in with a tray of hot ginger tea, shaking her head: “God help the judiciary if this is how my husband prepares.”

As midnight approaches, the house settles down into deep silence—except for the rustle of my heavy law textbooks. I sit surrounded by bare—act digests, coloured sticky notes, and half—finished cups of coffee. Occasionally, my wife walks past in the hallway, stops at my door, and looks at me with a mixture of affectionate disbelief and quiet pride.

"You have been working all day at the office, and now you are cramming torts and jurisprudence at midnight," she whispered, leaning against the door.

“At your age, people plan their retirement golf games, and here you are arguing with textbooks.”

I smile, pulling my reading glasses down. “Darling, retirement is for people who stop growing. I am just opening my second innings.”

She rolls her eyes, smiles softly, and mumbles, “Just make sure you pass your exams, or I’ll file a suit against you for wasting household stationery.” And with that, she walks away, leaving me to battle the precedents under the warm desk lamp.

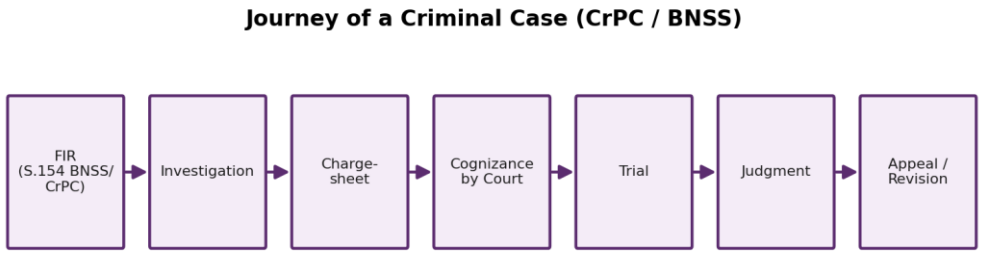
आधी रात को जागता है एक स्टूडेंट नया,
किताबों के दलदल में खोया है यह साया,
बीवी हँसती है देख के इस बचपने को,
कि इस उम्र में भी दिल ने कैसा इश्क़ लगाया!

Deep past midnight wakes up a brand—new student,
Lost deep within the quicksand of heavy law books.
The wife laughs, watching this childlike, stubborn passion,
That even at this age, the heart has fallen in love with learning!

To prepare for LL. B examinations under the watchful, teasing eyes of a middle—aged wife and college—student children is an absolute circus of love, laughter, and mutual admiration. They tease me mercilessly, quiz me ruthlessly, and correct my neckbands with mock annoyance. Yet, beneath every joke and playful taunt lies an unspoken, rock—solid family backing. In our home tribunal, I may be the student sitting in the dock, but I have already won the most important verdict of all: the unconditional love and pride of my family cheering me on.

LC 1001 — Criminal Procedure Code

If the IPC and other criminal statutes define what a crime is, the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 defines how the State is allowed to respond to it — from the very first FIR to the final appeal. This course tracked the entire life of a criminal case, the powers of police and magistrates, arrest, bail, and the transition now underway toward the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, which will eventually replace the CrPC altogether.



The long procedural road from a first complaint to a final appeal.

📖 Landmark Cases

Lalita Kumari v. Government of Uttar Pradesh (2014) (2014) 2 SCC 1

Lalita Kumari v. Government of Uttar Pradesh remains the definitive statement on the very first procedural step of the Indian criminal justice process, ensuring that the registration of an FIR — the formal gateway to criminal investigation — cannot be delayed or obstructed through unaccountable preliminary inquiry wherever a cognizable offence is disclosed. By carving out only a narrow, specifically defined, and time—bound exception for genuinely ambiguous cases, the Constitution Bench struck a careful balance that continues to protect both the promptness of genuine criminal investigations and the system's capacity to filter out complaints that do not, on their face, disclose any cognizable wrongdoing.

D.K. Basu v. State of West Bengal (1997) AIR 1997 SC 610

D.K. Basu v. State of West Bengal remains the cornerstone of Indian law governing the protection of persons under arrest and in police custody, establishing a detailed and continuing framework of procedural safeguards specifically designed to prevent the kind of custodial violence and impunity that had long plagued the Indian criminal justice system. By combining these detailed procedural guidelines with a robust public law remedy of compensation, the Supreme Court ensured that the dignity and physical safety of every person taken into custody would receive concrete, enforceable constitutional protection, not merely abstract guarantees on paper.

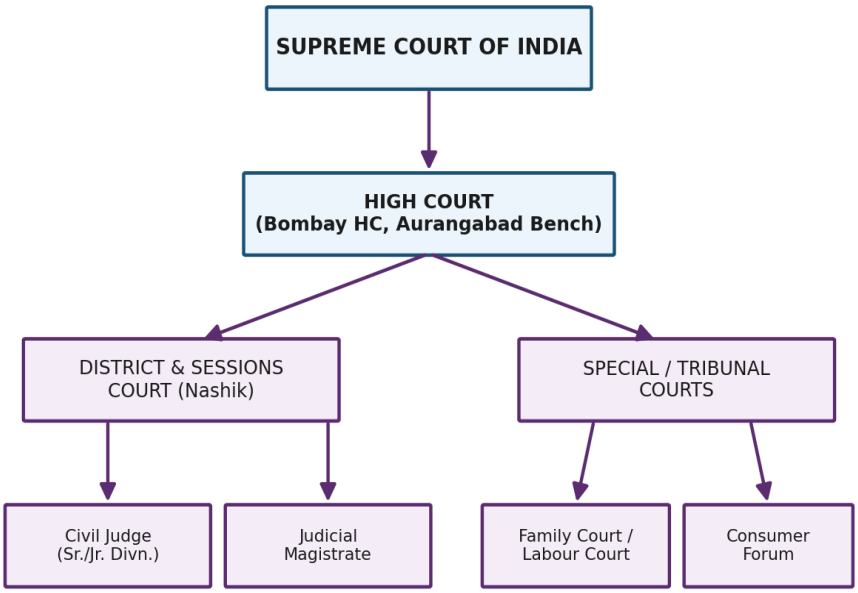
📜 Short Tale — The First FIR I Ever Read

As a trainee, I once watched a constable painstakingly write out a complainant's broken, breathless account of a theft — spelling mistakes, crossed-out words, a story told out of order because fear does not narrate chronologically. It was nothing like the clean, numbered FIRs in our textbook illustrations. That was the day I understood that criminal procedure isn't a diagram; it's a document written, every single time, by someone having the worst day of their year.

LC 1002 — Administrative Law

As the State grew from a night—watchman into a full welfare administrator, the law had to grow alongside it — and Administrative Law is the branch that keeps that growth accountable. We studied the principles of natural justice (Audi alteram partem and nemo judex in causa sua), delegated legislation, and the judicial review of administrative action, largely built, in India, through judge—made law rather than a single codifying statute.

Simplified Hierarchy of Courts in India



Where an aggrieved citizen's file eventually has to travel.

📖 Landmark Cases

A.K. Kraipak v. Union of India (1969) AIR 1970 SC 150

A.K. Kraipak v. Union of India stands as a pivotal moment in the development of Indian administrative law, substantially widening the practical reach of natural justice by rejecting a rigid, formalistic distinction between administrative and quasi—judicial functions in favour of a more substantive inquiry into fairness and the real risk of bias. Its insistence that even administrative decision—making must guard against the appearance, as much as the fact, of partiality continues to inform how Indian courts scrutinise a vast range of administrative processes affecting individual rights and interests.

Ridge v. Baldwin (1964) [1964] AC 40

Ridge v. Baldwin remains a defining moment in the history of administrative law, restoring the right to a fair hearing to its proper and expansive scope after a period in which narrow, formalistic classification had threatened to confine it to an unduly limited category of decisions. By insisting that the gravity of the consequence to the individual, rather than the technical label attached to the decision—making function, should determine whether natural justice applies, the House of Lords established a principle whose influence continues to be felt across common law jurisdictions, including in the parallel and closely related development of Indian administrative law.

🤔 A Small Paradox

An administrator is trusted with discretion precisely because rules cannot cover every situation — yet the more discretion he is given, the more the law must build rules just to control that discretion. The State cannot govern without power, and cannot be trusted without limits on it.

LC 1003 — Company Law

A company is one of law's strangest inventions — an artificial 'person' that can sue, be sued, own property, and outlive every human being who ever worked for it. This paper studied the Companies Act, 2013, incorporation and corporate personality, the duties of directors, corporate governance requirements, and the regulatory role of SEBI under the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.

📖 Landmark Cases

Salomon v. Salomon & Co. Ltd. (1897) [1897] AC 22

Salomon v. Salomon & Co. Ltd. remains the single most important case in the entire field of company law, establishing the doctrine of separate corporate personality that underlies the modern limited liability company in virtually every common law jurisdiction, including India. By insisting that a validly incorporated company's separate legal existence must be respected even where it is owned and controlled by a single dominant individual, the House of Lords laid the essential conceptual foundation on which the entire modern edifice of corporate law, and the economic activity it enables, continues to rest.

Life Insurance Corporation of India v. Escorts Ltd. (1986) (1986) 1 SCC 264

Life Insurance Corporation of India v. Escorts Ltd. remains a significant Indian contribution to the ongoing body of law refining and applying the foundational principle of separate corporate personality established in Salomon v. Salomon & Co. Ltd., affirming both the general autonomy of corporate internal management from shareholder interference and the continued, carefully bounded availability of the corporate veil—lifting doctrine where the corporate form is used to defeat a legitimate legal or regulatory purpose. The decision continues to guide Indian courts in striking an appropriate balance between respecting the autonomy of corporate

decision—making and ensuring that the corporate form is not abused to evade legitimate legal obligations.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Student: ‘Sir, if a company is a separate legal person, can it be sent to jail?'

Professor: ‘Only in the sense that its bank account can be frozen — which, for a company, is roughly the same thing.'

LP 1004 — Practical Training Paper IV — Moot Court Exercise and Internship

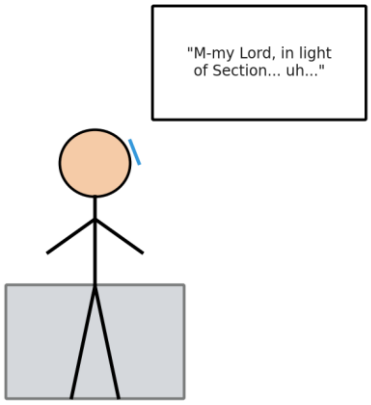


This final practical paper gathered everything the degree had built toward: moot court exercises, observance of live trials, and pre—trial preparation. It was here that court manners, interview technique, and the discipline of arranging facts into a coherent argument finally stopped being theory and became muscle memory.

The Dock, Revisited

The dock that shook me, first—year small,
no longer shakes me quite the same —
the arguments still come out rough,
but now I know to state my claim.

First Day in the Moot Court Dock



Every advocate remembers their first moot court sentence trailing off midway.



LO 1008 — Land Laws II

Where Land Laws—I dealt with flats and urban development, this paper turned to the soil itself — agricultural land, its holding, tenancy, and ceiling, governed by a set of statutes almost entirely specific to Maharashtra: the Maharashtra Land Revenue Code, 1966, the Maharashtra Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act, 1948, the Fragmentation and Consolidation of Holdings Act, 1947, the Ceiling on Holdings Act, 1961, and the century—old Mamlatdars' Courts Act, 1906.

Much of this law is intensely local and fact—specific — disputes here are usually settled less by Supreme Court doctrine and more by the Mamlatdar's Court and Revenue Tribunals, who develop their own steady, unglamorous body of precedent, field by field, village by village.

ज़मीन सिर्फ मिट्टी नहीं, किसी की पहचान है,
हर रेकॉर्ड, हर 7/12 में एक कहानी छुपी है!

— Land is not merely soil; it is someone's very name —
in every land record, a whole story hides its claim.

Reading a 7/12 Extract

For a city person, the 7/12 extract looks like a form. For a farmer it is an identity. In Maharashtra, this land record shows who holds the land, how much, what is grown and what claims are attached. Here is how I learned to read it.

What to look for	Why it matters
Survey / gat number	Identifies the exact piece of land
Name of holder	Who the records say has the right to cultivate or own
Area	How much land, in hectares and acres
Crop details	What is actually grown, and the season
Other rights and encumbrances	Loans, mortgages, tenants and disputes affecting the land

The Last Paper

There is a moment at the end of the last paper that no syllabus prepares you for. The bell rings, the invigilator collects the booklets, and the room, so full of nervous energy a minute earlier, empties in a rush. I stayed a little longer at my desk, not because I had anything left to write, but because I wanted to feel the ending.



Three years earlier I had climbed the college stairs unsure whether I belonged. On the last afternoon I understood that belonging is not granted by a seat. It is earned by turning up, night after night, until the doubt has nothing left to say.

The Edge

I came to the edge with a heavy bag,
a night shift still in my eyes;
the sea of the law lay wide and deep,
and I stopped believing in a safe disguise.

Not every wave was kind to me,
not every question had a shore;
but I had learned, at the water's rim,
that standing there is worth much more.

Chapter 5 — Beyond the Classroom: Field Visits

No law degree is complete inside a lecture hall alone. Somewhere between the bare acts and the case law, Navajeevan Law College made sure we actually walked into the institutions we had only read about — a jail, a police station, a High Court bench, a forensic laboratory, and, almost every single day of practical training, the corridors of the Nashik District Court itself.

These visits taught lessons no textbook could: the law has a smell, a queue, a waiting room, and a silence all its own.

The Nashik Road Central Jail

Nothing in three years of classroom study prepared me for how quiet a jail actually is. We had studied the Prisons Act and the philosophy of punishment — retribution, deterrence, reformation — as competing theories in a textbook chapter.

Walking through the high walls of the Nashik Road Central Jail, those theories suddenly had faces attached to them: undertrials still presumed innocent, convicts serving decades, and a prison administration trying, with limited resources, to balance security with the constitutional promise that even a prisoner does not lose all their rights at the gate.

The visit made real what Article 21 jurisprudence had only described in the abstract — that the right to life and personal liberty follows a person even behind bars, however imperfectly it is honoured in practice.


१९२७
नासिकरोड मध्यवर्ती कारागृह


NASIK ROAD
CENTRAL PRISON
1927

Behind the Wall

The wall was tall, the gate was cold,
the silence pressed on every word —
I thought of every case I'd read
where 'custody' was all, I'd heard.

Now custody had a colour, a smell,
a number stitched on faded cloth —
and Article **21** stopped being ink
and became a promise, kept or not.

Rights That Do Not Stop at the Gate

Case	What it taught
Sunil Batra v. Delhi Administration (1978)	A prisoner keeps his fundamental rights; inhuman treatment inside jail can be challenged
Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar (1979)	Speedy trial is part of Article 21; long detention of undertrials is unjust
D.K. Basu v. State of West Bengal (1997)	Safeguards at arrest and in custody

The most telling thing about the jail was the sound. Not shouting or clanging, as films suggest, but the opposite: a controlled, disciplined hush, punctuated by keys and the counted footsteps of a routine that must not break.

It made me understand that a prison is a machine for managing time, and I recognised the machinery. I had spent twenty—nine years managing time on the other side of a wall, but with the freedom to go home at the end of each shift.

Ambad Police Station

After the imposing stone walls of the Nashik Road Central Jail, the educational trip took a sobering turn when our bus pulled up outside the Ambad Police Station in Nashik. For the twenty—year—olds, these visits were thrilling academic adventures — clutching notebooks, asking eager questions about FIR registrations, custody remands, and penal codes.

As I stood inside the suffocating shadows of the station house, the emotional weight was entirely different for me. The criminal procedure code isn't just a set of sections to be memorized for an exam; it represents human lives hanging by a thread. I watch young students eagerly taking notes on penal architecture while my heart aches for the broken souls trapped inside those cells.



Sensing my quiet contemplation, a young batchmate steps close and whispers, 'Sir, you look at these walls differently than we do. What do you see?' In that gentle exchange, I realize I am no longer just a senior student; I am an informal mentor, bridging the cold text of the law with the warm empathy of lived life.

They look at stone and statutes on the page,

While I see beating hearts behind the bar.

They race to conquer through the fires of age,

I seek the healing where the bruises are.

A generation younger, yet we meet,

Where legal doctrines touch the common grief.

They lend their breath to make my journey sweet,

I lend my anchor for their brief belief.

If the jail taught us about punishment, Ambad Police Station taught us about the very first page of a criminal case — the FIR register, the daily diary, the lock—up, and the sheer administrative volume of complaints a single police station handles in an ordinary week. We were shown the process of recording a complaint, the difference between a cognizable and non—cognizable offence in practice rather than merely on paper, and the very human pressure under which investigating officers work.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Sub—Inspector, to visiting students: 'You have studied Section 154 CrPC in class?'

Student: 'Yes sir, FIR must be registered immediately for a cognizable offence.'

He smiled and gestured at the queue outside his office. "Good. Now come stand here for one Monday morning, and tell me how 'immediately' survives contact with real life."

It was, in its own way, the most honest lecture on criminal procedure any of us received that year.

Anatomy of a Police Station

Part	What it does
Complaint desk	Where the first information is heard and recorded
FIR register	The permanent, numbered record of cognizable offences
General (station) diary	The daily log of arrivals, departures and events
Lock—up	Temporary custody, under strict legal safeguards
Malkhana	The room where seized property and case exhibits are stored

High Court of Bombay — Aurangabad Bench

The culmination of the educational tour brings us to the majestic, high—ceilinged corridors of the High Court of Bombay — Bench Aurangabad. The afternoon sun filters through arches, casting long shadows across floors where senior advocates sweep past in immaculate black and white.



As our batch walks in a clustered flock, looking up in awe at the statues of legal titans, a young student nervously adjusts his tie and stumbles. I place a steadying hand on his shoulder, smiling softly. 'Don't worry,' I tell him. 'The law belongs to those who respect its temples, regardless of whether they enter at twenty or forty—six.' He smiles back, the panic clearing from his eyes.

Walking shoulder—to—shoulder through those hallowed halls—the boy young enough to be my son on my left, and the vast edifice of Indian jurisprudence before us—I realize that time had not left me behind. It had simply waited patiently until I was wise enough to understand the journey.



Watching senior advocates argue before the Aurangabad Bench of the Bombay High Court was unlike any moot court exercise. The arguments were shorter, sharper, and constantly interrupted by questions from the Bench — not hostile questions, but testing ones, probing whether the advocate truly understood the ground beneath their own submissions. The gravity of the courtroom, the formality of address, and the sheer speed at which matters were listed and disposed of gave us our first honest sense of scale: how many lives pass through a single High Court in a single working day.

We also visited the ADR Centre of High Court ; the Sr. Judge of ADR Centre also guides student on various alternate dispute resolution options and its necessity during this period of huge pendency of cases in courts.

📖 Note :

Note — many of the constitutional and administrative law principles studied earlier in the course — natural justice, judicial review, writ jurisdiction under Article 226 — were visible here not as case citations, but as live arguments being tested in real time.

The High Court Bench

The robes were heavier than ours,
the questions sharper than our fears —
I understood, watching that Bench,
why some arguments take years.

Five Writs, Five Questions

Writ	The question it asks	Remember it as
Habeas corpus	Why is this person detained?	"Produce the body"
Mandamus	Why is the duty not performed?	"We command"
Prohibition	Why is the lower court exceeding its power?	"Stop"
Certiorari	Why should this order not be quashed?	"Send up the record"
Quo warranto	By what authority does he hold this office?	"By what right?"

Regional Forensic Science Laboratory (RFSL), Nashik

Law of Evidence had taught us the theory of expert testimony under Sections 45 to 51 of the Indian Evidence Act; the Forensic Science Laboratory at Meri, Nashik showed us where that testimony is actually manufactured — through ballistics analysis, DNA profiling, questioned—document examination, and toxicology. Watching a forensic expert explain how a single fingerprint or a fibre of cloth can decide a case gave an entirely new respect for the phrase 'beyond reasonable doubt.'



🧐 A Small Paradox

A conviction can rest on a fact so small it is invisible to the naked eye — a strand of hair, a trace of gunshot residue — yet the standard of proof it must meet is the highest the law demands. The smaller the evidence, the heavier the burden it is often asked to carry.

📜 Short Tale — The Fiber That Spoke

A forensic scientist once told us of a case where a single synthetic fibre, invisible until placed under magnification, connected a suspect to a crime scene he swore he had never visited. Science, in that moment, did what a hundred pages of testimony could not: it made a silent object testify, cross—examine—proof, unmoved by pressure or persuasion.

What the Laboratory Does

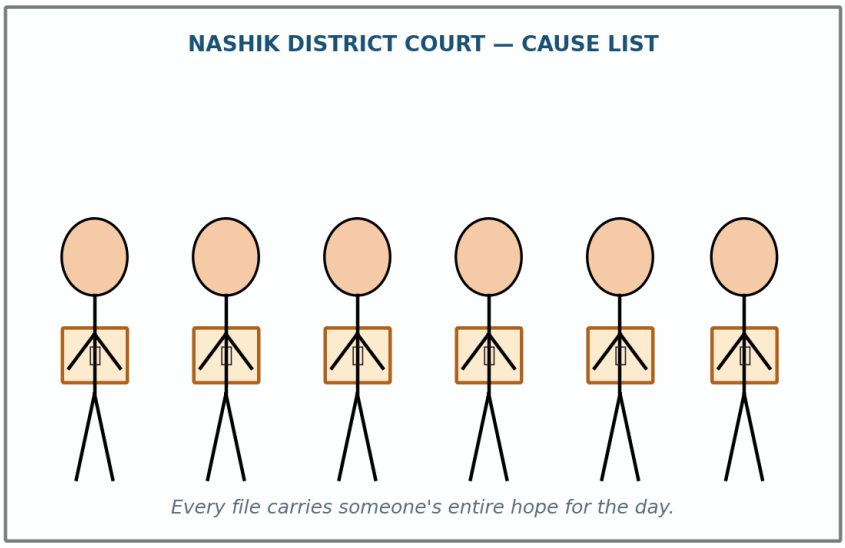
Division	Example of what it examines
Ballistics	Whether a bullet was fired from a particular weapon
DNA	Whether a biological trace belongs to a particular person
Questioned documents	Handwriting, forged signatures, altered documents, inks and paper
Toxicology	Poisons, drugs, alcohol in samples

Daily Visits to the Nashik District Court

Unlike the other visits, this was not a single day but a whole rhythm of life — the near—daily walk to the Nashik District Court during practical training, watching cause lists lengthen, files pile up, and the same small dramas repeat themselves every morning: an adjournment sought, a surety produced, a nervous litigant asking a clerk the same question three different ways because the first two answers felt too uncertain to trust.



It was here, more than in any single dramatic visit, that the profession actually revealed itself — not as the eloquent closing argument of courtroom dramas, but as patience: waiting for your matter to be called, learning the registry staff by name, and understanding that the corridor outside the courtroom often teaches as much as the courtroom itself.



😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

First—year intern, checking the cause list for the fifth time: 'Sir, when will our matter be called?'

Senior Advocate: 'Beta, in the district court, 'soon' is a relative term — relative to your patience, not to the clock.'

रोज़ अदालत के गलियारों में एक नया सबक मिला,
सब्र से बड़ी कोई दलील नहीं, यह मुझे पता चला !

— Every day, the court's corridors taught a fresh lesson anew —
no argument is greater than patience — that, I finally knew.

To travel together across moot courts, jails, police stations, and high courts, district court, forensic lab with students half my age was to experience the ultimate reconciliation of life. They teach me how to dream without cynicism; I teach them how to stand without fear. In the grand courtroom of existence, youth and wisdom

are not opposing counsel—they are co—petitioners, arguing side by side for a more meaningful life.



Five places, five lessons, and one thread running through them: the law is not what is said in a courtroom. It is what is done, day after day, by ordinary people in ordinary buildings, most of whom will never be quoted in a judgment. I came away with less awe for the majestic and more respect for the mundane.

What the Walls Taught Me

Place	One lesson
The jail	Rights do not vanish at the gate
The police station	Procedure meets pressure every day
The High Court	A good question is the best test of an argument
The Laboratory	Small facts can carry the heaviest burden
The District Court	Patience is the profession’s real training

Chapter 6 — Graduation (2024)

The morning the final—year LL. B results were scheduled to be published online; our household resembled a high—security war room. My elder son was hammering the refresh button on his laptop like a gamer in a tournament final, my younger son was holding a calculator as if we were computing rocket trajectories, and my wife was standing guard by the kitchen door with a container of traditional yogurt and sugar —ready to feed me success or console my defeat.

When the university website finally stopped crashing and the PDF loaded, my son let out a roar that could have shaken the High Court pillars.

'HE PASSED!

HE PASSED! PAPA ACTUALLY DID IT!'

Within seconds, absolute pandemonium broke loose. My son jumped up and down, knocking over a stack of civil procedure digests, while my wife rushed forward, spooning sweet yogurt directly into my mouth before I could even process the digits on the screen.

“Stop chewing and smile properly,” she laughed, her eyes shimmering with proud tears.

“The court of family opinion hereby declares you officially absolved of all mid—life crisis charges!”

इम्तिहान की रात कटी, अब जीत का पैगाम आया है,

47 की उम्र में देखो, क्या नया मुकाम आया है,

बच्चे भी नाच उठे, बीवी ने मिठाई खिलाई है ,

लगता है आज कानून ने खुद हमको सलामी दी है

The night of exams has passed, now comes the message of victory,

Look what a milestone has been achieved at forty—seven.

The kids are dancing with joy, the wife feeds sweet celebration,

It feels as though the law itself has saluted our endeavour!

True to form, my college—going children immediately turned my graduation into an interactive courtroom parody. My elder son grabbed a rolled—up newspaper as a

judge's gavel, stood on the living room sofa, and declared: 'Order, order! In the matter of Chandrakant K. Deshmukh versus The Passing of Time, this bench finds the defendant overwhelmingly guilty of stubbornness, late—night coffee addiction, and successfully proving that age is just a number. The sentence is mandatory family dinner at our favourite restaurant, paid entirely by the graduate!'

My younger son immediately chimed in as opposing counsel: 'My Lord, I object! The graduate must also be ordered to wear his advocate neckbands while eating dessert so we can take celebratory photos for social media under the hashtag #LexMonkJunior!' Even my wife, usually the voice of strict household discipline, nodded in absolute agreement, fetching my black coat and white bands from the wardrobe and insisting I wear them right there in the living room amid flying confetti and laughter.

Standing there in full advocate regalia in the middle of our living room, surrounded by my cheering children and my beaming wife, a profound wave of emotional gratitude washed over me. For twenty—nine years, I had served as a Time Office Supervisor at the press, punching cards, managing shifts, and watching time slip through the gears of routine. I had built a stable life, raised two brilliant children, and provided for my family.

Yet, looking at the glowing faces of my kids—who now viewed their forty—seven—year—old father not just as a provider, but as a peer in higher education who refused to let his dreams expire—I realized what this degree truly meant. It wasn't just a licence to practice law in courts; it was a living lesson to my children that curiosity has no expiration date, and that a goal deferred is never a goal denied.

कलम से जो नाता टूटा था कभी
वो आज फिर से जुड़ गया है यहाँ ।
बच्चों की आँखों में देखा जो फख्र
तो समझ आया क्या होती है जीत की शान ।

The bond with the pen that was broken once,
Has finally been re—stitched right here today.
Seeing the pride shining in my children's eyes,
I finally understood the true glory of victory.

While my immediate household erupted in high—energy digital chaos when the LL. B results were announced, the emotional epicentre of the broader family was my mother. For her, watching her forty—seven—year—old son—a steady, hardworking man who had spent nearly three decades managing time offices at the press—return to textbooks and university examinations felt like witnessing a miracle of quiet perseverance.

When I touched her feet to seek her blessings immediately after the results came in, her hands trembled slightly as she placed them on my head. Her eyes welled up with quiet tears of profound gratitude. “Beta, people study when they are twenty to earn a living,” she whispered, her voice choked with emotion. “You studied at forty—four out of pure passion and duty to your dreams. You have proved that learning never stops.” She immediately insisted on distributing “pedas”, turning the living room into a temple of thanksgiving.

माँ की दुआओं का असर देखो , क्या रंग लाया है,
47 की उम्र में बेटे ने नया इतिहास बनाया है ,
आँखों में खुशी के आँसू हैं , होठों पे दुआएँ ,
लगता है मानो पूरी काइनात ने सर झुकाया है ।

Behold the power of a mother's blessings, what wonders they bring,
At forty—seven, her son has scripted a brand—new history.
Tears of joy in her eyes, prayers resting softly on her lips,
It feels as though the entire universe has bowed in reverence!

The celebration of my LL. B graduation was no longer confined to my immediate roof; it rippled across mothers, brothers, sisters, and nieces, transforming into a festival of shared family pride. They had watched my late—night oil burning from afar, heard whispers of my study struggles, and now, they shared the sweet fruit of victory.

As I sat surrounded by congratulatory calls, family group chat messages, and my mother's comforting hand on my shoulder, I realised that an academic degree belongs to the individual who earns it, but the true joy of the milestone belongs to everyone who stood by them along the way.

In 2024, the three years folded neatly into a single word: graduate. The LL.B. degree from Savitribai Phule Pune University, earned through Navajeevan Law College, Nashik, was no longer a distant certificate imagined in 2021 — it was a document, real and signed, marking the end of one identity and the quiet start of another.

Graduation in Law is a strange kind of victory. It does not feel like winning a case; it feels like finishing a long cross—examination of oneself, three years of questions finally answered, at least on paper. There was relief, certainly. But underneath the relief sat a new and unfamiliar question: a degree makes you a law graduate, but it does not yet make you an advocate. That distinction — the gap between qualification and licence — became the next mountain to climb.

Convocation

They called my name; I walked ahead,
a scroll of paper, rolled and tied —
three years of arguments and doubt
now folded into one degree's pride.
But even as the applause rang loud,
I knew this was not journey's end —
a graduate still waits outside
the door the Bar alone can send.

डिग्री मिली, खुशी भी मिली, पर रुका नहीं सफर,
अभी तो वकालत का दरवाजा था आगे खड़ा, मगर

— The degree came, and joy with it, yet the journey did not cease —
the door to advocacy still stood ahead, waiting for its release.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Relative at graduation: 'So now you are a lawyer, beta?'

Graduate: 'No aunty, I am now officially unemployed, but with a degree to prove it.'

Chapter 7 — The Metamorphosis of Mind and Justice

What did I get during these three years?

When the results came, the family asked me what I had got out of three years of law.

My elder son meant marks.

My wife meant sleep I had lost.

My mother meant blessings.

I said, “A degree,” because it was the shortest answer, and the shortest answer is usually the least honest one.

The honest answer takes a whole chapter. A degree is a piece of paper. What I actually carried out of the gates of Navajeevan Law College was a different mind. I had walked in at forty—four believing I already knew how the world worked. I walked out at forty—seven, having learned that I knew how the world worked at a time office, at a press, and in a home. The world outside those three places had rules I had never read.

This chapter is my attempt to itemise the change. As a law student would say, it is a statement of account.

1. From Answers to Questions

For twenty—nine years my working life rewarded answers. A muster roll had to tally. A shift had to be covered. An attendance register was right or it was wrong, and the difference showed by the end of the month. I was good at answers, and in the first weeks of the first semester I quietly expected law to reward the same skill.

Answers

I left the house with answers packed,
like tiffin, warm and neatly tied;
the classroom opened every lid
and asked me what was really inside.
I came for certainty and found
a better gift: the shape of doubt —
the courage to say "prove it first,"
and mean it, and see it out.

It did not. The first thing law taught me was that the most valuable sentence in a courtroom is often a question.

Is this document admissible?
Was the consent free?
Who bears the burden of proof?
Which court has jurisdiction?

Every one of these is a question a good advocate asks before he dares answer anything.

I remember the exact discomfort.
A professor posed a problem on Contract: a promise made in a family setting, no writing, no money changing hands.
I raised my hand, sure of my answer, and he simply asked, "On what basis?" I had a conclusion but no foundation.
Twenty—nine years of practical instinct went quiet for a moment. Then I understood what the young students around me were learning without noticing: law is the discipline of showing your working.

जवाब की तलाश में निकला था घर से मैं,
सवाल ही सवाल मिले हर एक मोड़ पर।
अब समझ आया, यही तो इल्म है दोस्तों,
जो पूछना सीख गया, वही पहुँचा मंज़िल पर।

I set out from home searching for answers,
and found only questions at every turn.
Now I understand — this itself is knowledge, my friends:
the one who learned to ask is the one who reached the destination.

2. From Hearing to Listening

There is a difference between hearing and listening, and I did not know it until I stood outside the walls of the Nashik Road Central Jail.
In my working life, I heard people all day: workers reporting late, supervisors requesting leave, colleagues explaining absences. I listened for what I needed to record. I did not always listen for what the person was trying to say.

The jail, the Ambad police station and the queue at the district court changed that. Recall the constable who wrote out a complainant's breathless account of a theft, with crossed—out words and a story told out of order, because fear does not narrate in sequence.

The textbook FIR is a neat numbered form. The real one is a frightened person's attempt to be believed. That was my first lesson in listening as a professional skill: a client's story rarely arrives in legal order, and an advocate's first job is to be patient enough to hear what is underneath it.

I began to notice things I had walked past for decades. The waiting litigant who asks the clerk the same question three ways.

The old man holding a folder of papers as if they were a child.

The young woman who nods at everything the lawyer says and understands none of it. Law, I realised, is not only argued before judges.

It is explained, again and again, to people who are afraid, in a language they do not speak.

Someone has to translate. That someone, I decided, could be me.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Client, to his advocate: "Sir, I told you the whole story. Why are you asking me everything again?"
Advocate: "Because the first time you told me what happened. Now I need what actually happened."

3. Patience Is a Skill, Not a Personality

I used to think patience was a trait some people are born with, like a good singing voice.
Three years at the Nashik District Court taught me it is a working skill.
It can be practised, and like any skill it improves with repetition.

The corridor outside a courtroom is the best patience school I know. Cause lists lengthen. Matters are adjourned. A file is called just when you have stepped out for tea.

Nothing in a law college brochure mentions that a large part of the profession is waiting.

Yet the advocates who impressed me most were never the loudest. They were the ones who could wait for three hours, then stand up at the right moment and say three precise sentences.

My own life had already given me a version of this training. For decades I sat in a time office watching the clock govern other people's days.
I knew what a long shift feels like at four in the morning. What the law added was a reason. Waiting is not wasted time when the thing you are waiting for is a fair hearing.
The two years after graduation, between the degree and the enrolment, tested this properly. Forms had to be refiled. Stamp papers had to be bought again. There were queues and verification rounds and days when nothing moved.

I learned then what the long—serving advocates meant when they said the profession "selects for patience." It does not select for brilliance first. It selects for the person who is still there, robed and prepared, when the file is finally called.

इंसाफ़ की राह में जल्दी का काम नहीं,
सब्र की तारीख़ पर ही फ़ैसला आता है।
जो वक़्त के इम्तिहान में डटा रहा,
वही कठघरे से भी सुर्ख़रू निकल आता है।

On the road to justice, haste has no place;
the verdict arrives only on the date of patience.
One who stood firm through time's examination
walks out of the witness box with honour.

4. Justice as Process, Not Outcome

Before law, I believed justice was a result: the right person wins, the wrong person loses. I now believe justice is mostly a method. It lies in the fairness of how a decision is reached, not only in whether we like where it lands.

Three lessons from the syllabus shaped this belief more than any others.
The first was Maneka Gandhi, which taught that even the procedure of depriving a person of liberty must itself be fair, just and reasonable.

The second was the principle of natural justice: hear the other side, and let no one be a judge in his own cause.

The third was the Hart–Fuller debate in our Jurisprudence class, the most electric hour of the whole degree. If a rule was validly made yet monstrously unjust, was it still “law”? The class split. I found myself, to my own surprise, sitting in the middle, convinced that both professors were right and that the argument itself was the education.

Then the field visits made the abstraction real. In the jail, I saw that a person’s rights do not evaporate at the gate.

Watching the High Court bench, I saw that a question, patiently asked and honestly answered, is the mechanism by which a system corrects itself. Justice, I concluded, is what happens when a society insists on slowness where the alternative is haste against the weak.

This changed how I read newspapers. A headline shouting for instant punishment used to sound like justice to me. It now sounds like an incomplete sentence. I look for the missing words: after what procedure, on what evidence, heard by whom?

🧐 A Small Paradox

The law insists on finality: res judicata says a decided matter must not be reopened. Yet it also builds appeals, reviews and revisions so that decisions can be corrected. The system must be firm enough to end disputes and humble enough to admit it can err. Justice lives in that tension.

5. What My Twenty—Year—Old Classmates Taught Me

I entered college assuming I would be the teacher in every conversation with my younger classmates. Age, I imagined, had made me wiser. The truth is more balanced. I brought a steadiness they had not yet earned, and they brought things I had never learned. They taught me speed of thought. I read a case slowly, twice. They could pull a citation out of a phone in ten seconds.

They taught me to be unembarrassed about not knowing: at forty—four I was ashamed to ask a question in class, while they asked freely and learned faster for it. They taught me to laugh at a bad moot court performance instead of carrying it home for a week. And they taught me, without ever intending to, that hope is an unfinished habit, one that gets rusty when it is not used.

In return, I think I gave them something too: a sense that the law is not only an exam to be cleared but a life to be entered. When a nervous classmate stumbled at the High Court and I steadied him, when another asked what I saw behind the police station's iron bars, I understood that experience can be a gift even when it is not asked for. It is best given lightly, as a hand on the shoulder and not a lecture.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Younger classmate: "Sir, how do you remember so many sections?"
Me: "Beta, when you have memorised twenty years of shift rosters, ten sections of the Contract Act are a holiday."

6. What the Press Taught the Law, and What the Law Taught the Press

One thing I did not expect was how often my working life and my law books recognised each other. I spent nearly three decades in a time office. Attendance, shifts, overtime, leave and discipline are not glamorous subjects, but they sit almost exactly where Labour and Industrial Law begins.

When we studied domestic enquiry and the natural—justice requirements laid down in the Firestone case, I did not need a diagram. I had seen show—cause notices issued and replies filed. I knew what a fair opportunity to explain looks like, and what happens to morale when it is missing.

The same was true of records. A time office lives by the maxim that what is not written down did not happen. The Law of Evidence taught me the elegant version of that instinct: relevance, proof, the weight of a document, the certificate needed for an electronic record. I began to see an attendance register as a small piece of evidence in someone's future dispute.

The exchange ran both ways. Law made me a better supervisor. I began to write orders more clearly, to hear both sides before deciding, to notice when a rule was being applied without its reason. A colleague once remarked that my replies to workers had become "longer, but fairer." I took it as the best review of my first two years.

Area	What I knew from the press	What law added
Attendance & shifts	Rosters, muster rolls, night—shift fatigue	Statutory hours, wages and the employee's rights
Discipline	Notices, replies, warnings	Natural justice, fair domestic enquiry
Records	What is not written did not happen	Relevance, admissibility, proof of documents
Contracts	Terms of service, agreements with vendors	Offer, acceptance, consideration, free consent

The Register

A register is a quiet thing:
a column for the name, a line for the day.
For years I ruled its lines in ink
and never asked what it could say.
Now every entry seems to speak —
of shifts, of rights, of who was heard —
and I, who counted hours once,
have learned to weigh each written word.

7. What My Children Saw

Of everything in these three years, the part I value most is the one I did not plan. It is what my sons saw. They watched their father sit under a desk lamp at midnight, learning sections he could barely pronounce, after a full day at the press. They watched him fail a mock viva at home and try again, with the family's laughter for company.

Parents often teach by instruction: study hard, do not give up, it is never too late. I had said all these things to my sons. In three years, I did not say them once, because I was living them, and they were watching. A lesson delivered by instruction is forgotten by the next festival. A lesson delivered by example is inherited.

The role reversal was, of course, the funniest part. The father was a student; the sons were the invigilators. My wife, with twenty-two years of patient practice, fixed my neckbands each morning and reminded me that I did not need to argue with the Constitution before breakfast. Her quiet contribution has no case citation, but it deserves the longest entry in this statement of account. She kept the household

running so that a middle—aged man could return to school. No court would call that a small thing.

My mother's blessing on result day carried the same lesson from the other direction. She had watched me study at twenty and at forty—four, and her words, that learning never stops, were not congratulation only. They were the inheritance she hoped my sons would receive.

जो सबक़ किताबों में कभी न मिला मुझे,
वो बच्चों की आँखों ने पढ़ा दिया।
उम्र भर जो पिता बनकर सिखाता रहा,
आज बेटों ने विद्यार्थी बना दिया।

The lesson I never found in any book,
my children's eyes taught me.
I who spent my life teaching as a father
was today made a student by my sons.

8. The Statement of Account

If a monk counts his gains at the end of a long retreat, he seldom lists what he acquired. He lists what he let go of. My own ledger reads the same way.

I entered with…	I left with…
The habit of answering	The habit of asking
Hearing what was said	Listening to what was meant
Impatience with delay	Respect for process
A wish for quick verdicts	A love of fair procedure
Pride in experience	Gratitude for younger teachers
A worker's certainty	A student's humility

The degree hangs on a wall now. The mind that earned it does not. It sits with me on the bus to the district court, at the tea stall outside the registry, and in the study at midnight. It asks, gently and constantly, the three questions law taught me to ask before anything else:

On what basis?
Who has been heard?
What does fairness require?

If I could send one line back to the man who stood at the college gate in 2021, unsure whether he belonged, I would not say "you will succeed." He half—knew that already. I would say, "You will become someone who asks better questions, and that will matter more than any answer you carry in."

What I Got

Not just a scroll, not just a name
to print beneath the black—coat line —
I got a slower, kinder mind,
a sharper ear, a steadier spine.
I got the patience of the court,
the courage of a fair reply,
and sons who saw a father learn
and learned, themselves, to reach the sky.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Wife, at the end of the last exam: “So what did three years of law give you?”

Me: “Patience, humility, and a firm understanding of when to stop arguing with you.”

Wife: “That one you learned outside law college.”

Chapter 8 — The In—Between Years (2024–2026)

Between a degree and enrolment to Bar lies a corridor that no syllabus fully describes. These were the years of preparation, of revisiting procedural law with a seriousness the classroom could never quite demand, and of watching courtrooms not as a student but as someone who intended to belong there permanently.

It was also a period of patience — the least glamorous but most necessary legal skill. Enrolment with a State Bar Council is not automatic; it is earned through verification, documentation, and waiting rooms that test resolve as much as any examination hall does. Every visit to the Bar Council office, every stamp paper, every affidavit was a small ritual preparing the ground for the word 'Advocate' to attach itself, formally, to a name.

Like a monk in the years before ordination, this was a season of discipline without applause — reading, practising, waiting, and trusting that the robe, when it finally came, would fit the person the waiting had shaped.

The Waiting Room

Between the paper and the gown
there lived a quiet, patient year —
of forms refiled and stamps re—bought,
of hope kept warm through minor fear.

I learned that waiting, too, is work,
that patience is its own degree —
and every file stamped and closed
brought one step nearer, silently, to me.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Friend: 'Why do you look so calm before your enrolment interview?'

Candidate: 'Because after three years of viva exams, a Bar Council officer is the least scary place I have faced.'

सब्र एक फन है, जो हर वकील को आना चाहिए,

फैसला आने तक, खामोशी से लड़ना चाहिए!

— Patience is a craft every advocate must learn —

to fight in silence, until the verdict's turn.

Chapter 9 — The Silence of Kailash: Where Lex Monk Was Born

A mountain cannot be climbed, only walked around — and so, I discovered, can the law.

The Clock and the Mountain

For twenty-nine years I obeyed a clock,
Its hands my masters, its bell my law;
It told me when to count and sign,
But never what the counting was for.
Then came a road that thinned to wind,
And air too scarce for haste or pride,
A mountain no one may ascend —
So all of us walked it, side by side.
The monks lit lamps against the dark
And asked for nothing, taught me much;
The silence was not emptiness,
But a presence you could almost touch.
I came to ask what the black coat was for
And went home carrying a vow instead:
To walk beside the one who has no one
Till every word he speaks is heard and read.



Before the Mountain

Some journeys begin at a railway platform. Mine, I can see now, began at the time office of India Security Press, Nashik Road, where a young supervisor once looked up at a wall clock and let it become the measure of his life. For twenty-nine years the clock told me when to arrive, when to count, when to sign and when to go home. It never told me what any of it was for.

That was the man standing at the first page of this book: a forty-four-year-old with an admission form in his hand, a pandemic outside the window and a room inside him that had been locked for twenty years. In the chapters that followed I tried to tell the truth about what happened when he opened it.

I wrote about lecture halls that began as links on a screen, and about the strange new language of consideration, cognisable and void. I wrote about the night shifts that ended just in time for morning lectures, the moot court dock that shook under

a sweating beginner, and the corridors of the Nashik District Court, where I learned that ‘soon’ is a relative term.

I wrote about the jail, the police station, the High Court and the laboratory; about the morning of the results with yogurt and sugar at the door; and about the long wait between the degree and the licence, when I discovered that waiting is itself a profession.

By the summer of 2026 I possessed almost everything a new advocate is supposed to possess: the degree, the preparation, the patience and a family that had stopped being surprised by me. What I did not yet possess was an answer to a question that no examination had ever asked. Advocate for what? Advocate for whom?

The last step of putting my name on the rolls of the Bar Council was close, but the kind of advocate I wanted to be was still undecided, and I did not want to decide it in a hurry, in a crowded room, with a file under my arm.
So, from 23 June to 12 July 2026, I did something that looks, on paper, like the opposite of a career move. I went to the foot of Mount Kailash and walked around it.

My family did not ask why a man about to begin a profession would disappear into the Himalaya for twenty days. They asked whether I had packed enough woollens. My mother blessed me at the door, as she had blessed me on the day of my results, and I touched her feet. Nashik is a city that already knows what pilgrims look like — the Godavari ghats see them every day — and perhaps that is why it felt natural to become one.



The Road to the Door of the Mountain

The road to Kailash does not arrive; it thins. With every day the air gave up a little more of itself, the trees gave up their leaves and then their very existence, and the land opened into a pale, bare plateau under a sky so large that it made the watch on my wrist feel like a small, embarrassed thing. Villages became hamlets, hamlets became a few stone houses, and then there was only the road, the wind and the wide, dry silence that I would later learn to love.

I want to be careful about how I describe the mountain, because it belongs to more than one faith and no one of them owns it. For Hindus it is the abode of Shiva. For Tibetan Buddhists it is Kang Rinpoche, the Precious Jewel of Snow. For Jains it is Ashtapad, where the first Tirthankara attained liberation, and for the followers of the ancient Bon tradition it is the seat of their spiritual power.

Four traditions, four names, one mountain — and what struck me most was that on its slopes nobody was arguing about whose it was. Pilgrims from different faiths walked the same path, wearing different caps and murmuring different prayers, and nobody asked anybody for a certificate.

When the mountain finally appeared, I did not feel what I had expected to feel. I had imagined drama. What I felt instead was a quiet recognition, as if I were looking at something I had been carrying inside me for a very long time and had never seen from outside. It rose from the plateau like a great, simple, snow-dusted pyramid, with no ornament and no explanation. And nobody, I learned, is permitted to climb it. It stands unclimbed, by common reverence. A pilgrim may only go around it.

I stood at the foot with my breath short and my heart oddly steady, and a thought arrived that I did not try to chase away. The law, too, is a mountain that cannot be conquered. It can only be walked around — slowly, respectfully, again and again, from every side — by people who accept that they are small and that the thing they are circling is larger than any one of them.

The First Day: The Gate of Yama

The circuit, the parikrama, is about fifty-two kilometres long. It is walked clockwise by Hindus and Buddhists — the followers of Bon walk it the other way — and it is traditionally completed in about three days, crossing a pass at more than eighteen thousand feet. It is said that one circuit washes away the sins of a lifetime and that a hundred and eight of them lead to liberation. I did not count that high. I had enough trouble counting to one.

The path begins near a symbolic gate called Yama Dwar, the Gate of Yama, the Lord of Death. Pilgrims pass through it to mark the death of the old self before the walk can begin. I smiled when I first heard the name, because I recognised the idea at once. Somewhere in the winter of 2021, at the gates of Navajeevan Law College, I had passed through a gate of my own and left something behind, though I had not had the language to call it a death. The impostor who whispered in the lecture hall, and the supervisor who believed that life was something that happened to other people, had been dying a little at a time for five years. Now there was a gate with an actual name.



Walking through it felt both ceremonial and absurdly ordinary: a few steps, some stones, a flutter of prayer flags, and then the path simply continued. That, I suspect, is how most real endings feel. There is no thunder. You look back and notice that you are no longer where you were.

Then came the work. Altitude teaches humility faster than any professor I ever met. Every step demanded a negotiation with the lungs. A headache sat behind my eyes like an uninvited guest. My legs, which had carried me through night shifts and morning lectures for three years, informed me that those had been rehearsals. Around me the pilgrims were a procession of human variety: Indian families in woollen caps and borrowed jackets; Tibetan elders turning small hand-held prayer wheels with the unhurried rhythm of a lifetime's practice; and here and there someone doing the circuit by prostration — stretching the whole body on the ground, rising, stepping forward to where the fingertips had touched, and lying down again. Fifty-two kilometres, one body-length at a time.

I watched one such pilgrim for several minutes. He did not look tired in the way I felt tired. He looked occupied, entirely, with the next body-length. I thought of the first-year student who had panicked over five subjects at once and the second-year student who had dreaded the whole Constitution. Nobody had ever told me, in a lecture, what this man was showing me on a gravel path: that the way to cross a distance too large to imagine is to refuse to imagine it, and simply to do the next small, honest thing.

Prayer Wheels, Butter Lamps and the Monks

Many Buddhist monasteries stand along the route, some perched on cliffs as if the rock had grown them, some tucked into folds of the valley so quietly that you find them only when the smell of juniper smoke reaches you. I had not expected how often I would stop at one. At first, I stopped because I needed to rest. Soon I stopped because something in me wanted to.

A monastery, when you step in from that bright, bitter wind, is a different climate altogether. The air inside smelled of yak butter, incense and old wood. Rows of butter lamps burned with a low, steady, golden patience. Painted walls in deep reds, ochres and blues were crowded with deities and demons and mandalas, all of them looking remarkably unbothered by my arrival. A drum, somewhere, spoke softly; then came the low, layered murmur of chanting, like a river talking to itself in a language I did not know but understood perfectly well as sound. Outside, a line of prayer wheels waited along the wall, and each pilgrim who passed touched them in turn, setting them spinning clockwise with the flat of the hand. The mantra written inside them, Om Mani Padme Hum, turned a thousand times for every touch.

The monks, in their maroon and saffron robes, were not at all what a lifetime of films and calendars had prepared me for. They were not remote. They were shy, and funny, and practical. One offered me hot butter tea with a salty, slightly alarming flavour, and watched my face with open scientific interest as I tried to be polite. Another, who could not have been much older than twenty, laughed gently

at the way I dropped onto a bench, and made a small gesture that I understood to mean: breathe, you are not in a hurry.

We had hardly a common language. A few words of English, a few of Hindi, a good deal of pointing and smiling, and sometimes a younger monk translating for an older one with the proud, careful face of a boy reading out an important document. But I have been a Time Office Supervisor, a student at forty-four and a nervous mooter, and I can tell you that people understand a great deal when they are not pretending to understand more than they do. Being unable to talk made me, for the first time in years, a listener — the very thing I had written about in another chapter as the journey from hearing to listening. On that plateau it was no longer an exercise. It was the only available method.

I noticed the robes, of course. I am a man who has recently learned to respect clothes that mean something. At the end of my LL.B. I had understood that a black coat with two white bands is not a costume but a kind of promise: it announces to a stranger, before you speak, that you are bound by something. Looking at the maroon robes, it struck me that the monk and the advocate had been issued the same sort of garment, a uniform of a vow. One promises to step away from the world in order to serve it better. The other promises to enter the world's quarrels in order to bring something like peace to them. Neither is allowed to forget why the cloth is on his shoulders.

What the Monks Taught Me Without Teaching

I will not pretend to quote the monks. I am not a scholar of Buddhism, and my conversations were short, broken and mostly conducted through gesture. What I can honestly report is what I carried away, and I am aware that I may have understood some of it imperfectly. Four ideas, in particular, followed me down the mountain.

The first was impermanence. Everything in a monastery seems to say that nothing stays: butter lamps burn down and are refilled; sand mandalas are built grain by grain and then swept away; prayers printed on flags are given to the wind, which

shreds them and scatters them. For twenty-nine years I had lived by a clock that insisted on the opposite — that time was a ledger, that every hour was either counted or lost.

The monks seemed to hold time differently. It was not a ledger but a river, and the point was not to hoard it but to be awake while it passed. I thought of the statement of account I had tried to draw up at the end of my LL.B. and understood that I had left out its largest column: what I had given.

The second was compassion, which the monks seemed to treat not as a feeling but as a discipline, something to be practised daily like a musical instrument. I saw an older monk give his place near the stove to a shivering pilgrim and, without any ceremony, go and sit by the draught. I saw small kindnesses repeated — a cup passed, a blanket shared, a way pointed — until the place itself seemed to be built out of them. I remembered what I had written about the police station and the court corridor: that the law at its worst is a machine that processes people, and at its best is a hand held out to them. The monks did not discuss this. They simply lived it, cup by cup.

The third was right speech. I was told — or understood, or came to believe — that on the Buddhist path one of the steps is to speak only what is true, kind and useful, and to say nothing if what you have to say is none of those. I laughed when I thought of how many hours of law school had been spent learning to build the strongest case for a client, whether or not it was the most comfortable truth. And yet the more I thought about it, the more I saw that the advocates I admired had never been the loudest.

They had been the most exact. Their strength came from never saying a word they could not stand behind — the principle on which the ethics of my own profession rest, that an advocate is an officer of the court before he is a servant of his client. A monk would call it right speech. A judge calls it candour. It is the same discipline in two different robes.

The fourth was right livelihood — the idea that the way you earn your living is part of your moral life, not separate from it. I had been a salaried man for twenty-nine years, and for the first time I asked what a livelihood in the law would mean if it were done rightly. It could not be only about collecting fees. It could not be only about winning cases either, since an advocate who wins by deceiving the court has lost something larger. It would have to be a livelihood in which the person across the table — a farmer with a disputed land record, a widow with a pension file, a worker with a termination letter — was never treated as a source of income alone. Not charity. Just a profession with a conscience, practised in the plain daylight of the ordinary.

The Silence

What I had not been ready for was the silence.

I had thought that silence was simply the absence of noise, the thing you get when you switch off a television. On Kailash it was not an absence. It was a presence, large and attentive, with texture and weight. There was no network on my phone, so the small glowing rectangle that had become the first thing I reached for every morning turned into an inert piece of glass. There were no horns, no motors, no announcements. There was wind, and in the wind the dry, continuous whisper of prayer flags; there was the crunch of my own footsteps on loose stone; there was my own breath, loud and slightly ridiculous in the thin air. And between those sounds there was a stillness so complete that for the first few days I kept listening for what was missing.

In the evenings, after the walk, the pilgrims slept in simple lodgings, and sometimes I went out alone and stood in the cold. The sky there is not the sky of Nashik, which is a polite, diluted thing, dimmed by street lamps. It is crowded with stars to its very edges, so many that the dark seems to be the thing that is rare. Under that sky the mountain stood as a paler shape, huge and entirely silent, and I understood that people had been standing exactly here, in exactly this quiet, for a very long time, and that every one of them had been small.



I have spent most of the last five years in places defined by noise: a press floor with its machines; a lecture hall with its murmurs; a court corridor at ten in the morning, with its calling out of names, its clatter of files, and a clerk's voice announcing a matter that nobody could hear. Even the jail, which I had called the quietest place I had ever entered, has a silence that is held down, kept in by walls and by rules. In a courtroom silence is commanded: the cry of 'Silence!' is what the usher shouts when the judge enters, and the room obeys. On Kailash silence was not commanded. It was given. And a silence that is given does something that a silence that is ordered cannot do: it makes you listen to what you have been avoiding.

What I heard, in the end, was not mystical. It was small, specific and a little uncomfortable. I heard the people who had come to the Nashik District Court every morning for years, whom I had watched from the benches without ever fully listening: the old man holding a tattered file against his chest, the woman asking the clerk the same question three different ways, the young father who did not know whether his matter would be called before lunch.

I heard the quiet that falls on a person who has been told, for the fortieth time, 'next date'. I realised that the law I had spent three years learning to speak was, for most of the people it served, a foreign language that nobody had taught them, and that the first duty of an advocate was to translate.

This was the first real idea of Lex Monk. It did not arrive as a flash. It arrived as a patient, ordinary question that kept returning, like the wind: what would it mean to practise law as if the person in front of me had nobody else?

Dolma La: What I Left Behind

On the second day the path climbs to its highest point, a pass the pilgrims call Dolma La, a little above five thousand six hundred metres, where the air is barely willing to be breathed. It is the moment the whole circuit has been leading to, and it is a moment of ordeal. I remember my body as a very slow engine, each step a decision. I remember the surge of other pilgrims, strangers, urging each other on in three or four languages, somebody's hand under somebody else's elbow, a stranger pressing a sweet into my palm without a word. I remember the cold, which was not weather but a kind of fact.

And then, quite suddenly, the pass was there: a heap of stones, a tangle of coloured prayer flags snapping in the wind, and a crowd of exhausted people whose faces had all, briefly, become the same face. Here pilgrims leave small offerings — a lock of hair, a piece of clothing, a token of the old life — as a sign that they are leaving something of themselves on the mountain. I thought about what I had brought. I was carrying too many things: the clock, the fear of starting late, a quiet dread of being the oldest man in every room, the faint, stubborn voice that said I was an intruder in the profession I loved. I did not leave a cloth or a coin. I left those. I said to myself, not aloud, that I would go down the other side without them.

It sounds dramatic when I write it. It was not. It was a tired man standing on a pile of stones, breathing like a bellows, feeling slightly foolish and slightly free. But in my experience that is exactly the size of most turning points — small enough to be missed if you are not paying attention.



On the way down, the stories of Milarepa, the great Tibetan saint, are told, and one of them has stayed with me ever since. Milarepa, as the tradition tells it, began his life in anger. Wronged as a young man, he turned to black magic for revenge and caused great harm. Then, horrified by what he had done, he spent the rest of his life in discipline, meditation and compassion, and became one of the most beloved

figures in all of Tibetan Buddhism. A man who began in the dark, I thought, and ended in the light.

I could not stop turning that story over. What is the law, if not humanity's long effort to do what Milarepa did? To take the oldest impulse in us — the impulse to hit back, to destroy what has hurt us — and turn it into something that repairs? Before there were courts there was revenge. Before there were advocates there were feuds.

Every petition, every plaint, every cross-examination is at bottom a way of saying: do not strike him; bring your grievance here, and let us put the question into words. To be an advocate is to stand exactly where Milarepa stood, at the point where anger can become either violence or argument. And I had chosen a black coat. It occurred to me, with a kind of private amusement, that darkness, properly used, is not the enemy of light. It is the cloth on which light is written.

A Mountain Grants No Adjournments

On the second night, lying in a cold, crowded shelter, I composed an application in my head. In the Court of the Mountain. Application for adjournment. Respectfully showeth that the applicant is out of breath; that the applicant's knees have been in service for nearly fifty years without a day's leave; and that the applicant prays for a further date, preferably at sea level.



I knew, of course, what the order would be. A mountain does not grant adjournments. It does not accept affidavits of fatigue, does not entertain interim relief and does not care whether your counsel is senior or junior. It has a single rule

of procedure: the next step. Every advocate learns, sooner or later, that there are two kinds of court — the kind that will hear a plea of difficulty and the kind that will not — and that life is mostly the second kind.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

A fellow pilgrim, hearing that I was about to become an advocate, asked: ‘Then you must be used to asking for more time?’

‘Yes,’ I gasped. ‘But here the Judge is a mountain, and the next date is tomorrow.’

The pilgrims around me laughed, and then, because laughter at that altitude costs oxygen, they stopped laughing and sat very still, grinning at one another like conspirators. It was one of the happiest moments of the whole journey.

Eleven Chapters on One Mountain

Somewhere on the third day, with the plain in sight and my legs finally reconciled to my body, I realised that I had been rewriting this book as I walked. The parikrama had the same shape as my own story. In the Preface I had said that the black coat of an advocate is, in its own way, a monk's robe. I had said it as a metaphor. On Kailash it became a plain observation, and every chapter I had written seemed to find its place on the circuit.

The Decision (Chapter 1) was the gate. Every circuit begins with a decision that looks smaller than it is: a form filled in, a few steps through a gate, a morning at Navajeevan Law College when the sun felt different. Nobody has ever circled a mountain without first agreeing to start.

First Year (Chapter 2) was the first day's lesson in language. I could not pronounce half of what the monks said, just as I once mispronounced mens rea in a lecture hall, and as then, the embarrassment passed and the meaning stayed. Learning always begins with the humility of the mouth.

Second Year: The Grind (Chapter 3) was the long climb. The night shifts, the moot court dock, the ghosts of old friendships at a canteen table, the Desk Fourteen where my younger self sat waiting, the panch who taught two farmers to stop quarrelling over a stone: every one of them was a stretch of gravel on the way to the pass.

Final Year: Standing at the Edge (Chapter 4) was the pass itself, the thin air at the edge of everything. I had chosen that title long before I knew what an edge felt like at five thousand six hundred metres. The FIR that begins a criminal case, the plaint that begins a civil one, the long road from complaint to appeal: each was, as on the mountain, a path with no shortcuts.

Beyond the Classroom (Chapter 5) was the monasteries. The jail, the police station, the High Court bench, the laboratory and the daily district court had taught me that you cannot understand an institution from outside; you must walk in, sit down and

be quiet. The monastery halls taught the same lesson in a gentler key. The silence of the jail was held down by walls. The silence of the monasteries was held up by prayer.

Graduation (Chapter 6) was the descent and the warm cup waiting at the bottom. After every pass there is something warm. At home it had been yogurt and sugar, my mother's blessing and my sons' absurd mock courtroom. On the mountain it was butter tea in a stranger's hands. Both said the same thing: you were never alone on the way up.

The Metamorphosis of Mind and Justice (Chapter 7) was the circuit itself as a statement of account. I walked with a ledger in my head, what I came with and what I left with, and found the same entries I had recorded after my degree: from answers to questions, from hearing to listening, from patience as a trait to patience as a skill, from justice as outcome to justice as process.

The In-Between Years (Chapter 8) was the days of acclimatisation at high altitude, in which nothing seems to happen and everything is being prepared. Token No. 317 at the window and a slow, breathless wait on the plateau are the same event: the body and the mind are being made ready for a height they cannot yet manage.

Enrolment (Chapter 10) still lay ahead of me as I walked down the mountain: the black coat, the white bands, the signature in the register, the first morning in court. It would no longer be a costume, because I had now seen what a robe is when the person inside it means it. My wife, who once tied my neckbands, would have no idea that she was giving me more than a tutorial.

The Lex Monk: On Discipline and Solitude (Chapter 11) is where I wrote down, in plain words, what the mountain had asked of me, as vows, because a vow that is not written down is only a mood.

The Epilogue (Chapter 12) I could not have written without Kailash, because Kailash teaches the one lesson that no degree, licence or first victory can: the circuit does not end. The Letter to the Next Late Starter at the close of this book is really a letter from a man who has been around the mountain once and noticed that the path continues.

I came down understanding that the book I had been writing was never only the story of becoming an advocate. It was the story of circling something larger than myself, with humility, in the right direction.

The Decision After the Mountain

Coming back to India was like coming back to colour. The roads were loud, the phone buzzed, the air was thick enough to feel. For a few days I moved through Nashik as if I were still carrying the silence inside a glass, afraid to spill it. I did not announce anything. I washed the dust of the road off, sat with my family and listened to the ordinary noise of my own house.

Then, in those first days back, with the silence still ringing in me, the decision settled, not in a flash but the way the mountain itself had appeared: quietly, and then unmistakably. I decided to complete my enrolment as an advocate with the Bar Council of Maharashtra and Goa, and I will began to my practice as Lex Monk, fully dedicated to justice for every common man.

The working title of this book was once A Black Monk, after the coat. Kailash gave me the better name. Lex is the Latin word for law, the root of legal and legislate and legitimate. Monk is a person who has given his life to a vow. Put together, they described the only kind of advocate I was willing to become: one who does not renounce the world, but enters its quarrels with a monk's three habits, simplicity, service and silence.

And I knew who the common man was, because I had been sitting among them for three years. He is the farmer with a disputed seven-twelve extract and a brother's name that should not be on it. He is the widow who has been sent from one counter to another with the same pension file. He is the labourer holding a termination letter he cannot fully read, the pensioner with a bounced cheque, the woman standing at the police station counter and wondering whether anyone will register what she says. He is the man in the district court corridor, asking a clerk the same question three ways. Justice that depends on the thickness of a wallet is only a rumour of justice. I wanted to practise the other kind.

Lex Monk: One Name, Three Promises

I made the promises quietly, to myself and to the mountain, and I have tried to keep them in the daily detail of work.

Simplicity. I promised to speak to every client in a language he can keep. If a person leaves my room unable to explain to his family what I told him, then I have not advised him; I have only spoken near him. Simplicity also means honest fees, an honest office and an honest coat. A black coat is plain cloth. It should never become a way of looking more important than the person standing opposite.

Service. I promised that a part of my practice would always be for those who cannot pay: guidance, plain information about rights and procedure and, where the cause deserves it, representation without a fee. I promised to take the cause of the person nobody else will take on, and to remember that the file in front of me is someone's entire hope for the day, as that small cartoon from the district court once put it.

Silence. I promised to listen before I speak, and to keep what I hear. A client's confidence is the one thing in my profession that must never be repeated. Silence also means restraint. The rules of the Bar do not permit an advocate to advertise or solicit, and I am glad of it, because it matches the vow. The website that carries my name, www.lexmonk.in, is therefore not an advertisement but a lamp left burning in a window: a place where an ordinary person can find plain-language information, understand his rights and decide whether he needs an advocate at all.

I know how large these words are. I also know that the first test of a promise is a Monday morning with a long cause list, a tired client and an unsympathetic clerk. That is why I came down from the mountain wanting to write the promises into something I could not argue with later. The ten vows that appear in a later chapter of this book are what that wish became.

A Prayer for the Common Man

I go to the mountain not only to find the God,
I went to find a reason for the coat also.
The mountain gave me neither miracle nor sign —
only a silence wide enough to hold a question.
Who will stand beside the one who has no one?
Who will turn the law into a language he can keep?
Not the loudest voice, nor the longest list of wins —
only someone willing to walk around the same mountain,
one case at a time, clockwise, with respect.

ख़ामोश पहाड़ ने मुझे बस इतना सिखाया,
इंसाफ़ वही जो आख़िरी आदमी तक पहुँच पाया।

— The silent mountain taught me only this: justice is what reaches the last person in the line.

The Mountain I Did Not Climb

Mount Kailash has never been climbed, and I never expected to climb it. I walked around it, as every pilgrim does, and came home with no miracle to report. What I carry is plainer and, I think, more useful: a way of standing in the world.

That is how I mean to practise law. I will not conquer it, and I will not pretend to own it. I will go around the same mountain of human trouble, one case at a time, the way the pilgrims go, with a steady pace, a quiet mind and a hand ready for whoever stumbles beside me. When a client's trouble feels too big to imagine, I will refuse to imagine it, and do the next small, honest thing.

I have not thrown away the clock. I keep it now as pilgrims keep a stone from the path: not to measure the hours, but to remember the walk.

Chapter 10 — Enrolment: Becoming an Advocate (2026)

In 2026, the waiting ended. Enrolment with the Bar Council of Maharashtra and Goa transformed a law graduate into an Advocate — not merely a title, but a licence to stand, to speak, and to be heard where it matters most: before a court of law. The certificate of enrolment is a small document to hold and an enormous one to earn.

There is a particular silence in the moment an advocate first puts on the black coat and white band — not the silence of emptiness, but the silence of a promise being kept. Every argument yet to be made, every client yet to be helped, every judgment yet to be read suddenly became possible in a way that no textbook chapter had described.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Applicant: "Sir, I have brought every document."

Clerk: "Good. Now go and get the one you did not know existed."

This was not the end of learning — no advocate ever truly finishes learning — but it was the end of asking permission to learn. From this point onward, the classroom was the courtroom, and the professor was experience itself.

The Black Coat

I wore the black as monks wear robes,

not for the colour, but the vow —

of discipline in argument,

of truth pursued, no matter how.

The gown does not make silence easy,

nor does it promise every fight is won —

but standing here, I finally know

the journey of the student's done, the advocate's begun.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

New advocate, adjusting his band for the first time: 'How does this look?'

Senior: 'Perfect. Now remember, the band is white so the judge can see you're still nervous.'

काला कोट पहना, पर दिल में उजाला था,

यह सिर्फ वर्दी नहीं, एक वादा निभाया था!

— I wore the black coat, yet my heart held light —

this was not just a uniform, but a promise made right.

Chapter 11 — The Lex Monk: On Discipline and Solitude

Why “Lex Monk”?

Word	What it carries
Lex	Latin for “law”, the root of legal, legislate, legitimate
Monk	One who chooses discipline, silence and service over comfort
Black	The advocate’s coat, worn like a robe

A monk does not become a monk in a day. He becomes one by rising early, reading the same text, repeating the same discipline, year after year, until repetition turns into character. An advocate is made the same way. The law is learned by reading the same section until it stops being a section and becomes a habit of mind.

🤔 A Small Paradox

A monk seeks silence; an advocate speaks for a living. The resolution is that the lawyer who speaks best has done most of his work in silence: reading, drafting, waiting. The argument is the visible tip of a great deal of quiet.

A monk's discipline is invisible to those who only see the finished calm; an advocate's discipline is invisible to those who only see the finished argument. Behind both lies the same unglamorous truth: years of quiet, repeated effort that no one applauds until it suddenly matters.

A Monk’s Day and an Advocate’s Day

Hour	Monastery	Chambers and court
Dawn	Prayer and meditation	Reading the cause list and the file
Morning	Work and study	Court: waiting, arguing, adjourning
Afternoon	Service	Clients, drafting, research
Evening	Reflection	Revising tomorrow’s matters
Night	Silence	Family, and bare acts in the lamplight

The coat, worn daily, becomes something like a robe — a reminder that the person inside it has chosen a life of service to something larger than personal comfort: to justice, to a client's cause, to the slow and imperfect machinery of law that, nonetheless, is the best machinery humanity has built for settling its disputes without violence.

The Monk's Vow

Not every vow is spoken loud,
not every discipline wears a bell —
some vows are kept in silent rooms
where bare acts and long nights dwell.

I am no monk of mountain caves,
no saffron robe, no distant shrine —
my temple is the crowded court,
my scripture, every clause and line.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Junior advocate: 'Sir, people call lawyers sharks. Is that fair?'
Senior: 'Not at all — sharks don't have to draft their own bills.'

तन्हाई में भी एक इबादत होती है,
हर किताब, हर फ़ाइल में रियाज़त होती है!

— Even in solitude, there is a form of prayer —
in every book, every file, a discipline laid bare.

The Ten Vows of a Lex Monk

	Vow	In a sentence
1	**Preparation**	Read the file before you open your mouth
2	**Patience**	Wait well; the file will be called
3	**Truth**	Never mislead the court, even to win
4	**Listening**	The client's real story is under the first one
5	**Brevity**	Three precise sentences outweigh thirty loose ones
6	**Humility**	Every bench, every junior, every clerk teaches something
7	**Fairness**	Give the other side the hearing you would want
8	**Service**	Some help is owed, whether or not a fee follows
9	**Continuity**	Keep learning; no advocate ever finishes
10	**Silence**	Know when to stop speaking

Chapter 12 — Epilogue: The Road Ahead

Every book about a beginning must end honestly: this is not the end of the story, only the end of its first volume. The years at Navajeevan Law College, the examinations of Savitribai Phule Pune University, the long corridor between 2024 to 2026, and finally the enrolment with the Bar Council of Maharashtra and Goa — all of it was preparation, not arrival.

What lies ahead is the actual practice of law: the first case, the first client's trust placed carefully in new hands, the first small victory and the first hard lesson in loss. The black coat will grow familiar. The courtroom will grow less frightening. But the discipline that built the monk must remain, long after the robe has become comfortable.

If this journey has a single lesson worth carrying forward, it is this: the law rewards those who keep showing up — to the classroom, to the library, to the waiting room, and finally, to the court — quietly, patiently, and without needing applause for every step.

यह कहानी ख़त्म नहीं, बस एक मोड़ है नया,
हर अदालत में अब मेरा नाम भी लिखा जाएगा !

— This story does not end; it only turns a new bend —
in every courtroom now, my name too shall be penned.

😄 Courtroom Comic Relief

Someone asked the new advocate, "What's your specialisation?"
He smiled and said, ‘Currently, surviving.'

Beginning, Again

This is not the final page,
only the closing of one door;
the corridor of law goes on,
with cases, causes, always more.

I came as student, doubtful, small,
I leave this chapter, robed, aware —
that every ending in this life
is just a courtroom's opening prayer.

A Letter to the Next Late Starter

If you are reading this at forty, or forty—four, or fifty, and some part of you is still standing at a college gate that you believe you missed, let me tell you what three years and day / night shift taught me.

It is never too late, but it is also never easy. You will be the oldest person in the room and in a month, you will forget it. You will be tired in a way that nobody warns you about. You will doubt yourself at two in the morning, and again during a lecture, and again at the exam. The doubt is not a sign that you have made a mistake. It is the toll you pay for doing something that matters.

Start small. Buy one bare act. Sit in one court for one morning. Ask one question. The rest, I found, follows the way a river follows a slope: not quickly, but steadily, and almost without being asked.

Ten Questions for Anyone Beginning Late

1	Is my family with me, even if they are nervous?
2	Can I create two protected hours a day?
3	Have I checked the admission and eligibility rules myself?
4	Do I know what my work allows, and what I must negotiate?
5	Am I ready to be the slowest in the class for a semester?
6	Have I found one friend, of any age?
7	Will I sit in a real court before the first exam?
8	Can I afford the cost, including the waiting years?
9	What am I most afraid of, and what would I do if it happened?
10	Who will I thank at the end?

About the Author

Adv. Chandrakant K. Deshmukh completed his graduation in Economics in the University of Pune, also completed his post-graduation in Economics in the year 2002 as an external candidate in the University of Pune. He began studying law at forty—four, after twenty-nine years of work in the India Security Press.

The lockdown of the pandemic year gave him the restless time to act on it. Over the next three years he balanced his day and night duty at India Security Press, Nashik Road, with lectures, moots, field visits to a jail, a police station, a High Court bench and a forensic laboratory, and examinations at Navajeevan Law College, Nashik.

He enrolled as an advocate with the Bar Council of Maharashtra and Goa in 2026 and decided to start practice in the Nashik District Court and the Bombay High Court in civil, criminal, writ, labour, consumer and public—interest matters, through Lex Monk. In 2026 he also made the pilgrimage to Kailash Mansarovar.

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