

Alumna of the Month

As a science undergraduate who transitioned to a Master's degree in English Literature with an advanced language diploma in French from La Rochelle, France, Deepa found herself unconventional in her academic choices. As part of the founding batch of MPP at NLS, she felt at home among an interesting cohort of students under the stewardship of open-minded teachers. An imaginative coursework that encouraged anthropological fieldwork in rural Rajasthan, an internship at IIM Ahmedabad and a fully paid scholarship to study research methods at Beijing Normal University were among the best parts of the MPP course that anchored policy education in the real world. Deepa worked with South Asian Alliance for Poverty Eradication and co-authored the triennial poverty report (2016) that directly put to use the skill sets that MPP had nurtured in her.

Deepa was awarded the Cambridge Trust-Commonwealth shared scholarship to pursue an MPhil in Development Studies from the University of Cambridge. While taking courses under renowned scholars such as Professors Ha-Joon Chang, Shailaja Fennel and Graham Denyer Willis, she was also the founding research director of Cambridge Development Initiative that worked in Tanzania. As a member of Gonville & Caius, the fourth oldest college and alma mater of Stephen Hawking, she was an active member of the graduate student union and the prestigious May Ball of Trinity College and these experiences made Cambridge unforgettable.

After Cambridge, Deepa worked as an alumni advisor to the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission. During this time, she also collaborated with a consortium of researchers on how technology was transforming labour rights. This exploration resulted in the publication of the two theoretical papers 'Job Polarisation in India: Structural Causes and Policy Implications' in the *Indian Journal of Labour Studies* and 'Digital Workers, Urban Vectors, and New Economies' in *South Atlantic Quarterly*. Deepa's team also won the first prize in the special issue competition at the *Citizenship Studies* journal in which her research article on Covid-19 and citizenship is forthcoming.

Deepa will begin her doctoral research at the Industrial and Labor Relations School, Cornell University in the fall of 2022 to explore the eroding rights of labour in the gig economy and digital platforms. As a first generation college-goer, Deepa owes her academic career entirely to great teachers and competitive classmates. Without the tough love of her teachers and the friendly rivalry of her peers, her academic career would have been a tad less productive and far less interesting.



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Master's in Public Policy '16