

## Statement of Purpose

*“The questions are always more important than the answers”* these poignant words of the HCI pioneer Professor Randy Pausch from ‘The last Lecture’ instilled the fervor in me to be an integral part of a field so innovative. The uncharted realm of the blend of design, technology and psychology intrigued me to explore the creative frontiers of my life with intent to significantly contribute to society, so constant in a state of flux. Spellbound by the power of design in technology, I aspired to be the contributor to its advancement. My intense curiosity pertaining to the impact of different designs of a product on the user’s experience instills the confidence in me as a future contributor for a breakthrough design. To accomplish this ambition, I wish to embark on an exhilarating journey and delve deep into the enigma of interaction design by pursuing Masters in Human Computer Interaction (HCI) from an institute of international repute.

Penchant for Science and Mathematics resulted in consistent academic grades at school that further culminated into Bachelor of Technology in Information Technology from a reputed autonomous institution- Walchand College of Engineering, Sangli. I could consolidate my fundamentals due to the extensive curriculum. To obtain a better understanding of the theoretical concepts, I invested myself in labs that helped in conceptualizing and shaping my ideas. I was involved in numerous academic projects- a multiplayer ping pong game, an interactive flash animation of ‘Working of a Compiler’, a web based Q&A portal for which I designed and developed the User Interface, an open source code performance monitoring tool wherein I was responsible for the development of its web based performance dashboard. As a part of the final year project engagement, I led a team of three on a project titled **‘Performance optimization of PETSc modules using CUDA libraries’**. By analyzing the potential areas of performance optimization in PETSc, a scientific computing library, I contributed in optimizing the performance of its modules by writing parallel routines using CUDA libraries. Involvement in diversified projects gave me a panoramic view of technological avenues and shaped my thinking with a more pragmatic approach.

I excelled in academics and started to gain tremendously from the courses. Besides academics, I was also involved in extracurricular activities. An exciting and learning phase at the college had been my experience as the **Club Service Director (CSD)** of the PACE- Personality Advancement Circle of Engineers club for consecutive three years. I was responsible for designing, hosting and leading the club services- an interactive session involving presentations, communication exercises, discussion, debates, enactments, JAMs, etc. I also availed the opportunity as a **Chairperson** to this club for a year, organizing technical and managerial activities and seminars. I could also awaken to my social responsibility by making humble contributions to the underprivileged segment of society by volunteering to teach the poor and differently abled children at an NGO named ‘Palavi’. While these activities were both educational and enjoyable, they helped me evolve into a dynamic personality and also provided me with a unique experience in the basics of communication against the backdrop of emotional and physical challenge.

My professional journey was initiated at IIT Bombay where I was appointed as a **Junior Research Fellow** to work on performance optimization of benchmarking problems in the area of scientific computing, at the High Performance Computing Lab. It was a challenging experience where I learnt research methodologies from distinguished faculty and sharpened my analytical and programming skills. Although I was fascinated by the power of technology, I was still in search of its blend with design, which intrigued me more. My hunt got a definite path when my roommate, a Master of Design student at IIT Bombay, enlightened me about the discipline of Human Computer Interaction and Design. Long hours of fruitful dialogues on the blend of technology, design and psychology, helped me explore my creative caliber and I realized the need to venture into this fascinating field. I started reading more on Design and HCI. It was an epiphany to discover something all knew but very less really cared about. From there on my quest to explore this field was initiated.

I acquired additional information and committed myself to learning everything I could about design and HCI through various resources including online courses, books, blogs, TED talks, and practicum through attending UX meetups. I took a free online course on HCI at **www.coursera.org** tutored by Scott Klemmer. It taught me the process of Design thinking which involved Need finding, Rapid Prototyping, Heuristic Evaluation, and Information Design. As an assignment to design a product, I designed an app named 'Pixconic' that would enable users to learn words using their visual memory and mnemonic techniques. It was highly appreciated and graded well by the peers. The discovery of my creative caliber coupled with the technical and communication skills gave me the confidence to enter into this innovative field of HCI.

Soon I was absorbed as a Systems Engineer Trainee by **Infosys Limited** and underwent a four months comprehensive training program at the Center of Excellence, Infosys Mysore campus. As an extra-curricular task, I also contributed to the design of an online magazine Gurukul- Movies edition. My prior design knowledge aided me in incorporating a user centered approach in creating the website interface. I was further selected to work on a **Voice Enabled Virtual Assistant** project in the R&D division of Infosys. The assistant built on the foundation of Natural Language Processing (NLP) principles was capable of listening, interpreting and reacting aptly to the Insurance domain questions. I contributed to the design and development of its activity diagrams and user interaction flows for different discourse modules. My diligence, focus and sincerity helped me excel at work and promoted me to Senior Systems Engineer. I got an opportunity to work in a partnership venture of **Infosys and The Goldman Sachs group Inc.** on various client billing projects. As a software engineer, I was responsible for requirements gathering, design and development of software built for processing of newly introduced funds, invoice generation, daily accounts processing, and operations dashboard. The involvement in various academic and professional projects have taught me team dynamics, and helped me gain managerial and leadership skills. I acquired a proactive forward looking approach, adhered to stringent deadlines and developed effective interpersonal relationships as well as polished my communication skills.

At this crucial juncture of my life I wish to explore the frontiers of my knowledge further. I aspire to become a **Product Designer** who can empathize with the user requirements, translate them into clean and simple designs that not only make the product usable but also provide the

users with a delightful experience. To fulfill this objective, I wish to enroll into the Masters Program in Human Computer Interaction from the highly acclaimed University of **Rochester Institute of Technology**.

The MS program will help me understand the subject as a discipline and will enable me to have a better understanding of complex problem solving using design thinking and HCI methodologies. The cognitive aspects of organization and representation of information with a strong CS background could help me create efficient information architectures and effective user interactive designs. The state-of-the-art facilities to explore and grow, distinguished faculty and enriching campus experience will help me gain theoretical understanding, an in-depth idea of practical approaches and research skills required to develop an expertise in the core areas. I'm particularly interested in the concentration of **Smart device application design and development** which would help me design effective user interactions in mobile devices for educational tools. Through this professional degree I aim to contribute significantly to the emerging design trends in the software industry, and also create a cost effective and easily available educational tool that would benefit the underprivileged who aspire to learn.

I believe that I possess the motivation, the intellectual ability and the preparation to set out on this odyssey that also entails arduous and rigorous measures to do justice to the demanding Masters program offered by your prestigious University. I shall strive in earnest to contribute to the University's culture of excellence.



**Program: M.S- Human Computer Interaction**