STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Columbia University - Engineering Achievers in Graduate Education
Bhagawat Chapagain   First Generation Computer Science Student @ Stevens

As a Nepali American, my family's history is deeply rooted in the resilience of the Lhotshampa community in southern Bhutan. This community, primarily of Nepali origin, endured ethnic cleansing during the late 20th century due to Bhutan's exclusionary policies. Forced to flee, my family found refuge in United Nations-designated camps in southeastern Nepal, where we lived for eighteen years before being offered asylum in the United States through the International Migration Organization in 2009.

This journey profoundly shaped my understanding of the transformative role of education and organizations like the UN in creating opportunities my parents could only dream of. Motivated by this realization, I aspire to achieve the pinnacle of academic excellence through a PhD in Data Science. My goal is to conduct research that amplifies the stories of underserved refugees and leverages data to support sustainable futures for new Americans.

Why Especially _EngAGE?_ _EngAGE_ represents the first step in this journey, aligning with my commitment to uplifting first-generation immigrants striving for brighter futures. As an asylee, I deeply resonate with the program's mission to support academics from diverse geographic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. I want to leverage the _EngAGE_ experience to further a career in telling the stories of underprivileged and underrepresented communities enduring poverty or oppressive regimes—challenges I have personally experienced. _EngAGE_'s dedication to diverse first-generation voices will guide my future pursuits to contribute ethically and responsibly to advancements through Data Science and AI.