

## **Personal History Statement**

Throughout my academic journey, I have learned to be persistent and adaptable while also understanding the importance of different perspectives. As a high school student in Delhi, I aspired to pursue a Bachelor's degree abroad. I worked diligently, scoring well on examinations like the SAT and IELTS, earning admissions and scholarships from prestigious international universities. The prospect of studying abroad filled me with excitement and anticipation for the diverse experiences and world-class education. However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 prompted apprehension within my family about the feasibility of my international pursuit during such uncertain times. Compounding this, many universities transitioned to online learning, which seemed incongruent with the substantial financial investment associated with studying remotely. Consequently, I made the difficult decision to stay in India for my undergraduate studies. This choice, while necessary, was initially heartbreaking as it meant letting go of my long-held dreams of an international education.

This unexpected turn of events led me to pursue my undergraduate studies in India, a path I hadn't initially prepared for. As my original plans were focused on studying abroad, I hadn't appeared for the national entrance exams typically required for admission to top-tier Indian institutions. Consequently, I enrolled in an institution that, while not my initial choice, became a platform for significant personal and academic growth. This experience, though different from my original plans, taught me valuable lessons in adaptability and resourcefulness – skills that I believe will be invaluable in my graduate studies and future career. From the outset, I was determined to make the most of my circumstances, refusing to let the change in plans hinder my growth and learning. I proactively sought out online courses, internships, and research opportunities to supplement my formal education. This self-driven approach led me to publish two research papers, develop innovative projects like a Dermatology Image Recognition tool, and secure internships at companies such as Kubikk Cloud Technologies, Vector3 Digital Tech, and IIIT Delhi. These experiences not only enhanced my technical skills but also taught me the importance of perseverance and initiative in achieving academic and professional goals.

Perhaps the most profound aspect of my undergraduate experience was the exposure to a student body with varied backgrounds, vastly different from my previous educational environment. Coming from a private English-speaking school, I initially held preconceived notions about my peers from different socio-economic backgrounds and educational systems. I hesitated to engage with students from government schools or Hindi-medium institutions, harboring a misguided sense of superiority based on my background. However, as I collaborated with classmates from various states and linguistic backgrounds, my perspective underwent a significant transformation. I vividly remember a group project where a teammate from a rural background in Bihar demonstrated exceptional problem-solving skills, approaching our task with a unique perspective that led to an innovative solution. This experience was eye-opening, challenging my initial biases and teaching me the value of diverse viewpoints in problem-solving. I learned that brilliance and capability are not confined to any particular background. This realization was humbling and enlightening, which taught me the value of varied perspectives in fostering innovation and comprehensive problem-solving in computer science. It made me reflect on my own prejudices and motivated me to actively seek out diverse viewpoints in both academic and personal settings.

My role as Vice Chairperson of the GeeksForGeeks student chapter in my college further honed my leadership skills and reinforced the importance of inclusivity. Managing a team of eight members with diverse backgrounds and skill sets, I learned to appreciate and utilize individual strengths. Organizing various events, from coding competitions to workshops on emerging technologies, taught me how to create inclusive environments where everyone could contribute and learn. For instance, when organizing a hackathon, I ensured that teams were diverse in terms of skills and backgrounds, leading to more creative and comprehensive solutions. These experiences have prepared me to

contribute positively to Purdue's diverse academic community, where I look forward to collaborating with and learning from peers and faculty from various backgrounds and research interests.

The challenges I've faced have shaped me into a resilient, open-minded, and resourceful individual, ready to contribute to Purdue's diverse academic community. My journey has taught me that true excellence stems from collaboration across diverse backgrounds, adaptability to unexpected challenges, and a persistent approach to learning and innovation. As I look forward to graduate studies at Purdue, I'm excited to bring not only my technical skills and research experience but also my cultural sensitivity and commitment to fostering an inclusive environment. I'm eager to engage in cross-disciplinary research, confident that my experiences have prepared me to collaborate effectively in Purdue's dynamic setting. At Purdue, I aspire to grow both as a STEM professional and a global citizen, contributing to a vibrant community that pushes the boundaries of innovation in our interconnected world.