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From MGGE to IIT Madras: My Journey in Civil Engineering

Every journey has its own pace, and mine has certainly not been a straight line. Looking back, what once felt like delays and uncertainties have become some of the experiences that shaped me the most.

I completed my B.Tech. in Civil Engineering from Mahatma Gandhi Government Engineering College (MGGE), Jeori, Himachal Pradesh, in 2019. From an early stage in my academic journey, I developed a strong interest in research and a curiosity to understand the science and engineering behind the problems we encounter in the built environment. This interest gradually motivated me to pursue higher studies and explore opportunities where I could contribute through research and innovation.

After completing my B.Tech., I had a one-year gap before pursuing my Masters. At that time, the gap felt like a setback and made me question whether I was progressing at the same pace as my peers. I eventually joined Dr. B. R. Ambedkar National Institute of Technology, Jalandhar, for my Masters in Structural and Construction Engineering, which I completed in 2022. Another six-month gap followed before I began my doctoral journey. These periods of uncertainty taught me an important lesson: a different timeline does not mean a lesser journey.

In January 2023, I joined the Indian Institute of Technology Madras as a Ph.D. scholar in Building Technology, Construction Materials and Management. This was a significant milestone in my journey. Moving from a state government engineering college to an institution like IIT Madras was not simply an academic transition; it was a reminder that consistent effort, patience, and perseverance can open doors that may once have seemed distant.

One of the most rewarding milestones of my Ph.D. journey came in 2026, when I was selected for the International Immersion Experience (IIE) Award by IIT Madras. Through this award, I had the opportunity to visit Clarkson University, USA, as an exchange research scholar during June–July 2026. The experience was much more than an international visit. It gave me the opportunity to work in a new research environment, interact with faculty and researchers from another institution, learn different approaches to research, and experience academic collaboration across countries. Most importantly, it gave me greater confidence in my abilities as a researcher and broadened my perspective on the possibilities within an academic and research career.

I am still pursuing my Ph.D. at IIT Madras, and my journey is far from complete. Looking ahead, I aspire to build a career in academia and research, where I can continue learning, contribute meaningful research to the field of civil and construction engineering, and hopefully inspire and mentor future generations of engineers and researchers.

To the students of my alma mater, I would like to say: do not let a gap, a rejection, a slow start, or a different timeline define your potential. Your journey may look different from everyone else's, but that does not mean you are falling behind. Keep learning, keep improving, and most importantly, keep believing in you and the possibilities ahead. My journey is still being written, and there is much more that I hope to achieve. But if my experience can offer one message to the students who are beginning their own journeys, it would be this: your starting point may shape your journey, but it does not have to define your destination.