



# A Small Detour A Bigger Destination!

*Some journeys begin in familiar corridors, over lunch-break laughter and plates of SBS rajma chawal.*

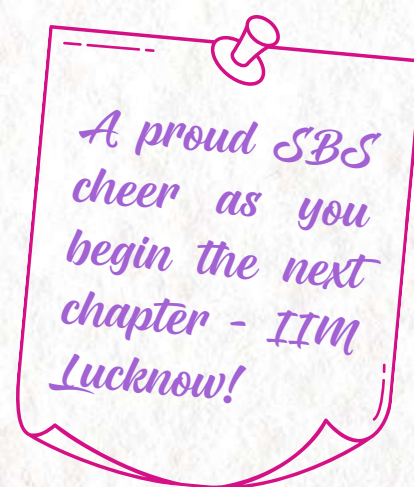
Keya's path then wandered through CA, McKinsey & Company and now IIM Lucknow - not always straight, but full of grit, pauses, pivots and one steady thread running through it all: resilience.

## 01

### **What does your life look like at the moment?**

I am at an exciting turning point. I have recently wrapped up my role as a Senior Finance Analyst in the Corporate Tax team at McKinsey & Company, where I worked on tax compliance, reporting and process improvement across global teams.

My next chapter begins at IIM Lucknow this June, where I will join the MBA PGP programme as part of the Class of 2028. I am currently in Noida and will soon move to Lucknow, ready to learn, grow and build a wider understanding of business and leadership.



## 02

### **How did your journey unfold after SBS?**

After SBS, I took on two demanding tracks together - B.Com. (Hons.) at Delhi University and Chartered Accountancy. It was intense, but it taught me discipline, time management and persistence early on. My CA journey began with an articleship at Walker Chandiok, followed by a full-time audit role. In January 2024, I joined McKinsey & Company's Corporate Tax team, where working across global processes deepened my understanding of finance, collaboration and adaptability.

### 03 What changed your idea of success?

CA Final results in May 2022. After clearing every stage until then, I expected things to go my way, but I could not clear either group. It was highly disappointing, and more challenging owing to personal emotional stress I was enduring. But it taught me that effort matters, but strategy matters just as much - making me pause, rethink and return sharper.

### 04 What helped you bounce back?

I stopped trying to bulldoze through the setback and changed the game plan. Instead of attempting both CA Final groups together, I put my energy into Group 1, and cleared it. Then came my first solo trip to Dubai, which became more than a holiday. It gave me space, confidence and a reset. I returned sharper, took on Group 2, and completed my CA. Lesson learnt: sometimes, the comeback needs a better strategy.

## Keya Palorkar, Class of '18

### 05 What SBS memories still make you smile?

Rajma chawal in the dining hall - no contest! It is the kind of simple memory that stays. I also miss walking through the corridors with friends, talking about everything and nothing. Those ordinary break-time conversations became the memories I carry most fondly.

### 06 What would you tell students at SBS today?

Your school grades do not define your future success. Academics matter, but they are only one part of the journey. Curiosity, resilience, consistency and the willingness to learn from setbacks matter just as much. There is no single path to success - just keep growing with consistency and courage.

### 07 What is one passion from school you still carry?

Competitive tennis. I miss the rhythm of the court - the rallies, discipline and quiet self-belief it built. It taught me to stay focused, recover after a point, and carry confidence well beyond the game.

### Quick Takeaways

A hobby that stayed: Racquet sports - badminton and, more recently, pickleball.  
One SBS value carried into life: Resilience.