

2025



Annual Report

CENTRE FOR GENDER AND POLITICS



contact@cgapsouthasia.org
www.cgapsouthasia.org
www.womenforpolitics.com

A Message From Us



CGAP is pronounced 'see-gap' for a reason: to invite all of us to see the gap in research, and see the gap in how gender and politics in South Asia are portrayed. Five years in, what you will read in this report is not just a list of projects, but the collective work of volunteers, advisors and friends who chose to notice that gap and do something about it.

This year, our community helped launch a first-of-its-kind Parliamentary Readiness Report, deepen conversations on digital pathways for women political leaders, and keep series like Worth Asking and Beyond Victims alive with new stories from across the region. Alongside jobs, studies, caregiving and everything else life demands, you researched, edited, interviewed, organised events and showed up to build a more gender-equal political imagination for South Asia.

There were limits too; time, language barriers, funding and access meant some interviews we wanted to do or stories we hoped to publish had to wait, but each constraint sharpened our focus on what only CGAP's volunteer-driven community can uniquely offer. As co-founders, we are proudest not of the number of outputs, but of the care, rigour and courage you brought to each one.

If you see yourself in these pages and want to do more, there is always room to join in: by volunteering, sharing leads to women leaders whom we can spotlight, connecting us to partners, or supporting CGAP's work in other ways. Thank you for being here, for seeing the gap with us, and for helping to imagine what South Asian politics can look like when more of us are in the room.

*Best regards
Sugandha & Akhil*

About Us



Over the past 5 years, the Centre for Gender And Politics South Asia (CGAP) has been dedicated to cultivating political role models across the region. Our goal is to inspire aspiring politicians and the global community to fundamentally rethink gender in the South Asian political landscape.

Our core focus is two-fold: first, to raise regional and global awareness of successful women's leadership and men's allyship in South Asian electoral politics. Second, we aim to connect stakeholders, fostering partnerships to advance gender equality within South Asian political spaces.

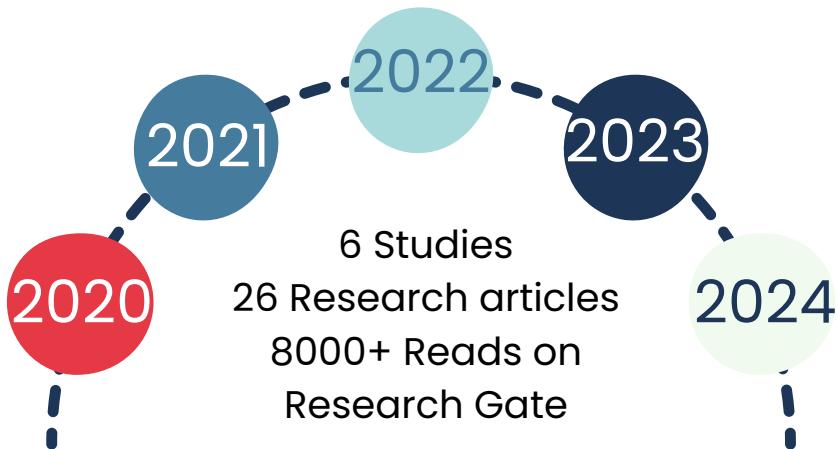
This mission has been powered by project managers, a passionate community of friends and volunteers who worked tirelessly. Together, we drive research projects, publish newsletters, curate roundtables and mixers, and represent CGAP at various events to spread our vision around the globe. Along this journey, we have been inspired by and have interviewed a diverse array of political leaders, and have also partnered with, and drawn passion from leaders in the non-profit, industrial, scholarly, and academic sectors.

We are proud to present this year's projects, which are a testament to the dedication of the entire CGAP community, friends, and family.

Projects



Research Projects



Parliamentary Readiness Report

First-ever comprehensive, peer-reviewed study critically identifying strategic opportunities to position India as the best parliament globally, setting a new standard for gender inclusivity and to welcome an incoming cohort of 33% or more women MPs.

2025

Digital Pathways: Strengthening Women's Political Leadership in South Asia

This research brief explores how digital technologies are transforming women's political engagement in South Asia, presenting both opportunities and challenges.

Read our Research

Awareness Projects

Worth Asking

From our first year in operation amidst the pandemic, our flagship project Beyond Victims has been dedicated to telling stories of women in politics across South Asia, shifting the lens from victimhood to leadership. Since then, we have published 29 stories of women in politics from Afghanistan, 25 from Bangladesh, 19 from Bhutan, 72 from India, 17 from Maldives, 33 from Nepal, 31 from Pakistan and 28 from Sri Lanka.



A group of enthusiastic volunteer teams researched and drafted stories of 36 women leaders, carrying forward our project goal of breaking the “victim” image of South Asian women, both within the region and globally.

2025

This year, we published 6 stories from Afghanistan, 5 from Bangladesh, 4 from Bhutan, 5 from India, 6 from Nepal, 5 from Pakistan and 5 from Sri Lanka. While we have not yet been able to document the work of women in politics from Maldives due to language barriers and limited ground access, we continue to actively look for women who are working boldly across the country, whose stories remain unseen and unhighlighted.

[Click here to read their journeys](#)

Beyond Victims

Since its inception, the Worth Asking series has published 35 interviews with political leaders across South Asia, documenting women's career journeys, motivations and strategies to overcome gendered barriers so that women political aspirants can see and learn from these role models. The series has also featured men in politics who speak about allyship, with the aim of inspiring men aspirants to become role models for gender-inclusive politics.



2025

In 2025, CGAP conducted four interviews, with a fifth scheduled, and continued to prioritise questions that avoid sexist portrayals of women in politics. This year's interviews include Bhutanese politician Lily Wangchuk, Sri Lankan Deputy Minister of Mass Media Kaushalya Ariyaratne, a GenZ politician in the making and someone from our very own CGAP community, Eeshna Gupta and village head Neeru Yaadav, who is breaking barriers in local governance.

While previous years saw a higher number of interviews, capacity constraints meant limiting the 2025 series to five conversations; readers who wish to support the continuation and expansion of Worth Asking can do so by volunteering, connecting CGAP to potential interviewees or contributing financially. Please visit cgapsouthasia.org/donate for further details.

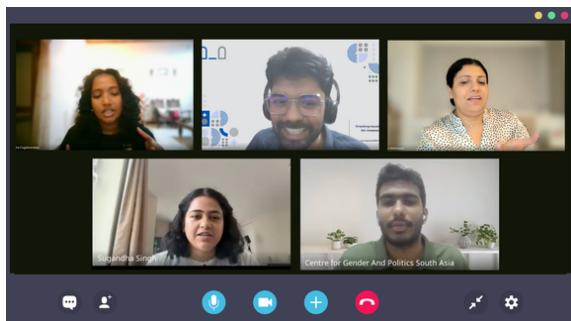
Click here to read the interviews

Building Connections and Convening



Dialogues, Events and Collabs

Our focus remained on developing a regional platform for researchers and academics specializing in gender and politics in South Asia. Additionally, we organised a hackathon to encourage young students to engage with our mission.



Roundtable on Technology and Women's Political Participation

As digital spaces reshape democratic engagement, women leaders in South Asia face both unprecedented opportunities and systemic threats. This CGAP roundtable convened practitioners and researchers in South Asia to explore how technology facilitates and hinders gender-inclusive political participation in the region.

You can read the proceedings [here](#).

Participants:

Jeehan Mahmood, Vice-Chairperson of The Maldives Policy Thinktank and a former Parliamentarian

Saritha Irugalbandara, a Sri Lankan queer-feminist researcher and former Head of Programmes at Hashtag Generation

Himanshu Panday, a digital anthropologist and co-founder of Dignity in Difference (DiD) in India

Pitch 4 Her: Empowering Women in Politics Through Technology

In collaboration with the Women in Leadership Conclave 2025, we hosted the “Pitch 4 Her: Empowering Women in Politics Through Technology” competition at GNITS, Hyderabad, providing a dynamic platform for young innovators to address gender gaps in political participation through tech-first solutions.

Participants enthusiastically presented impactful ideas across three core themes—online safety, campaign strategies, and political literacy for women in politics



Panel of judges:

Dr. Sinjini Bhattacharya, Assistant Professor, St. Francis College for Women, Hyderabad, India

Priyanka Kosaraju, Product Manager, Microsoft

Rajeev Agur, Policy Manager at Amazon Web Services

Gender x Policy Mixers

This year, we kicked off an initiative to bring together gender and policy experts and enthusiasts. In partnership with the World Economic Forum's Global Shapers Hyderabad Chapter, we held our inaugural mixer. It was an honor to be surrounded by such a diverse and talented assembly of policy professionals, gender advocates, and passionate enthusiasts.



Gender x Politics Mixer in Hyderabad, India

In collaboration with the World Economic Forum's Global Shapers Hyderabad Chapter, we hosted our first ever mixer. It was a privilege to be in the company of such a diverse and talented group of policy professionals, gender advocates, and passionate enthusiasts

Gender x Policy Mixer in Colombo, Sri Lanka

In collaboration with Social Impact Forum (SIF), we hosted the second edition of the mixer where 40+ youth researchers and young professionals from Colombo joined us to meet new people, share ideas, and engage in the discourse about gender equality in public policy, and politics.



Recognition



AI for Good Innovate for Impact Award

Our efforts gained international recognition when the case study, ***AI-Powered GaP Repository***, was awarded the AI for Good Innovate for Impact Award by the International Telecommunication Union. This accolade highlights the use case's potential in democratizing access to political knowledge for young women in South Asia.

Read the Innovate for Impact report released at the AI for Impact Summit held in Geneva in May 2025 [here](#).

ITU Publications

International Telecommunication Union
Telecommunication Standardization Sector



Our Colombo Mixer got the news coverage!



Discussing gender and policy

Centre for Gender and Politics and Social Impact Forum hosted mixer on 11 June



Social Impact Forum founders
Sahithyan Ganeshanathan and
Danya Maseearanghe

The Centre for Gender and Politics (CGAP) and the Social Impact Forum (SIF) recently hosted a Gender and Policy Mixer, where 27 participants came together to discuss gender and policy, the work of CGAP and SIF, and why work in the

field of gender and policy matters. The event took place on 11 June in Colombo 6.

The mixer commenced with 'Human Bingo' as an ice breaker, where participants were provided a list of items or qualities to find

in the room, but instead of physical items, they were human characteristics. Breakout sessions followed, where participants were able to connect with others from similar professional backgrounds, discuss among interdisciplinary groups, and reflect on their experience at the event.

The Gender and Policy Mixer was the first of many

planned by CGAP and SIF and aimed to create a dynamic space for knowledge exchange and networking among Colombo's gender equality advocates, political researchers, consultants, and students.

The event facilitated meaningful connections and fostered collaborations that could strengthen research and advocacy for women's leadership in politics and public policy, while at the same time promoting allyship for women leaders amongst men, boys, and gender diverse communities.

CGAP is a volunteer-led think tank focused on promoting gender inclusion in politics. Founded in 2020, CGAP has mobilised over 130 volunteers across 14 countries to produce research, curate success stories, and convene dialogues about women's political leadership.

Meanwhile, SIF is a movement built by and for young professionals in Sri Lanka who are passionate about driving positive social change. Their mission is to nurture a community of social pioneers who engage critically, lead boldly, and champion inclusive, sustainable solutions for Sri Lanka's future.

*The Daily Morning
(Sri Lanka), June 18,
2025*

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20 June 2025



UNESCO's GRO
Centre (Iceland)

Onwards and Upwards



In 2026, we want to focus on the most impactful work by evaluating our initiatives, build sustainable initiatives by establishing long-term grassroots partnerships. We want to bridge the gap on research on this topic by building our GAP repository and, by bringing back our essay style publications and collaborating with researchers and scholars. We want to continue bringing experts and enthusiasts together with more mixers around the globe.

While we continue to run as a volunteer think tank, we explore ways to raise funds in the form of donations to secure and sustain resources that could help in scaling and deepening our work. We acquired relevant income tax approvals to receive donations that are exempted from tax under Indian law. Indian citizens can now donate and support our work and claim tax exemption on their charity.

Registration and Tax Compliances:

Centre for Gender And Politics (CGAP) is registered as CGAP Foundation, a non-profit company under Indian Companies Act.

More details are [here](#).

Email: contact@cgapsouthasia.org for any queries

To donate online, click below



Join our community of 5000+ gender and politics enthusiasts



Report compiled by Akhil and Sugandha

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