

Women
4 Ethical



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SOUTH ASIA CHAPTER

IMPACT AND ACTIVITIES 2025



WORDS FROM THE Co-Chairs



Ms. Eunsong Kim
UNESCO Regional Office
for South Asia

The Women for Ethical AI (W4EAI) South Asia Chapter was established to ensure that women's voices, perspectives, and lived experiences are central to how AI is shaped across the region. Through ongoing engagement with partners from government, academia, civil society, and industry, one message has emerged clearly: AI cannot reach its full potential if it reinforces existing inequalities. It is therefore critical that AI systems are designed and deployed in ways that do not exacerbate vulnerabilities but instead promote equity and inclusion. This booklet highlights the collective efforts and impact of the Network, bringing together dialogues, partnerships, research, and member-led initiatives that work to address gaps in representation, access, and decision-making. As the Network continues to grow across South Asia, we remain committed to fostering cross-sector collaboration, evidence-informed action, and sustained engagement so that AI advances justice, dignity, and opportunity for all.

Ms. Eunsong Kim, Co-Chair, Women for Ethical AI South Asia Chapter & Programme Specialist and Chief of Section, Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO Regional Office for South Asia, New Delhi



Dr. Bhavani Rao
UNESCO Chair on Gender Equality and
Women's Empowerment, Amrita University

"Technology is a good servant, but a dangerous master" - Amma

Artificial Intelligence is, as any technology is, an amplifier. It amplifies the values, priorities, and power structures embedded in the data that is used to design, train and deploy it. South Asia houses a very large population, characterized by immense diversity, entrenched inequalities, as well as extraordinary resilience. This makes the stakes of ethical AI very significant. Technologies introduced in the name of efficiency or scale can either exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, create new ones or instead can become the tools of justice, equity, sustainable development and collective well-being.

The Women for Ethical AI South Asia Chapter (W4EAI SAC) emerged from a shared conviction of the need for collective action to evaluate, guide, and shape AI's growing influence across the region. This report documents our collective effort; our reflections, dialogues, and actions over the past year. We hope that our first steps serve as an invitation for others to join us in our journey towards creating an inclusive and ethical new world design.

AT A GLANCE

W4EAI South Asia Chapter Network

Established:

January 2025

Co-Chairs:

UNESCO Regional Office for South Asia &
Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham (Amrita University)

Total Members:

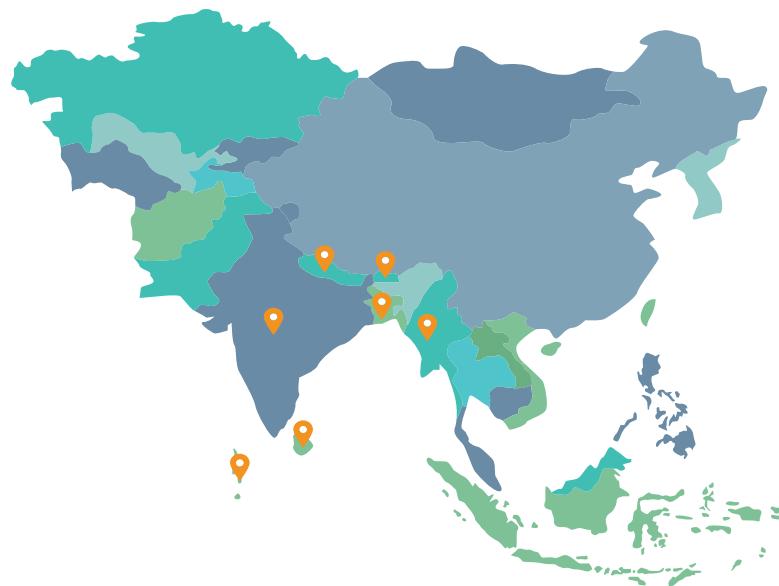
55

Countries Represented:

Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka

Strategic Workstreams (3):

Policy & Advocacy | Research & Innovation | Inclusion & Equity



KEY NUMBERS AND ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2025

7

Workstream Coordinators appointed

9

Events co-organized or partnered on in 2025

3.5M+

Viewers of the *Gender Equity, Ethics & AI* Podcast, launched in partnership with Ctrl+Alt+Thrive powered by TechThrive Ventures

7

Strategic Meetings held since the Network's inception

7,180+

Individuals reached through a social media campaign highlighting the potential harms of AI

2

Sessions hosted at the India AI Impact Summit 2026

ABOUT THE NETWORK

Why the South Asia Chapter Network was created

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a primary driver of economic restructuring, public service delivery, and social interaction across South Asia. However, the deployment of these technologies is not gender neutral. In a region characterized by deep-seated socio-economic diversity and persistent digital divides, AI systems frequently mirror and amplify existing structural inequities.

Women remain significantly underrepresented in South Asia's AI workforce and leadership pipelines. This lack of representation facilitates the "algorithmic reproduction" of gender bias, where exclusionary design processes and non-representative datasets encode historical

prejudices into future technologies. Without targeted, regionally grounded interventions, the rapid adoption of AI risks institutionalizing these biases, further marginalizing women and vulnerable populations from the benefits of the digital economy.

Recognizing the region's unique challenges and opportunities, the Women for Ethical AI South Asia Chapter (W4EAISAC) was established as a regional extension of [UNESCO's global W4EAISAC initiative](#), which serves as a collaborative platform for women leaders across industry, government, academia, and civil society to advance gender-inclusive AI.

Launch of the W4EAISAC Network in January 2025

The W4EAISAC South Asia Chapter was officially launched in January 2025 during the International Conference on Gender and Technology, organized by Amrita University in partnership with UNESCO.

The network is co-chaired by Amrita University and the UNESCO Regional Office for South Asia.

The W4EAISAC Network responds to persistent gender gaps in AI, ranging from biased datasets and exclusionary design, and aims to ensure that the voices of South Asian women are

prominently reflected in global AI discussions.

The network also aims to empower women with the skills and resources necessary to influence AI's design, implementation, and deployment while tackling the systemic gender biases embedded in AI systems by fostering collaboration across academia, industry, government, and civil society.

As of December 2025, the network comprises 55 members across Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.



Address by Dr. Mariagrazia Squicciarini, Chief of Executive Office, Social and Human Sciences Sector UNESCO, and Launch of the W4EAISAC Network in Amrita University, January 2025



South Asian Chapter of Women for Ethical AI inaugurated

Updated - January 19, 2025 08:18 pm IST - KOLLAM

THE HINDU BUREAU

The South Asian Chapter of Women for Ethical AI (W4EAI) under UNESCO was officially inaugurated at Amritapuri on Sunday. The announcement marked the conclusion of a four-day International Conference on Gender and Technology, jointly organised by UNESCO and Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham.

The formal declaration was made in the presence of UNESCO representative Gabriela Ramos; Prof. Eunsong Kim, Chief of SHS Section, UNESCO South Asian Region; and Dr. Ramadevi Lanka.

Led by Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham — which holds the UNESCO Chair for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment — the newly formed South Asian Chapter aims to enhance women's influence in the digital technology sphere. The initiative is expected to significantly contribute to AI development by bringing together women from industries, governments, and civil society across South Asia.

South Asian Chapter of Women for Ethical AI inaugurated

The Hindu Bureau
KOLLAM

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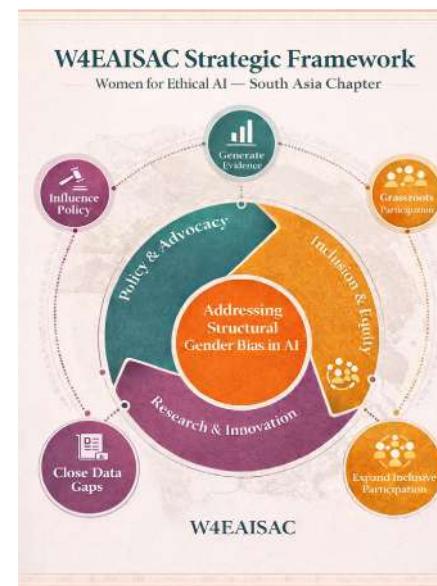
Strategic Framework

W4EAISAC operates through three interconnected workstreams designed to address structural gender bias in AI systems. Together, they aim to generate evidence, influence policy, and expand inclusive participation across the AI ecosystem, while responding to the region's cultural, social, and economic realities:

Workstream 1: Policy and Advocacy

Workstream 2: Research and Innovation

Workstream 3: Inclusion and Equity



Workstream 1: Policy and Advocacy

Objective: To integrate gender perspectives into AI governance frameworks

The Policy and Advocacy workstream focuses on shaping public discourse and supporting policy processes that promote accountability, inclusion, and gender equality in AI governance. In 2025, the workstream prioritized awareness-raising and applied policy engagement.

Main Achievements

Launch of a Social Media Campaign in August 2025

In 2025, the Chapter launched a regional social media advocacy campaign, primarily through LinkedIn, to raise awareness about the

differentiated and disproportionate impacts of AI on women, particularly those in vulnerable contexts across South Asia. The campaign highlights how biases in data, algorithms, and deployment practices can exacerbate existing gender inequalities, while also showcasing scalable policy solutions and governance interventions that can mitigate these risks.

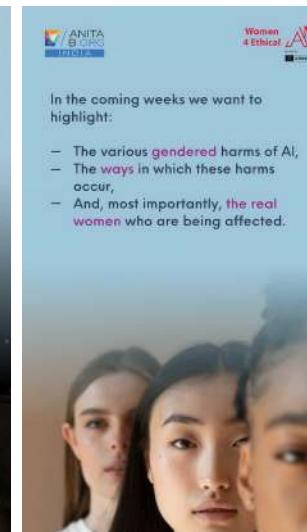
Impressions: 15,788

Members Reached: 7,183

Clicks: 3,692

Total Followers: 454

Launch Post



Sexual Deepfake

Most people don't know that **AI therapy's gender biases affect both women and men**

74% of users think sexual deepfakes are harmless

SWIPE >>



Awareness will be the **key** to any solution given that...

74% of users think sexual deepfakes are harmless



I started throwing up. I just didn't know what to do. In a country like India, I knew this was a big deal. I didn't know how to react, I just started crying... People started sending me WhatsApp messages asking me for my rates for sex. I was sent to the hospital with heart palpitations and anxiety, the doctor gave me medicine. But I was vomiting, my blood pressure shot up, my body had reacted so violently to the stress. I couldn't sleep for three nights.

Indian journalist Rana Ayyub recounting her IBSA experience



Mental Health

AI therapy may be the new norm?

Usage patterns are still **unclear** but:

- 57% of young Indians use LLMs for emotional support
- 52% of young women share personal thoughts with AI
- 50% value AI advice for its availability and non-judgmental nature

*Youth ki Awaaz Report, 2025

LLMs have proven gender biases

For instance:

- Doctors, engineers and pilots are described as **men**
- Teachers, nurses and receptionists are described as **women**



The consequences are real

- 9% of users encounter harms
- 35% of harms involve harassment (sexual misconduct is most common)
- AI companions **sometimes encourage users** to engage in substance abuse and suicide ideation

EXAMPLES >>



Health

AI underdiagnoses women and minorities more often

AI assisted X-ray and CT-scans are more likely to **mistakenly diagnose sick patients** that are women or minorities as **healthy**

The error rate is higher if you are **both**



We must remember - AI is just a tool

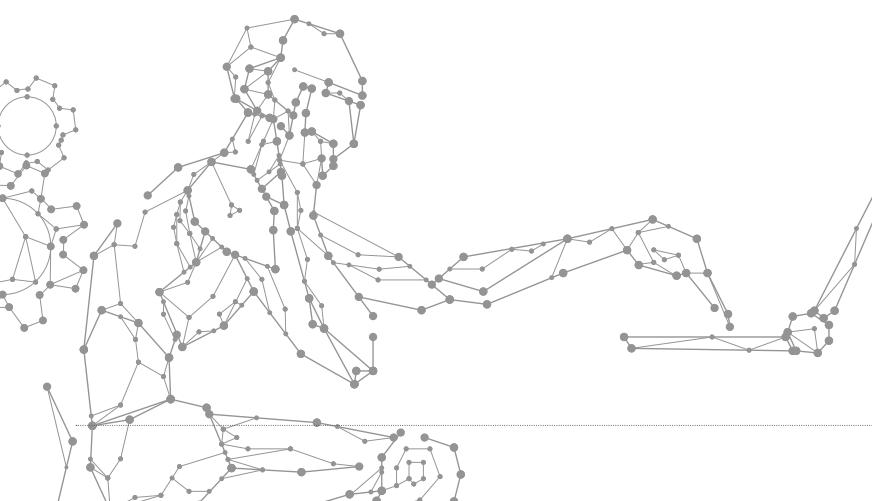
It can be used for **good**, for **bad** or just **irresponsibly**

- AI is **not 'objective'** and devoid of **human bias**
- Over-reliance or automation bias by healthcare workers are **real risks**
- Responsible AI in healthcare needs to meet **higher standards**



Review of the AI Procurement Guidelines of the Government of Telangana

A notable achievement under this workstream was the Chapter's support to the Government of Telangana, where members contributed to the review of state-level AI procurement guidelines through a gender lens. This engagement helped strengthen the inclusivity and accountability of public-sector AI deployments and demonstrated the practical policy relevance of the network's expertise.



Workstream 2: Research and Innovation

Objective: To address the paucity of gender-disaggregated data regarding AI in South Asia

The Research and Innovation workstream responds to the limited availability of consolidated, region-specific evidence—particularly gender-disaggregated data—on AI systems and ecosystems in South Asia. The primary focus of this workstream in 2025 was the development of the Regional Outlook on Gender and AI in South Asia.

Main Achievements:

Upcoming Release of the Gender & AI Outlook for South Asia

Building on [UNESCO's Global Women for Ethical AI: Outlook on Artificial Intelligence and Gender \(2024\)](#), the South Asia Outlook extends global analysis by foregrounding regional realities, including cultural norms, labour market dynamics, digital access inequalities, and governance contexts. The report brings together diverse perspectives from across the region and seeks to bridge the gap between technical research, policy needs, and lived experiences. The South Asia Regional Outlook is expected to serve as a foundational reference for policymakers, researchers, AI developers, and civil society

The Gender & AI Outlook for South Asia will be released in June 2026 and accessible at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/>

actors working at the intersection of gender and technology in South Asia, supporting more informed and context-sensitive AI governance and innovation efforts.

Purpose

- ◆ Create the first comprehensive gender-disaggregated baseline on AI participation across South Asia
- ◆ Identify critical data gaps and measurement blind spots
- ◆ Provide evidence foundation for gender-responsive AI governance and future monitoring frameworks

Methodology

- ◆ Mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data
- ◆ Analysis of education, labour and census datasets, bibliometrics from SCOPUS, and policy documents
- ◆ Semi-structured interviews and regional case studies
- ◆ Post-pandemic data prioritized with explicit acknowledgment of limitations

Workstream 3: Inclusion and Equity

Objective: To amplify diverse voices and create accessible pathways for women and underrepresented groups in the AI ecosystem

Objective: To amplify diverse voices and create accessible pathways for women and underrepresented groups in the AI ecosystem. This workstream focuses on fostering dialogue, widening participation, and ensuring that ethical AI principles are accessible and actionable for all stakeholders.

Main Achievements:

Monthly Podcast Partnership: Gender Equity, Ethics & AI

W4EAISAC partnered in 2025 with Ctrl+Alt+Thrive, powered by TechThrive Ventures, to support the monthly *Gender Equity, Ethics & AI* podcast series led by Ms. Navneet Kaur.



The podcast originally began in December 2023, and W4EAISAC formally joined as a partner in May 2025 to strengthen outreach across South Asia.



The series features conversations with women leaders across AI research, public policy, academia, industry, and social innovation. Since launch, it has reached **3.5 million+ views** across major platforms.

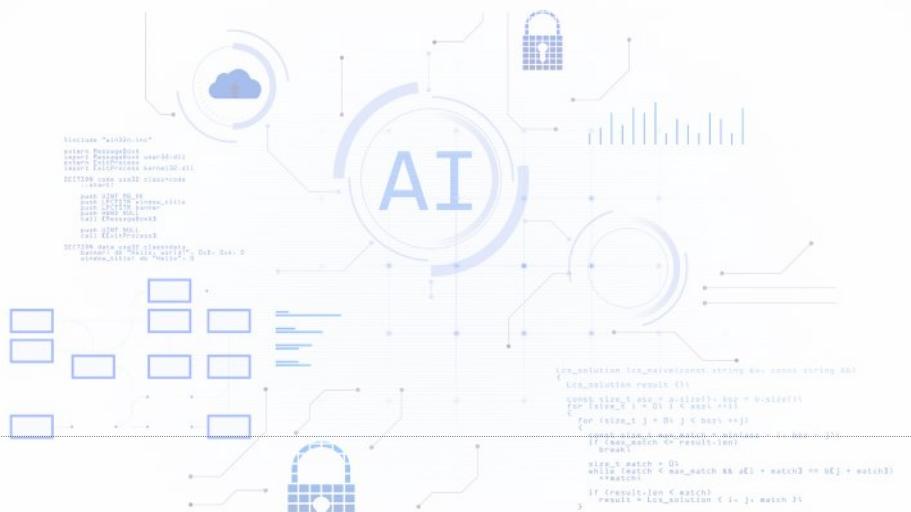


Notable episodes in 2025 included discussions on the foundations of ethical AI, national AI policymaking in India, leadership gaps for women in the technology workforce, and the use of AI to redefine future-of-work opportunities for women. The series also featured a special episode, AI Dreams & Futures: Gen Z's Take on Building Ethical AI, which brought youth perspectives into the conversation.

Reach: 3.5M+ cumulative views

Platforms: Spotify, Apple Podcasts, YouTube, Amazon

Positioning: A leading business and technology podcast amplifying women's voices in technology, Ethical AI, and leadership.



Key events in collaboration with W4EAISAC

1

International Conference on Gender and Technology

Date: January 16–19, 2025

Location: Amrita University, Amritapuri Campus
Kerala, India

Organized by: Amrita University in collaboration with UNESCO and IEEE

Served as the official launch of the W4EAISAC

Overview & Metrics:

- 12 Thematic Areas: Gender, Society, and Representation in Emerging Technologies
- Climate Change, Environment, and Gender
- Gender, Livelihood, and the Future of Work
- Women's Health and Sanitation in the Digital Age
- Safety and Security | Gender, Education, and Cultural Shifts through Technology | Socio-cultural Change, Access to Technology, and
- Gender Equity Politics | Building Inclusive Resilience to Disaster and Climate Change
- Inclusive Technology Design for Social Good
- Ethics, Data Science, and Social Problem Solving | Emerging Technologies: Opportunities and Vulnerabilities | Gender and Finance
- Technological Innovations for Financial Inclusion

500+
Conference
participants

10
countries
represented

60
papers presented
across 12 themes

25
exhibitions
booths

10



2

Participation in the 3rd Stakeholder Consultation on AI Readiness Assessment Methodology (RAM) in India

Date: April 8, 2025

Location: Hyderabad, India

Organized by: UNESCO and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (Meity), Government of India

Overview & Metrics:

This national-level consultation brought together government agencies, academic institutions, technical experts, and civil society organisations to support India's implementation of [UNESCO's AI Readiness Assessment Methodology \(RAM\)](#).



3

Global Forum on the Ethics of AI 2025

Date: June 24-27, 2025

Location: Bangkok, Thailand

Organized by: UNESCO

The 3rd UNESCO Global Forum on the Ethics of AI brought together governments, UN agencies, academic institutions, technology companies, civil society organisations, and youth networks to accelerate the responsible and inclusive implementation of the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI across regions. The event served as a platform to review national progress, share regulatory approaches, strengthen global cooperation, and deepen dialogue on human-centric, rights-based AI governance.

Key Metrics

• 800+ participants from government,

academia, industry, civil society, and youth networks

- 90+ countries represented, including several from the Global South
- 50+ speakers and experts, including ministers, UN representatives, AI researchers, and regulators
- High-level ministerial roundtables on national AI strategies and ethical governance
- Regional implementation workshops focusing on capacity building, policy readiness, and regulatory frameworks
- Launch of new implementation toolkits supporting national AI governance
- Multi-stakeholder dialogues on gender, bias mitigation, AI in education, digital public infrastructure, and cross-border AI cooperation



4

Webinar: Perspectives on Gender and Artificial Intelligence

Date: July 17, 2025

Location: Online

Organized by: Department of Public Policy, School of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham (Delhi NCR campus)

Overview & Metrics:

The Webinar focused on diverse challenges and issues like bias in data and algorithms, inclusive AI standards, and obligations for regulators to embed gender equality, human rights, and transparency across AI laws,

public-sector deployments, and industry self-regulation frameworks. The session featured expert panelists:

Key Metrics

- Ms. Eunsong Kim, Programme Specialist and Chief of Social and Human Sciences Sector, UNESCO Regional Office for South Asia
- Ms. Aditi Namdeo, Director of Strategic Initiatives, J-PAL South Asia
- Dr. Mrittunjoy Guha Majumdar, Assistant Professor, School of AI, Amrita University & Adjunct Professor, NIAS



5

2nd Just AI Awards 2025

Date: November 14–15, 2025

Location: T-Hub, Hyderabad

Organized by: Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF), in partnership with Government of Telangana, World Summit Awards (WSA), MXR.World, and T-Hub

Overview & Metrics:

- Second edition of the initiative (first launched in India in 2024)
- Recognised ethical, inclusive, citizen-centric AI innovations for social good

- Highlighted AI addressing social justice, digital inclusion, gender equity, public welfare, and community empowerment
- Strengthened regional collaboration on responsible, human-centric AI ecosystems, fully aligned with W4EAI SAC's mission
- Positioned APAC innovators on a global stage, elevating the most impactful examples of ethical and equitable AI and reinforcing W4EAI's leadership in inclusion and AI governance.



6

7th Digital Citizen Summit 2025

Date: November 14–15, 2025

Location: T-Hub, Hyderabad

Organized by: Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF)

Overview

- Annual multi-stakeholder platform on digital rights, platform accountability, and inclusive digital governance
- 100+ speakers
- 29 organisations
- 73+ sessions at T-Hub



- 5 thematic tracks
- Sessions on platform governance, community networks, digital inclusion, data justice, grassroots innovation, and ethical AI, featuring plenaries, panels, workshops, unconference forums, exhibitions, and awards.
- Provided a key policy forum for accountability-centric conversations around AI, platform power, and equitable technology ecosystems.

7

Grace Hopper Celebration India 2025 (GHCI 25)

Date: December 2–4, 2025

Location: KTPO, Bengaluru

Organized by: AnitaB.org India

Theme: Unbound

Overview & Metrics:

- Asia's largest gathering of women & non-binary technologists
- 10,000+ participants
- 13,000+ community members
- 300+ speakers
- 100+ sessions

- 700+ organisations in the Tech Expo
- 35 community events and 30 hours of training
- 350+ volunteers
- Tracks included: AI, Cyber/Cloud, Leadership, Data & Digital, Entrepreneurship & Social Impact
- Featured GenAI Hackathon – “Unbound with GenAI”
- Built pathways for women in technology, expanded leadership opportunities, and catalysed diverse innovation ecosystems.



8

Safe AI for the Global South – Safe, Trusted, and Human-Centric Innovation for Inclusive Development

Date: December 13, 2025

Location: Amritapuri, Kerala, India

Organizer: Amrita University, AI Safety Research Labs, Amrita, Center for Cybersecurity Systems & Networks

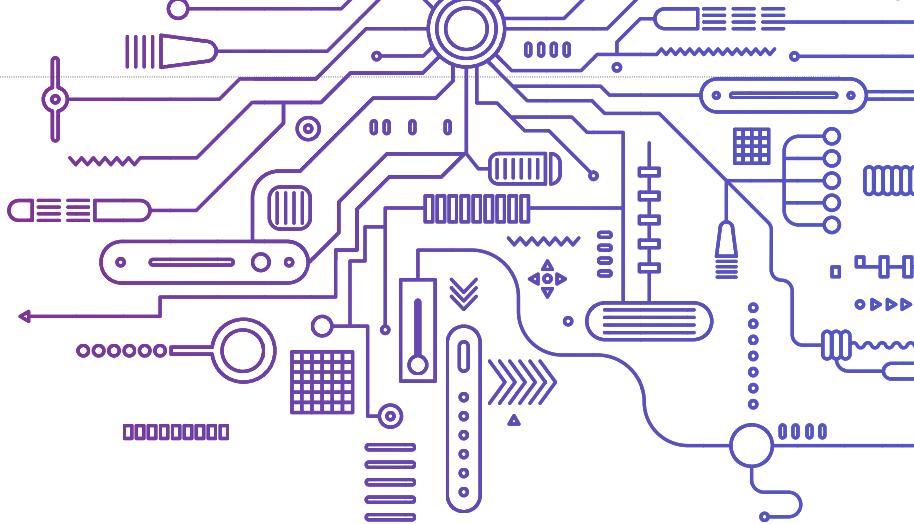
Theme: Safe, Trusted, and Human-Centric Innovation for Inclusive Development

Overview & Metrics:

- 8 countries represented
- 29 speakers & experts, including UN leaders, government officials, AI institutes, industry heads
- 10+ partner organisations (TATA MD, YES Bank, WEF C4IR India, NASSCOM, BCG, Myelin Foundry, QuantumBlack, etc.)
- 13 keynote addresses | 3 panel discussions | 20+ sessions
- Release of India's first sector-wide white

paper on agentic AI safety

- Established South-South leadership in safe, inclusive AI development with strong global participation
- Addressing women's perspectives on rethinking safety, sovereignty and social impact equitable technology ecosystems.



Planned initiatives for 2026

Social Media Campaign

New series of posts continuing in 2026, highlighting gendered harms emerging from AI technologies and showcasing success stories of how some applications of AI can actually reduce gender inequality instead of exacerbating it

Date: 16th February, 2026 (12:30 pm IST)

Location: Bharat Mandapam, Delhi, India

Partners: W4EAISAC, UNESCO, UN Women, LinkedIn and The Quantum Hub (TQH) and Amrita University

Monthly Podcast on Gender Equity, Ethics & AI

To be continued in 2026, with speakers from the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India

India AI Impact Summit 2026 - Panel on: Gendered Lens to AI – Discourses on Equity & Empowerment

Session: Women in AI: A South Asia Outlook on Representation, Equity & Empowerment

India AI Impact Summit 2026 - Panel Session

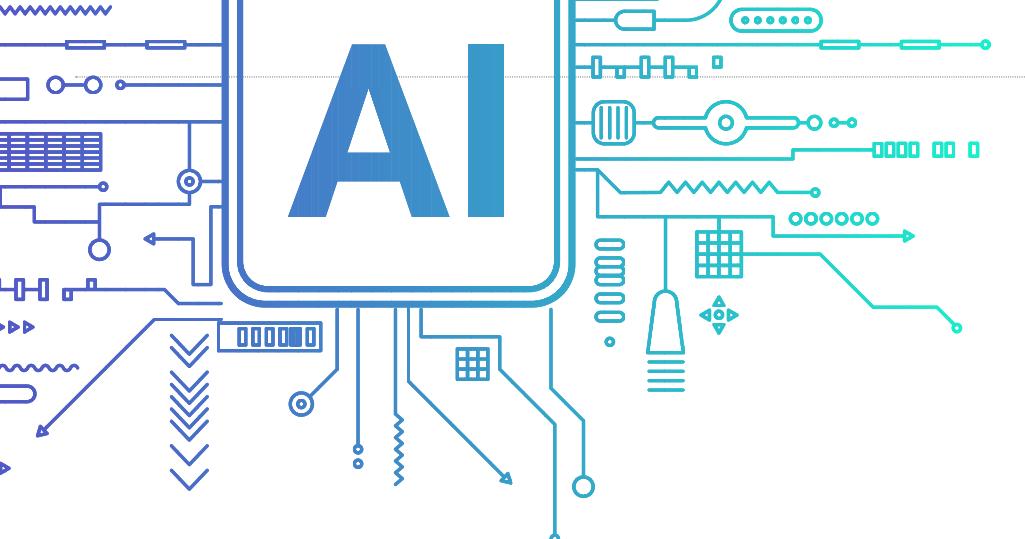
Panel Discussion: Data, People, and Pre-Empting Mass Exclusion: Building Ethical AI as Digital Public Infrastructure

Sub-theme: Community-centric AI, Inclusive data governance

Date: 17th February, 2026 (10:30 am IST)

Location: Bharat Mandapam, Delhi, India

Partners: Digital Empowerment Foundation, W4EAISAC, Globethics, AI Safety Connect



MahaAI: Building Safe, Secure & Smart Governance

Date: 20th February, 2026, 9.30 am IST

Location: Bharat Mandapam, Delhi

Partners: IT Secretary (Govt. of Maharashtra), Primus Partners, Nanyang Technological University, Stanford University

Hackathon on Building Systematic Trust and Safety Interventions for the Manosphere

Tentative Date: April 2026

Location: Kathmandu, Nepal and Colombo, Sri Lanka

Theme: Preventative digital solutions

Partners: Indradhanush Foundation, Digizen, Tattle (to be confirmed), Dignity in Difference, W4EAISAC

International Conference on Gender and Technology 2026

Tentative Date: October 2026

Location: Kathmandu, Nepal

Theme: "Climate Technology – exploring how emerging technologies can mitigate climate change while centering gender equity and intersectionality"

Partners: The Small Earth Nepal (SEN) and Action for Resilient Adaptation and Nature-based Energy Alternatives (ARANYA), UNESCO Chairs; Amrita University, IEEE Nepal Chapter (to be confirmed), W4EAISAC

Members

Workstream Coordinators

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Shreya Krishnan,
Managing Director, AnitaB.org, India

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Noopur Jhunjhunwala

Founder & Trustee, CHANGEINK FOUNDATION India

Nova Ahmed

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Ntasha Bhardwaj

Criminologist and Founder, South Asian Institute of Crime and Justice Studies, India

Poornima Meegammana

Social Entrepreneur, Shilpa Sayura Foundation India

Preeti Banzal

Senior officer in Government of India, Office of Principal Scientific Adviser to Gol, India

Rajeshwari Singh

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Entrepreneur, FlexiBees, India

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Service tietoevry, India

Sangay Lhazom Thinley

Innovation and Strategy Lead (Southeast Asia) EdTech Hub, India

Saumya Kalia

Journalist, BehanBox, India

Selvi sanghamitra

Digital public goods lead, Karya, India

Shamima Akhter

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Smriti Parsheera

Lawyer, Independent, India

Sonam wangmo

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Sudeshna Mukherjee

UN Professional, UN Women, India

Sunita Baranwal

Business Executive, TheKVM, India

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