

Proceedings of the Conference on

Girls in ICT for Inclusive Digital Transformation



Girls in ICT Nepal

*Girls in ICT for inclusive
digital transformation*

23 May 2025

Hotel Himalaya, Sahid Sukra Marg
Lalitpur, Kathmandu, Nepal



itu.int/go/GICT-NEPAL2025

Event Organized to Celebrate

International Girls in ICT Day 2025

Organizers:



**International
Telecommunications
Union**



**Nepal
Telecommunications
Authority**

23 May, 2025

Executive Summary

International Girls in ICT Day is celebrated worldwide every year on the fourth Thursday of April (25 April 2025). Girls in ICT Day provides an opportunity for girls and young women to see and be exposed to the benefit of ICT in enabling their career and aspiration.

The ICT sector is a growing sector for education in both developed and developing countries. This means that qualified female students in technical fields around the world have significant opportunities available to them. These are excellent opportunities in particular for highly skilled girls and young women who are still a minority when it comes to STEM education and careers. Developing initiatives and activities to promote and encourage girls to take up study in STEM and ICT is hence a requirement.

International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and Nepal Telecommunications Authority (NTA), partners from UN agencies, industry, and academia co-organized for the 2025 Girls in ICT celebration. Three discussion sessions were held on topics Get inspired with women leaders in the ICTs, Girls in ICT for Inclusive Digital Transformation: Industries and Academia. More than 500 dignitaries, delegates, experts, speakers and participants from various national and international organizations actively participated in the program physically and virtually.

Key Takeaways are:

1. **Enhance Digital Literacy and Inclusion:** Empower girls and young women with digital skills, especially in cybersecurity and other emerging technologies, to bridge digital divides in line with Nepal's Digital Nepal Framework 2019.
2. **Build a Future-Ready Workforce:** Equip young women with high-demand skills like AI and data analytics, supporting Nepal's growth in the ICT and STEM sectors.
3. **Empower Disadvantaged Communities:** Provide targeted digital training for disadvantaged communities, promoting economic mobility and bridging rural-urban ICT gaps.
4. **Inspire Through Local Role Models:** Showcase successful female ICT leaders to inspire girls across Nepal.
5. **Set a Global Benchmark in ICT Empowerment:** Position Nepal at the forefront by sharing best practices in female ICT inclusion with other countries.
6. **Develop Localized ICT Learning Solutions:** Partner with local technology companies to create digitally accessible, scalable and regional-language ICT learning tools adaptable to other nations ensuring equitable digital opportunities for all girls benefiting of the solution.
7. **Build a Resilient ICT Workforce:** Prepare young women with adaptable skills in emerging technologies, modelling a resilient workforce for developing nations.

Overall, the conference emphasized on the necessity of a coordinated effort among government, industry, academia, and communities to inspire a new generation of girls to pursue STEM careers, fostering a diverse and innovative workforce while contributing to economic growth and bridging the digital divide. The event provided a platform to strengthen international collaborations, support youth skill development, and enhance Nepal's global image as a progressive, inclusive nation.

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Event Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sVBUtKj6aA&t=22379s>

Session 1

Celebration of International Girls in ICT Day 2025



Welcome Speech
Mr. Bhupendra Bhandari
Chairman, Nepal Telecommunications Authority

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Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava
BDT Director, ITU

Opening Remarks
Ms. Anita Niraula
Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

Opening Remarks
Mr. Jaco Du Toit
UNESCO Representative to Nepal and Head of the Office

Opening Remarks
Ms. Radhika Aryal
Secretary, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology

Welcome Speech

Mr. Bhupendra Bhandari,
Chairman,
Nepal Telecommunications Authority

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen namaste and good morning to you all.

It is a great honor and privilege to welcome you all to Girls in ICT Nepal 2025. Today marks a celebration of progress, a reflection of our journey and a renewed pledge to build digital inclusive future. I extend my sincere gratitude to the girls, young women, educators, partners, all stakeholders present today. Your presence here demonstrates our shared dedication to building a more inclusive and empowered digital Nepal.



We are proud to host the inaugural International Girls in ICT day event in Nepal, welcoming international participants for the first time. I would like to recognize the dedication of our Girls in ICT coordinator whose effort in collaborating with the ITU have made this event possible. Together with ITU we are thrilled to roll out a series of impactful activities including coding workshop for school girls in three provinces, a specialized workshop for girls with disabilities in two provinces and training on emerging technology in the remaining two provinces. These programs will support the digital empowerment of hundreds of girls across the Nepal. We also encourage participation in ITU academic courses. And, we eagerly anticipate ITU's forthcoming announcement in this opportunity.

Our journey for Girls in ICT began in 2012 with a workshop commemorating World Telecommunication and Information Society Day. Following ITU's plenipotentiary conference, Resolution 70, we formally launched Girls in ICT day in Nepal in 2020. Since then our efforts have expanded nationwide encompassing varieties of initiatives, workshops, awareness, campaigns, walkathons, publications, competition in essay writing, presentations, quiz, app development and hackathons. These activities have reached all seven provinces including remote areas like Humla and Jumla and unserved community including Musar Basti. We are especially proud to see former participants evolved into leaders, innovators and entrepreneurs. Proof that these initiative initiatives are yielding lasting impact. The Covid-19 pandemic posed challenges to hold in-person events yet our partners continued their effort through virtual and hybrid format. Last year, we resumed our physical events with renewed vigor. However, I have observed many of our activities are not yet reflected on ITU's Girls in ICT portal. I urge all partners and the organizing team to regularly update our collaborative and collective progress on this global platform.

This year's ITU theme "Girls in ICT for Inclusive Digital Transformation" is a timely call to action as technology continues to receive every aspect of our life. We must ensure inclusivity leaving no one behind especially girls and women. In Nepal, girls and young women's still encounter systemic barriers in ICT from education, training to leadership and innovation. We must collectively change this narrative. At NTA Digital inclusion is not just a policy, it is a fundamental responsibility. Through our Universal Services Program, Broadband initiatives, Digital Literacy projects, we strive to ensure equitable access for all, regardless of location, gender or background. True digital transformation must be inclusive by design. Bridging the gender divide, the rural-urban gap, affordability barriers and literacy challenges are essential not only as a technical goal but as a imperative of social justice, economic development and human rights.

We call upon educators, industry, leaders, civil society and above all youth especially girls to join us in shaping Nepal's digital future. Empowering girls with digital skill are not only about equality, it is an investment in innovation, prosperity and progress. Today's event is a platform to celebrate talent, share inspiring stories and empower the next generation to themselves not only as a user of technology but as its creator, innovator and leaders. Let us seize this moment to reaffirm our shared commitment to closing the gender digital divide and fostering a digital ecosystem where every girl can succeed.

Thank you and once again welcome to this significant event.

Inaguration

Ms. Radhika Aryal
Secretary
Ministry of Communications and Information Technology



GICT Day Video message

Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava,
BDT Director
ITU

Greetings to all!

Under the theme “Girls in ICT for Inclusive Digital Transformation” this year's International Girls in ICT day observed on 24th April underscores the critical need to ensure equal and equitable digital inclusion for all young women and girls particularly those in vulnerable situations. Our data highlights persistent gender disparities in digital access and use. Nearly 30% of people in rural areas of low-income countries remain unconnected and girls and women are the most affected in these countries and regions, widening the digital divide and limiting opportunities and full participation in societies. To build inclusive digital transformation, we must empower all girls and young women providing them with equal and equitable access to ICT, skills development and leadership opportunities in technology and innovation regardless of their educational and socio-economic background or geographical location. We cannot afford to wait. The time to act and make an impact on every young girl and woman worldwide is now. I hope we all get together on this year's Girls in ICT day and throughout the year, to organize programs, trainings, activities and actively engage and collaborate with other relevant stakeholders to make every day a Girls in ICT day and promote STEM education, gender inclusive ICT policies and strategies foster mentorship opportunities for young women in Tech. This year, for the first time, the global celebration of Girls in a ICT day will be co-hosted by the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Arab States regions, in Kyrgyzstan and Mauritania. A live stream event will unite the efforts of the two countries to drive the girls in ICT mission forward on a global scale. Recognizing the agency and importance of inclusive digital transformation we stand together to break barriers breathe, the gender divide and empower young women with opportunities they deserve in the digital world so we can achieve inclusive digital transformation.

Thank you and happy International Girls in ICT Day.



Opening Remarks

Ms. Anita Niraula
Joint Secretary
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

Good morning and Namaste,

It is my great pleasure to be here and welcome you all to this significant event marking International Girls in ICT Day 2025. This is not just a celebration, it is a call to action, a call to empower girls and young women to become active creators, leaders and change makers in the digital world. The theme of this year's International Girls in ICT Day "Girls in ICT for Inclusive Digital Transformation" reminds us that inclusion in technology is not only about participation but about ownership, innovation, influence, etc. Girls must not only use technology. They must lead its design, innovation, its governance and its impact on society. The theme resonates strongly with our national vision for inclusive education and digital empowerment. As we stand at the intersection of rapid technological advancement and educational transformation, we must ensure that girls and women are not left behind but instead are encouraged, equipped and inspired to lead.



In Nepal, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is committed to create a learning environment where all students, regardless of gender, have equal access to quality education, digital literacy and technological opportunities. Through our policies including the Digital Nepal Framework, School Sector Development Plan and recent curriculum reforms, we aim to close the gender gaps in ICT and STEM education. However, despite progress, we know that girls especially in rural and marginalized communities still face significant barriers. These include limited access to devices, connectivity, mentors and societal expectations that often discourage them from pursuing careers in science and technology. Addressing the challenges is not optional, it is essential for our collective progress as a nation. That's why the Ministry is actively promoting programs that encourage girl's participation in ICT from an early age. We are strengthening ICT labs in schools, integrating coding and digital skills in curricula supporting digital literacy for female teachers, conduction steam programs and fostering partnerships with national and international stakeholders to expand opportunities for girls. However, policies alone are not enough. We need role models. We need visibility and we need platforms like today's program, where girls can see that their voices matter, their ideas are valid and their futures are limitless.

To all the girls and young ladies, here today I urge you to dream big and explore fearlessly. Whether it's artificial intelligence, software development, digital media or space science, your path in ICT is not only possible but essential in further days. The world needs your leadership, your creativity and your problem-solving abilities. Know that your ideas, your curiosity and your ambition are needed now more than ever. Technology is not just a tool, it is a platform for you to solve problems, tell stories, connect communities and build futures. Whether you dream of becoming a software engineer, a robotics, a designer or a data scientist and educator your path is valid and your potential is unlimited. On behalf of the Ministry, I express a deep appreciation to all our partners, mentors, teachers and families who are creating enabling environment for girls to thrive in the digital space.

Together let us continue to build an inclusive digital Nepal where no girls are left behind. As we celebrate International Girls in ICT Day 2025, let this not just be a symbolic gesture but a reaffirmation of our shared responsibility to build a digital Nepal where every girl has the excess, agency and ambition to lead. Thank you all and I wish this program meaningful dialogue inspiring stories and actions that resonate beyond today. And to our partners and organizers thank you for your dedication to advancing digital inclusion and equity through the empowerment of girls in ICT in the occasion of International Girls in ICT Day 2025.

Thank you all and welcome you once again.

Opening Remarks

Mr. Jaco Du Toit
UNESCO Representative to Nepal
Head of the Office

Good morning!

It's a pleasure to be here today and to celebrate women and its role in our society. The global digital compact highlights the important role of the United Nations system in working towards digital transformation. But this cannot happen without women. This cannot happen with more than half of the population of a country like Nepal, where girls are important part of our population and have a great contribution to the country. Unfortunately, girls still face barriers in terms of digital skills, in terms of access to infrastructure, in terms of role models.



We are proud to host the inaugural International Girls in ICT day event in Nepal, welcoming international participants for the first time. I would like to recognize the dedication of our Girls in ICT coordinator whose effort in collaborating with the ITU have made this event possible. Together with ITU we are thrilled to roll out a series of impactful activities including coding workshop for school girls in three provinces, a specialized workshop for girls with disabilities in two provinces and training on emerging technology in the remaining two provinces. These programs will support the digital empowerment of hundreds of girls across the Nepal. We also encourage participation in ITU academic courses. And, we eagerly anticipate ITU's forthcoming announcement in this opportunity.

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We call upon educators, industry, leaders, civil society and above all youth especially girls to join us in shaping Nepal's digital future. Empowering girls with digital skill are not only about equality, it is an investment in innovation, prosperity and progress. Today's event is a platform to celebrate talent, share inspiring stories and empower the next generation to themselves not only as a user of technology but as its creator, innovator and leaders. Let us seize this moment to reaffirm our shared commitment to closing the gender digital divide and fostering a digital ecosystem where every girl can succeed.

Thank you and once again welcome to this significant event.

Opening Remarks

Ms. Radhika Aryal
Secretary
Ministry of Communications and
Information Technology

Namaste and Good Morning!

It is my great honor to welcome you all to the ITU Girls in ICT Nepal organized by the Nepal Telecommunications Authority. This event reflects our shared commitment to building a digital future, that is inclusive, fair and full of opportunity for all. Nepal has come a long way since the Beijing declaration of 1995. Over the past three decades, we have made strong progress in promoting gender equality and empowering women socially, economically and politically. In recent years, Nepal has also seen major transformation in the field of communication and information technology and Nepali women are stepping forward leading, contributing and driving innovation in Tech-space, but we still face challenges. The digital gender gap in access, skills and leadership remains a real barrier especially in developing country like ours. Yet with every challenge comes an opportunity, an opportunity to shape a digital world where girls and young women are not just users but creators, leaders and change makers.



To bridge this divide Government of Nepal, especially the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology is updating our core policies, Digital Nepal Framework, Broadband and ICT policy, Artificial Intelligence policy and telecommunication related acts and regulation. We are investing in digital education by establishing IT labs in rural areas and encouraging girls to pursue STEM programs from an early age. Now is the time to bring even more girls and women to the tech industry with stringent policies and bold action. But more than infrastructure or policy, we need a digital ecosystem that values equality, promote innovation and includes everyone. To all young girls and women here today, you belong in tech, you belong in innovation, you belong in leadership, your ideas, your creativity, your voices are vital to the future that we are building. And we are with you. To all our partners government, academia, experts, private sectors, civil society and international organization, I call on you to work together, so that every girl in Nepal has an equal opportunity to learn, lead and succeed in digital age. I wish the program great success. May it inspire, inform and help shape a more inclusive digital future for Nepal.

I thank you all

Session 2

Get inspired with women leaders in the ICTs



Session 2: Get inspired with women leaders in the ICTs

Moderated by:

Ms. Palpasa Tuladhar Kansakar
Executive Member
Women In Information Technology



The session titled “*Get Inspired with Women Leaders in the ICT*” is a powerful tribute to the transformative role women are playing in shaping the future of Nepal’s ICT landscape. The session brings together a dynamic panel of women leaders—from emerging voices to established trailblazers—who have made a lasting impact not only within the technical domain but also in uplifting and empowering Nepali youth. Central to the discussion is the sharing of stories phenomenal Nepalese women leaders whose journey challenges and achievements will truly empower and motivate girls and young women.

Speakers:

1. Ms. Roja Kiran Basukala,
Deputy Director, Nepal Telecommunications Authority
2. Ms. Sunaina Ghimire Pandey,
President, CAN Federation (Virtual)
3. Ms. Sarita Lamichhane,
Chairperson, Prayatna Nepal
4. Ms. Nishla Shakya,
Vice-President, Women Leaders in Technology
5. Ms. Pratikshya Pandey,
Founder, Smart Cheli

Ms Palpasa Tuladhar Kansakar is executive member of Women In Information Technology. She has completed Masters of Science in Information System Engineering from ACME Engineering College. She has completed her Masters of Business Administration Executive from Kathmandu University, School of Management, pursued her Bachelor of Engineering in the field of Electrical and Electronic Engineering from Kathmandu University, Diploma in 3G Broadband Wireless Access at the United States Telecommunication Training Center. She is currently working as an engineer in Nepal Telecom Company as Deputy Manager in Wireline and Customer Service Directorate.

Session 2: Get inspired with women leaders in the ICTs

Ms. Roja Kiran Basukala
Deputy Director
Nepal Telecommunications Authority (NTA)



Regarding the equitable digital access, Ms. Basukala highlighted the vital role of the RTDF Fund, established under the Nepal Telecommunication Act of 1997, which mandates every telecom operator and licensee to contribute at least 2% of their revenue. The RTDF facilitates the Universal Service Obligation, ensuring connectivity reaches rural and remote areas so that no one is left behind. She shared progress updates of RTDF including:

- Ongoing expansion of optical fiber connectivity along the Mid-Hill highway.
- Completion of 18 broadband access projects.
- Establishment of IT labs in over 1,000 schools across Nepal.
- Efforts to connect every health post, ward office, and government school to digital infrastructure.

The initiative is grounded in gender equality, guaranteeing equal access for all communities regardless of gender.

She also highlighted that NTA has actively championed gender inclusion in ICT through the Girls in ICT campaign following the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference Resolution 70 in 2010. Since 2013, the program has expanded nationwide, reaching multiple geographic regions and involving numerous stakeholders. Ms. Basukala, as the coordinator for Girls in ICT Nepal, emphasized their commitment to capacity building through:

- In-person training and workshops for hundreds of girls.
- Online courses via the ITU Academy benefiting thousands.

Ms. Basukala pointed out key policy frameworks supporting gender equity in ICT: Broadband Policy 2015 ensures girls and women are not left behind in broadband access. And ICT Policy 2016 includes provisions for positive discrimination to empower girls and young women. She emphasizes that while policy support is important, **individual agency matters too**. In her words: “Even if you can’t run, you can walk. Even if you can’t walk, you can crawl. But you must keep moving forward.”

Reflecting on the evolving telecom landscape, Ms. Basukala shared her experience starting with Nepal’s 3G launch, contributing to the introduction of 4G, and now working toward 5G deployment. She stressed that technology careers are dynamic and constantly evolving, providing exciting opportunities for women professionals. To attract and retain more girls and women in ICT, she emphasized:

- Awareness raising to break gender stereotypes.
- Showcasing role models and success stories.
- Providing training in telecom, ICT, emerging technologies, and coding.
- Networking opportunities connecting girls and young women with industry professionals.

She concluded with a powerful message that possessing IT skills, communication, and networking abilities will enable girls and young women to thrive in the ICT sector. She underscored NTA’s strong commitment to inclusive digital transformation and women’s empowerment in technology. Through coordinated efforts with ITU and stakeholders, NTA continues to foster a supportive ecosystem for girls and women in ICT, contributing significantly to Nepal’s digital future.

Ms. Roja Kiran Basukala is Deputy Director and Section Chief of the Technology Research and Development Section at NTA. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Engineering and Law and Master's Degree in Public Administration and Information and Communication Engineering. She currently serves as a Vice-Chair of the South Asian Telecommunication Regulators Councils working group on Policy, Regulation and Services. She is an advisor to Nepal's Center for Cyber Security, Research and Innovation. She has been the Girls in ICT coordinator in Nepal since 2013 and is an executive member of WIIT. She received the National ICT Excellence Award, 2022 and the Outstanding Youth Professional Award, 2022 for her contribution to the ICT sector.

Session 2: Get inspired with women leaders in the ICTs

Ms. Sunaina Ghimire Pandey
President
CAN Federation

Ms. Ghimire Pandey expressed pride in becoming the first woman President of CAN Federation, emphasizing that her leadership symbolizes the changing dynamics within Nepal's IT sector. She noted the increasing presence of women not only leading organizations but also founding startups, reflecting a vibrant shift toward gender-inclusive growth in technology.

Despite the faster pace of the global IT market, Nepal's ICT sector is growing steadily, creating abundant opportunities for women. The rise of remote work has eliminated geographical barriers, allowing women to contribute creatively and effectively from anywhere. Ms. Ghimire Pandey encouraged women to harness their creativity, knowledge, and problem-solving skills to excel in emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, fintech, agriculture technology, healthcare, and education.

She highlighted the evolving nature of STEM education and careers, noting that women are increasingly visible not just as coders, but also as designers, analysts, digital entrepreneurs, and leaders—diversifying and enriching the ICT industry's perspective.

Ms. Ghimire Pandey acknowledged challenges in accessing collateral-free financing, despite existing government and bank programs promising funds such as NPR 1.5 million without collateral. She stressed the need for continued advocacy and lobbying to create more supportive financial ecosystems for female entrepreneurs.

The current environment is highly favorable for young women innovators, bolstered by incubators, funding opportunities, and the booming global freelancing market. Ms. Ghimire Pandey shared striking data: Nepal's IT software and service exports amount to \$515 million, with freelancers contributing 60% of this revenue—an encouraging indicator of the sector's untapped potential for women.

Concluding her speech, Ms. Ghimire Pandey urged young women to embrace ICT not just as technology but as a domain of creativity, leadership, and problem solving. She encouraged them to take bold steps toward gaining new skills and taking their rightful place in shaping Nepal's digital future.

Ms. Sunaina Ghimire Pandey's virtual address underscored the importance of support systems, skills development, and policy advocacy to empower women and young girls to thrive in the digital economy. With guidance and vision, the future of Nepal's tech industry looks poised for greater inclusivity and innovation.

Ms. Sunaina Ghimire Pandey has over 25 years of experience in Nepal's ICT sector. She is the Managing Director of General Technology Pvt. Ltd., a leading fintech company and chairperson of SpaceTech Office Automation Pvt. Ltd. She has played a key role in empowering women in tech as the founder of the Women in ICT Committee under the Computer Association of Nepal and received numerous awards including ICT Women Icon Award, 2023 and National Girls in ICT Award, 2018.

Session 2: Get inspired with women leaders in the ICTs

Ms. Sarita Lamichhane
Chairperson
Prayatna Nepal

Ms. Lamichhane highlighted a critical issue: the widespread use of the Preeti font for Nepali language documents, which is inaccessible to screen reader users, creating significant barriers for blind and visually impaired persons to access knowledge and information. She emphasized the necessity to develop Nepali digital content (documents, websites, videos) in Unicode fonts and compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to ensure inclusivity.

She pointed out that many government, private, and non-government websites and digital content fail to follow these accessibility standards, resulting in exclusion of persons with disabilities from accessing crucial information and services.

Ms. Lamichhane stressed that persons with disabilities are often only considered as end users rather than contributors or resource persons during the development of software, applications, and technology solutions. This exclusion leads to inaccessible products and missed opportunities for innovation. She urged the tech community to actively involve persons with disabilities as experts during the research and development phases.

Ms. Lamichhane also highlighted that her organization, Prayatna Nepal, has conducted comprehensive audits of websites and mobile applications across sectors, revealing that most digital platforms are not accessible due to non-compliance with WCAG. The organization also trains visually impaired women in the use of assistive technologies such as cash readers, software tools, Google Maps, and ride-sharing apps to enhance their independence and career opportunities. Additionally, Prayatna Nepal provides digital security training for women with disabilities, empowering them to confidently navigate the digital world.

Ms. Lamichhane shared efforts to conduct orientations and training sessions for government officials, NGOs, and private agencies on accessible content development. She expressed frustration at the initial lack of recognition and acceptance of persons with disabilities as resource persons in these programs, calling for greater respect and acknowledgment of their expertise.

In her concluding statement, Ms. Lamichhane issued strong appeals to various stakeholders:

- **Academic Institutions:** To integrate digital accessibility courses into curricula.
- **Government and ISPs:** To develop disability-accessible technologies such as routers with features for visually impaired users.
- **Media:** To highlight success stories of women with disabilities in the IT sector.
- **Development Partners:** To finance digital accessibility, security, and literacy initiatives.
- **Young Women and Women with Disabilities:** To learn digital accessibility, engage with peers, and pursue research in IT and digital literacy.
- **All Institutions:** To design tailor-made training and awareness programs focused on digital accessibility.



Ms. Sarita Lamichhane is the Chairperson of Prayatna Nepal. She is a passionate advocate for the rights of women with disabilities. As a founder of Prayatna Nepal, she works to enhance safety, digital access, leadership opportunities and economic empowerment for blind and visually impaired women across South Asia. She pioneered the region's first self-defense training program for visually impaired women and has been a key voice in gender and disability rights at platforms like AWID and CREA. She also served as the main host of WOW Kathmandu, 2017 and continues to lead on inclusion as an adviser for WOW Kathmandu, 2025.

Session 2: Get inspired with women leaders in the ICTs

Ms. Nishla Shakya
Vice-President
Women Leaders in Technology

Ms. Nishla Shakya shared her inspiring vision for fostering inclusivity and diversity in Nepal's tech sector. She emphasized the importance of building a strong foundation to nurture future women leaders in technology, focusing particularly on young girls in schools and universities.

Ms. Shakya used the metaphor of constructing a tall building to describe the importance of a strong foundation. She stressed that nurturing women leaders in technology requires early, sustained support starting from school-age girls. WLIT's flagship programs focus on introducing technology and coding to girls aged 10 to 14 and undergraduate students, aiming to break down gender biases about the IT sector.

To make IT and coding accessible and engaging, she stated that her organization, WLIT organizes Hour of Code sessions using interactive platforms such as Scratch Foundations. These sessions are designed not only to teach programming concepts but also to make learning enjoyable, which encourages sustained interest among young learners. Since 2018, WLIT has reached 139 schools across Kathmandu, Pokhara, and Butwal, delivering Hour of Code sessions to over 3,500 students—more than 1,600 of whom were girls. Feedback from participants revealed enthusiasm and a desire to learn more about coding, signaling the success of WLIT's early engagement strategy.

Ms. Shakya reiterated that every individual in Nepal, regardless of gender, geographic location, or ability, deserves equal access to internet and educational resources necessary to thrive in IT, science, and STEM fields. She hopes that future efforts to include girls in IT will become standard practice rather than exceptional initiatives.

She praised ongoing efforts by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) and Nepal Telecommunications Authority (NTA) to extend digital access in rural areas. Ms. Shakya envisions a future where gender equality in IT is the norm, and barriers for persons with disabilities or from marginalized communities are dismantled.

Ms. Nishla Shakya's address highlighted the critical role of early education, inclusive programming, and resource accessibility in shaping Nepal's future women leaders in technology. Her passion for equity and innovation underscores the transformative potential of initiatives led by Women Leaders in Technology and collaborating stakeholders to create a truly inclusive digital ecosystem.



Ms. Nishla Shakya is Vice President of Women Leaders In Technology. She is a passionate advocate for inclusivity and diversity in the Tech sector. As a Vice President of WLIT, she plays a key role in driving initiatives that empower women in technology through mentorship, skill development and community building. She is also currently working as a technical product owner at Infinite Software Services. She committed to bridging the gender gap in Nepal's tech industry. She works tirelessly to create pathways for young girls to thrive in STEM fields.

Session 2: Get inspired with women leaders in the ICTs

Ms. Pratikshya Pandey
Founder
Smart Cheli

Ms. Pratikshya Pandey, Founder and CEO of Smart Cheli, delivered an inspiring address focusing on promoting gender equality in STEM fields. As a social entrepreneur and engineer, she shared her personal journey and vision to empower young girls through early STEM education, mentorship, and confidence-building.

Ms. Pandey recounted her experience as one of only three girls in her engineering classroom in 2012 and the societal stereotype that STEM is “not for women.” She emphasized that this stereotype is unfounded as she performed equally well academically as her male peers. Her message was clear: STEM fields are not gender-specific and such misconceptions create unnecessary barriers for young girls.

Highlighting the importance of reaching girls at a young age, Ms. Pandey stressed that early childhood is a critical period when curiosity and learning flourish. Smart Cheli focuses on providing training, mentorship, and workshops to young girls to encourage experimentation, resilience, and acceptance of failure as part of the learning process. This early exposure to coding and STEM education helps build critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving skills, and collaborative teamwork.

Ms. Pandey also underlined that STEM education fosters not only technical expertise but also important human skills such as empathy, teamwork, and appreciation of diverse ideas. These skills are essential for a well-rounded personality and a successful future workforce.

Ms. Pandey urged young girls to believe in themselves and to dismiss any notions of gender-based subjects. She encouraged them to pursue their passions fearlessly, explore new ideas, and make the most of networking opportunities. Her closing message inspired all participants to be curious, persistent, and confident in shaping their own futures.

Ms. Pratikshya Pandey’s address showcased her dedication to dismantling gender stereotypes in STEM and nurturing the next generation of women leaders in technology. Through early engagement, mentorship, and empowering programs, Smart Cheli continues to pave the way for gender equality and innovation in Nepal’s digital future.



Miss Pratikshya Pandey is an Electronic and Communication Engineer, currently pursuing her Master's Degree in Computer Engineering. She is an award-winning social entrepreneur and she is the founder and CEO of Smart Cheli, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promote gender equality in the STEM fields. Her inspiring work has earned her several international accolades including the Power of Radiance Award in 2020, a joint initiative by UNICEF and Clé de Peau Beauté. She is also the winner of the Lead2030 Challenge for Quality Education awarded by One Young World, UK. Her leadership and vision project continue to empower young girls and reshape their future in this digital world.

Session 3

Girls in ICT for Inclusive Digital Transformation: Industries Discussion



Session 3

Girls in ICT for Inclusive Digital Transformation: Industries Discussion

Moderated by:

Ms. Elisha Rajbhandar
Co-founder,
Sciever Inc.



The session focuses on the real-world applications and innovations shaping the ICT industry, featuring leading experts who are actively driving change and making a significant impact in the field. This panel brings together seasoned professionals to explore the future of technology, emerging industry trends, and the pivotal role of leadership in building an inclusive digital world. Participants will gain insights into how companies, industries, and government sectors are working towards inclusive digital transformation, with a special focus on creating opportunities for women in ICT. The session also highlights the importance of breaking gender barriers in leadership, recognizing role models like Ms. Sangita Pahadi, Managing Director of Nepal Telecom, as evidence of progress. Attendees will hear powerful success stories from the panelists, offering inspiration and guidance for aspiring youth—particularly young women—on how they can pursue and thrive in careers in the ICT Industry.

Panelists:

1. Ms. Srijana Tiwari,
Under Secretary, Ministry of Industry,
Commerce and Supplies
2. Ms. Sangita Pahadi,
Managing Director, Nepal Telecom
3. Ms. Karvika Thapa,
CEO, Kimbu Tech
4. Ms. Mona Nyachhyon,
MD, Monal Tech
5. Ms. Dibya Tara Shakya,
Assistant Manager, Global IME Bank

Ms. Elisha Rajbhandari is co-founder of Sciever Inc Pvt. Ltd. She has completed her Masters in Engineering from Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand. She embarked her professional journey at the Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT), where she contributed her expertise from 2017 to 2022. Currently based in Nepal, she has transitioned into the entrepreneurship as the co-founder of Sciever Inc where she applies her technical knowledge and leadership skills to drive innovation in the technology sector. She also has an involvement with the Women In Information Technology (WIIT), a nonprofit organizations dedicated to empowering women in technology field.

Session 3: Girls in ICT for Inclusive Digital Transformation: Industries Discussion

Ms. Srijana Tiwari
Under Secretary
Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies

Ms. Srijana Tiwari underscored Honesty, Integrity and Accountability as three pillars serving as the foundation for women aspiring to excel in ICT or any sector. "These are non-negotiable traits for leadership" she asserted.

She advocated for the importance of Innovation and Self-Confidence in process of embracing new and unconventional ways of solving problems while believing in one's capacity to learn and lead.

Ms. Tiwari outlined three promising avenues for female in ICT:

- ICT Services: Roles in government and corporate sectors driving digital transformation.
- ICT Industry: Technical careers in development, AI, and infrastructure.
- Startup Entrepreneurship: Founding tech ventures to address market gaps.

Her message for all women in ICT sector was: "Lead from where you stand. Speak the truth with confidence and grace."

On the question regarding the kind of policies government of Nepal should have in the future for involving more woman in ICT, she recommended the following:

- Time-specific objectives for Girls and Women in ICT.
- Internship opportunities and reserved seats in ICT-related training programs.
- Incentives for companies employing women in ICT.
- Prioritization of women entrepreneurs in government policies.
- Adoption of Gender-Responsive Budgeting and maintaining an up-to-date database of women in ICT.

She added that as the Government of Nepal is in the process of formulating IT Policy 2082, these can be included.

Key Takeaways from interaction with her:

- Values (honesty, integrity, accountability) are the bedrock of professional growth.
- Women must seize opportunities in ICT services, industry, and entrepreneurship.
- Confidence and innovation are critical to breaking barriers.

She concluded by encouraging the participants with "Lead from where you stand. Learn every day and don't hesitate to speak truth with confidence and grace."



Ms. Srijana Tiwari is Under Secretary at Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies. She has over 19 years of experience with the civil services and around like 2.5 years in the Labor Act with Nepal and Kuwait.

Session 3: Girls in ICT for Inclusive Digital Transformation: Industries Discussion

Ms. Sangita Pahadi
Managing Director
Nepal Telecom



Ms. Sangita Pahadi highlighted on the role of Nepal Telecom in leading nationwide connectivity efforts to bridge gender and demographic divides through infrastructure development. She believes ICT can empower Nepal's female population (50% of the country) by opening up different avenues of opportunities. She emphasized women breaking barriers with an example of increasing number of women excelling in NT recruitment via competitive Public Service Commission exams. She further acknowledged historical under-representation of women in leadership roles but highlights progress, citing current panelists as examples.

Ms. Pahadi emphasized the following key messages for aspiring young women in the ICT sector:

- Profession and expertise transcend gender. Success is determined by one's potential, not gender.
- The field of ICT remains accessible to all who approach it with dedication and perseverance.
- Women are capable of achieving excellence in any domain; competence, rather than gender, dictates success.
- Take inspiration from the women pioneering change today to become the leaders of tomorrow.

In response to an audience inquiry regarding affordable rural communication services, Ms. Pahadi highlighted Nepal Telecom's significant contributions in ensuring affordable and reliable data and voice services across rural regions. Key points included:

- Deployment of fiber-optic, microwave, and satellite technologies to extend coverage to 90% of Nepal, excluding only the most remote mountainous and uninhabited areas.
- Provision of diverse service options, including mobile communications and Namaste Wi-Fi, catering to varying consumer needs.
- Continuous technological advancements, transitioning from 2G to 4G networks, with ongoing preparations for 5G implementation to enhance service quality and affordability.

Ms. Pahadi further elaborated on Nepal Telecom's commitment to nationwide digital inclusion, stressing its role in:

- Reducing disparities in access to ICT services across different gender and demographic groups.
- Strengthening infrastructure to ensure equitable opportunities for all citizens, particularly in underserved communities.

These efforts align with Nepal Telecom's mission to foster socioeconomic development through inclusive and forward-looking telecommunications solutions.

Ms Sangita Pahadi is Managing Director of Nepal Telecom (Nepal Doorsanchar Company Limited). Throughout her 32 years of tender, she has hold various leadership roles including CTO, CCO and Deputy Managing Director with her expertise in wireless communication service and has been instrumental in the transition of Nepal's telecom infrastructure.

Session 3: Girls in ICT for Inclusive Digital Transformation: Industries Discussion

Ms. Karvika Thapa
CEO
Kimbu Tech

While recalling a stark gender disparity from 25 years ago (few female classmates, nearly no women leaders) Ms. Karvika Thapa, CEO, Kimbu Tech highlighted that despite women comprising 51% of Nepal's population, they still face disproportionate struggles in technology. She emphasized on the urgent need to transform societal attitudes, create supportive environments and be the voice for change. She highlighted the tangible benefits of women in tech leadership: More balanced decision-making and healthier industry ecosystems.

She urged all to be committed to paving the way so future generations face fewer barriers and to make collective effort to normalize women's leadership in technology.

Her message for all women in ICT sector is: *"Our struggle today is our daughters' foundation tomorrow."*

In response to inquiries regarding the gender inclusion methods used by her organization, she outlined its comprehensive policies to promote women's participation in the workplace as follows while keeping focus on enhancing technical competencies to meet client expectations and project deliverables.

- Implementation of a preferential hiring system prioritizing qualified female candidates
- Requirement for formal justification when female candidates are not selected for available positions
- Development and maintenance of a women-friendly work environment
- Establishment of dedicated female managers to address gender-specific workplace concerns
- Provision of specialized training and retraining initiatives for female employees



Ms Karvika Thapa is an entrepreneur and tech leader. She started her journey from her Master's Degree from US and has international tech expertise in various sector like education, healthcare, retail and government. She is a founder of Kimbu Tech in Nepal and also a Chairperson of Simjung Pvt. Ltd., Naxal, creating a client from Israel and US. She's also Executive Director of VS International College to increase quality tech resources.

Session 3: Girls in ICT for Inclusive Digital Transformation: Industries Discussion

Ms. Mona Nyachhyon
MD
Monal Tech

"The path to tech leadership is challenging but rewarding – women can excel both professionally and personally while breaking barriers," was the Key message that Ms. Mona Nyachhyon, MD, Monal Tech put forth.

While portraying her journey from pioneering as the sole female employee in her previous workplace to being recognized as an award-winning startup founder, she highlighted the dual challenges of navigating competitive tech industry pressures and balancing motherhood with entrepreneurial demands. While serving as living proof that leadership roles are achievable for Women in Tech, she inspires women to pursue leadership without compromising life goals.

In response to an inquiry about female representation within her organization, she emphasized the women participation being very significant. She specifically noted the presence of female professionals in diverse ICT roles including Software programming, Development positions, IT systems management and Security analysis roles.



Ms. Mona Nyachhyon is the founder of a leading cyber security company, Monal Tech. She is a certified ethical hacker and a chain analyst certified specialist in crypto scams forensic. She has also been recognized as the best startup company here in Nepal. She operates across global market with experience expanding in US, Canada, Africa, Gulf, Europe and Asia. Her company is also ranked amongst the top five startup company in Europe.

Session 3: Girls in ICT for Inclusive Digital Transformation: Industries Discussion

Ms. Dibya Tara Shakya
Assistant Manager
Global IME Bank

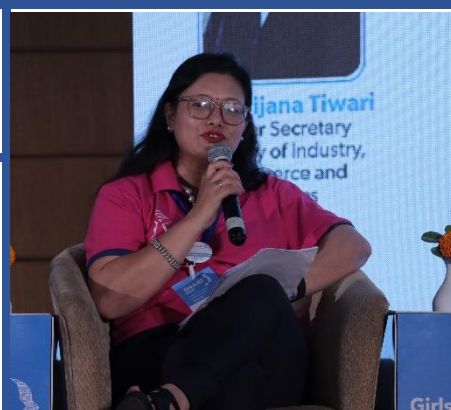
Ms. Dibya Tara Shakya highlighted how Banking has evolved from manual processes to leading digital innovation (eg. mobile banking, fintech). She stated that current developments are only the foundation – AI and data analytics are creating new frontiers. She stressed on opportunities being limitless across: Digital financial services, AI-powered banking solutions and Data-driven customer experiences.

She encouraged girls to pioneer next-generation banking technology. The sector needs new generations fresh perspectives to shape inclusive financial futures.

In response to an inquiry about gender representation in banking sector ICT positions, Ms. Shakya acknowledged that while female employment in banking is substantial, women remain significantly underrepresented in technical departments, with some banks reporting near-zero female participation in these roles. However, she expressed optimism about impending changes, referencing:

- The notable 80% female participation rate in recent AI Hackathon events.
- The predominance of female winners in these competitions.
- Various Initiatives including the government's "Save and Educate Girl Child" initiative in Janakpur District as a promising intervention to enhance female ICT participation across sectors, including banking.

Addressing a subsequent question about bridging the digital divide and improving accessibility for people with disability, she said that financial institutions are exploring on developing mobile banking solutions designed to accommodate visually impaired users. This initiative represents part of broader efforts to enhance digital and financial accessibility for women with disabilities.



Ms Diva Tara Shakya is currently working as an Assistant Manager in the digital banking department at the Global IME bank. She is also lecturer of database system at the British College. She has over 20 years of experience in developing and delivering various software applications for the Nepal of Government, corporate companies as well as international clients She's also an active member of WIIT.

Session 4

Girls in ICT for Inclusive Digital Transformation: Academia Discussion



Session 4

Girls in ICT for Inclusive Digital Transformation: Academic Discussion

Moderated by:

Ms. Richa Neupane
Udeshya: Girls in STEM

This session will lead us into the important role academia playing in shaping the future of girls, the challenges they face and the opportunities for growth and empowerment. This panel brings together women leaders from academic institutions, research institutions and government sector. Participants will gain insights into how academic institutions and government sectors are working towards reach of girls in ICT education. The session also highlights the challenges faced by girls and women while transitioning from academic to industry sector.

Panelists

1. Ms. Salina Dangol,
IT Director, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
2. Dr. Tista Prasai Joshi,
Senior Scientist, Nepal Academy of Science and Technology
3. Ms. Deepika Rimal Thapa,
Senior Vice-President, Private and Boarding Schools Organization, Nepal
4. Ms. Dakshina Shrestha,
Principal, Sagarmatha Engineering College
5. Ms. Stella Koirala,
BCA Coordinator, Kathmandu Business Campus



Ms. Richa Neupane is co-founder of Udeshya: Girls in STEM, an organization dedicated to promoting and supporting inclusion in learning, with over 10 years of experience and an academic background in public policy economics and diplomacy. She is passionate professional driving to enhance the life experience of the most marginalized and also an accountpreneur at accountability lab for 2023.

Session 4: Girls in ICT for Inclusive Digital Transformation: Academic Discussion

Ms. Salina Dangol
ICT Director
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

Ms. Salina Dangol shared her professional journey and shed light on the ministry's efforts toward digital transformation and inclusive ICT practices within the education sector of Nepal. She expressed pride in her current role, highlighting the significance of being one of the few women in a leadership position in government ICT.

Focusing on her current role, Ms. Dangol explained that the Ministry of Education is strongly committed to ensuring equitable access to quality education through digital literacy and the integration of technology into the learning environment. As the head of ICT at the ministry, she is responsible for mainstreaming ICT policies and activities across educational planning, ensuring that gender and social inclusion are embedded in all strategies. She emphasized the importance of collaboration with curriculum developers to integrate ICT-based learning content that is inclusive of women and gender minorities.

In addition to policy development, Ms. Dangol oversees key digital platforms and services such as the Education Management Information System (EMIS), which tracks student data nationwide, and the NOC system, which manages certificates and student records. She also highlighted the ministry's initiatives in capacity building, particularly in training teachers on ICT tools and digital literacy to improve educational delivery.

One of the focal points of her speech was the ministry's active engagement in programs aligned with the goals of inclusive digital education. She cited the STEAM project, which mandates female participation in activities like coding, robotics, and emerging technologies. The ministry also conducts outreach at the local level to promote STEAM education and cyber safety awareness, especially among school children. Additional initiatives include Child Online Protection programs, media leadership programs, ICT lab establishments and awareness campaigns, all designed to encourage more girls to participate in technology-based learning and reduce the digital gender gap.

Ms. Dangol concluded her address by reaffirming her commitment to building an inclusive, digitally empowered education system. Her leadership and the ministry's multifaceted efforts reflect a broader vision of ensuring that every student—regardless of gender or background—has access to the tools and knowledge needed to thrive in the digital age.



Ms. Salina Dangol is ICT Director at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), Nepal. With a strong academic background, she holds both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Computer Engineering from the Nepal College of Information Technology (NCIT). Prior to joining the government sector, she worked for approximately three and a half years as a Lecturer and Assistant Lecturer at ACM Engineering College.

Session 4: Girls in ICT for Inclusive Digital Transformation: Academic Discussion

Dr. Tista Prasai Joshi
Senior Scientist
Nepal Academy of Science and Technology



Dr. Tista Prasai Joshi delivered an inspiring address reflecting on her personal journey, academic achievements, and commitment to empowering the next generation of scientists, particularly women in STEM.

She remembered that a pivotal moment in her career came through a training opportunity at the Chinese Academy of Sciences. This experience fueled her ambition to pursue a PhD in China, where her research focused on water purification technologies. During her doctoral studies, she was recognized with the *Excellent International Student Award*. Upon returning to Nepal, she rejoined NAST and continued applying her expertise in water quality and environmental engineering.

Dr. Joshi spoke proudly of her many accolades, including the prestigious *OWSD-Elsevier Foundation Award* and the *OWSD Early Career Fellowship*, which provided her with USD 50,000 in research funding. With this support, she established a fully equipped laboratory at NAST, enabling her to mentor and support numerous young researchers, particularly in the area of water purification.

In 2024, her impactful work was further recognized with *The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) Award*, adding to her growing list of accomplishments. While highlighting these achievements, Dr. Joshi humbly noted the immense dedication and struggle behind her success—motivated by a deep commitment to the next generation.

She also emphasized NAST's efforts to uplift women in science through the formation of a dedicated *Women Scientists Forum*, which supports and recognizes female researchers across the country. The academy has recently begun formally felicitating outstanding women scientists and awarding young female researchers for their contributions, reinforcing the importance of gender equity in the scientific domain.

Dr. Joshi concluded with an empowering message to the youth, particularly young women, urging them to pursue their ambitions with resilience and courage, as she continues to do in her professional life.

Dr. Tista Prasai Joshi is a Senior Scientist at the Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST), where she leads research and innovation in environmental engineering, particularly in water purification. She has Master's degrees in Microbiology and Anthropology and a PhD in Environmental Engineering from China. Her work has earned her multiple international accolades, such as the *Excellent International Student Award*, the *OWSD-Elsevier Foundation Award*, and the *OWSD Early Career Fellowship*.

Session 4: Girls in ICT for Inclusive Digital Transformation: Academic Discussion

Ms. Deepika Rimal Thapa
Senior Vice-President
Private and Boarding Schools Organization Nepal

Ms. Thapa began by introducing PABSON as a major umbrella organization that includes over 6,000 private and boarding schools across Nepal. These schools collectively serve more than 3.5 million students, with over 350,000 teaching staff, of whom more than 51% are women. Similarly, over 51% of the student population are girls, reflecting the organization's emphasis on gender-inclusive education.

She emphasized the rapid adoption of ICT tools during the COVID-19 pandemic. The crisis served as a wake-up call for schools to shift from traditional teaching methods to digital platforms. Under PABSON's leadership, schools quickly moved from blackboards to whiteboards and now to smartboards, implementing Learning Management Systems (LMS) and conducting online classes throughout all provinces of Nepal—not just in urban centers.

Ms. Thapa also recounted her personal journey in the education sector, which began 40 years ago when technology was virtually unknown in classrooms. She shared how the pandemic accelerated digital transformation and brought attention to the need for teacher training in ICT, especially in using platforms like Zoom and social media to continue education remotely.

She proudly noted PABSON's collaboration with the Curriculum Development Centre, which led to the modernization of the computer education curriculum. This change has allowed students—especially up to Grade 9—to learn practical coding languages such as Java, Python, and Scratch, alongside the incorporation of STEM and STEAM education (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics).

Ms. Thapa further stressed the importance of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in implementing ICT-based education initiatives. She called for greater cooperation between the government and private institutions to provide consistent training, awareness programs, and workshops across all regions. While many private schools are investing in ICT from their own resources, she urged for joint efforts to ensure equal access and capacity building.

In her concluding remarks, she highlighted PABSON's hope that such efforts would not only enhance the quality of education but also help curb the brain drain and monetary outflow by encouraging students to pursue quality education within Nepal. She emphasized that if schools and colleges become ICT-friendly, more students will choose to stay and study in Nepal.



Ms. Deepika Rimal Thapa, Senior Vice-President of the Private and Boarding Schools' Organization Nepal (PABSON), major umbrella organization that includes over 6,000 private and boarding schools across Nepal

Session 4: Girls in ICT for Inclusive Digital Transformation: Academic Discussion

Ms. Dakshina Shrestha
Principal
Sagarmatha Engineering College



Ms. Shrestha began by recounting her 32-year professional journey, which started with a bold decision to pursue engineering against family expectations of studying medicine. After graduating in Electronics and Communication Engineering in 2000, she joined Kathmandu Engineering College as a lecturer and served for 10 years in multiple academic and administrative roles including Head of Department, Chief of Academic and Monitoring Unit, and Vice Principal.

In 2010, she became one of the promoters and now the Principal of Sagarmatha Engineering College and Sagarmatha College of Science and Technology, affiliated with Tribhuvan University. Her colleges offer five programs, with four strongly related to ICT, including Civil Engineering, Electronics and Communication Engineering, Computer Engineering, BSc, and BCA, contributing significantly to the ICT workforce in Nepal.

Ms. Shrestha highlighted the special scholarships and admission waivers provided to female students over the past five years, resulting in good female participation across all programs. Additionally, the promotion of girls into leadership roles in clubs and societies was noted, with women presidents currently leading the Civil Club and Computer Engineering Club. This reflects the institution's commitment to gender inclusivity and encouraging female students to actively participate in academics and extracurricular activities.

During the interactive session, Ms. Shrestha addressed the challenges faced by women in transitioning from academia to industry. She pointed out the persistent gap between academic curriculum and industry needs. Although Tribhuvan University revised its syllabus in 2018 to include practicum and internships, more efforts are needed to keep academic programs aligned with fast-evolving industry standards.

A significant challenge for women transitioning into industry roles, especially those with family responsibilities, is work-life balance. Ms. Shrestha shared a poignant example of a talented female graduate who had to leave her promising job due to night shifts conflicting with childcare duties. She emphasized the critical role of family support in retaining women professionals in the workforce.

To encourage more women in ICT, Ms. Shrestha's colleges actively promote female participation in projects, fieldwork, clubs, and societies. She also highlighted efforts to push female students beyond traditional comfort zones—many female students prefer roles in QA or graphic design, so she motivates them to engage in coding and participate in hackathons organized for women by organizations like Shequal Foundation.

She also shared that for the past five years, her colleges and its partner colleges have participated in Erasmus co-funded projects, designing courses that address practical problems and offering exchange programs for students and teachers with European universities.

Ms. Dakshina Shrestha, Principal is promoter and principal of Sagarmatha Engineering College and Sagarmatha College of Science and Technology. She was also lecturer at Kathmandu Engineering College where she served for 10 years in different management roles like head of the department, head of the career center, chief of academic and monitoring unit and vice principal.

Session 4: Girls in ICT for Inclusive Digital Transformation: Academic Discussion

Ms. Stella Koirala
BCA Coordinator
Kathmandu Business Campus

Ms. Koirala began by recalling her early days as a recent electronics and communication engineering graduate and leader of the team “Miss Tech” which evolved into the Robotic Association of Nepal. Her journey in ICT started not just as an engineer but as an advocate for empowering girls in technology, encouraging them to be seen, heard, and recognized for their talents.

Her professional career spans diverse roles including project coordinator at the Robotic Association of Nepal, technical writer in the corporate sector, business development officer, and web developer. Although she planned to pursue her master’s degree abroad in telecommunication, the COVID-19 pandemic redirected her path, leading to new opportunities in Nepal. After completing her MBA and embracing motherhood, she joined Kathmandu Business Campus, where she now proudly coordinates the Bachelor of Computer Applications (BCA) program.

Ms. Koirala highlighted a major challenge: the current BCA curriculum is outdated, requiring students to cover compact subjects in very limited time. She emphasized the need to modernize the syllabus to meet contemporary industry demands.

She urged educational institutions to move away from traditional teaching methods and prioritize practical, hands-on learning experiences. Inviting industry experts to share real-world knowledge and organizing activities outside the classroom, such as hackathons, can better prepare students for the competitive job market.

Addressing gender disparity and minority inclusion, Ms. Koirala emphasized the importance of diversity in academic environments to foster fresh perspectives and innovative solutions. She cited examples like accessible technology for visually impaired users, highlighting how such initiatives can expand learning and employment opportunities.

As BCA coordinator, Ms. Koirala is committed to bridging the gap between academia and industry by facilitating interactive learning and industry engagement. Under her guidance, KBC organizes intra-college hackathons to expose students to real-world tech challenges and global platforms.



Ms. Stella Koirala is BCA Coordinator at Kathmandu Business Campus (KBC). She is electronics and communication engineering graduate and leader of the team “Miss Tech” which evolved into the Robotic Association of Nepal.

Session 5

Closing Remarks



Mr Badri Kumar Karki
Under Secretary,
Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens

Dr. Pranita Upadhyaya,
Head, ITU Area Office for South Asia and Innovation Centre, Delhi

Mr. Min Prasad Aryal,
Director, Nepal Telecommunications Authority

Closing Remarks

Mr Badri Kumar Karki
Under Secretary
Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens

Esteemed Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Afternoon!

I would like to express my sense of gratitude for this opportunity to deliver closing remarks on behalf of the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizen. Our Ministry holds the mandate to serve over 78% of the total population. This includes all women, children below 18 years, senior citizen aged 60 and above, persons with disability as well as gender and sexual minorities.



Among these groups, women and girls are our prime concern. While the constitution of Nepal guarantees gender equality, the reality still shows a significant disparity between men and women particularly when it comes to access and use of Information and Communication Technology. This gap is even widened among girls and boys especially in rural areas and backward community. We recognize that ICT is a key element for national development and prosperity. Using digital tools and technology is no longer option, it is essential. However, to move forward, we must understand our current situation.

Clearly as far as I know, Nepal doesn't yet have a standalone ICT survey that provides detailed insight into ICT uses in both household and non-household setting. The socioeconomic impact of ICT use is still not clear because of the data gap. The data we currently rely on comes from broader national surveys and census which limit information. Among youth aged 12 to 24, it is estimated that fewer less than 1/4 of the ICT user are female. This under representation becomes even more visible when we look at female entrepreneur and women in leadership position.

And yet we all acknowledge that ICT makes life easier, more efficient and more connected. While it is encouraging to see increasing ICT use among teenager, we must also address it darker side. For instance, cyber-crime, online violence, bullying, blackmailing, ethical distortion and cultural erosion are real threat. It is time to revisit our ICT use policy and legislation to ensure that technology is a force for good but not for harm.

As a focal Ministry, we are actively working to empower women and children through awareness program, skill training and targeted policy intervention. Ministry is using ICT for capturing social related data from 753 local government and also use ICT for capturing gender-based violence response mechanism case handling. We also provide grant to NOG's focused on uplifting disadvantaged, ultra-poor and marginalized population. We have made progress a noticeable rise in the participation of women in government services, a political leadership but significant challenge remains. Barriers such as restrictive social norms, limited access to digital resource, work-life balance and low continue to hold back women and girls from fully engaging in ICT sector. To bridge this digital gender divide, we must work together, government bodies, NOG's, INGOs like ITU and the private sector and communities as at large. Collaboration is the key. together through education, awareness, empowerment, we can create inclusive pathway for girls and women in ICT. Initiatives like Girls in ICT are crucial in improving digital literacy, education and career opportunity for a young woman. I assume we discuss and share views and ideas today in a panel discussion. It will be fruitful for all to make a plan for the days to come. Let us continue to support and expand such initiatives to ensure that Nepal's future is inclusive, innovative and equitable.

Let us unite in our commitment to empower young women in ICT paving the way for peaceful and prosperous Nepal. Thank you all.

Closing Remarks

Dr. Pranita Upadhyaya
Head
ITU Area Office for South Asia and
Innovation Centre, Delhi



Distinguished guests, our valued partner of this event Nepal Telecommunications Authority, speakers, moderators, most importantly the young women and girls who have joined today, it is with great appreciation and optimism that we bring this launch session of Girls in ICT program to a close. Today marks a beginning of the meaningful journey. One that is dedicated to empowering girls and women across Nepal and other South Asian countries to explore, engage with the excel in the field of Information Communication Technologies.

We are deeply encouraged by the enthusiasm and commitment demonstrated today. Your presence affirms the importance of creating inclusive digital space where every girl regardless of her background or ability can thrive and lead. The launch is only the first step. Distinguished guests, our valued partner of this event Nepal Telecommunications Authority, speakers, moderators, most importantly the young women and girls who have joined today, it is with great appreciation and optimism that we bring this launch session of Girls in ICT program to a close. Today marks a beginning of the meaningful journey. One that is dedicated to empowering girls and women across Nepal and other South Asian countries to explore, engage with the excel in the field of Information Communication Technologies. We are deeply encouraged by the enthusiasm and commitment demonstrated today. Your presence affirms the importance of creating inclusive digital space where every girl regardless of her background or ability can thrive and lead. The launch is only the first step. In the weeks ahead, we are proud to present a series of hands-on inclusive learning opportunities designed to build skills, confident and community: Hands-on coding workshop on 2nd and 3rd of July in Butwal and Dhangadhi, Inclusive workshop for girls with disability on 10th July in Kathmandu and Pokhara, Skill building in emerging technology from 23rd to 25th July in Surkhet and Itahari, Access to curated IT academy courses from 16th to 5th of August offering self-paced learning in key digital skills. And finally, we will come together once again for a closing ceremony to celebrate achievements and reflect on the journey. We at ITU remain committed to support every step of this initiative. Together with our partner, we will continue to work towards a future where girls are not only the participants in the digital world but leaders and innovators and change makers. Thank you once again for your participation in today's launch. We will look forward to seeing you in the incredible progress and inspiring sessions that will emerge from the sessions ahead. Let us move forward with a purpose with passion and with a shared belief that when girls are empowered in ICT entire world benefits.

Thank you very much.

Thank you for joining us today.

Closing Remarks

Mr. Min Prasad Aryal
Director
Nepal Telecommunications Authority

Namaste and good afternoon!

As we come to the close of this inspiring and impactful observance of ITU Girls in ICT Day Nepal 2025 launch event, it is my honor to offer a few concluding reflections on behalf of Nepal Telecommunications Authority. Today, we have witnessed the strength, creativity and ambition of the girls and young women who are not only prepared to take part in the digital future but to lead it.



We have heard valuable insight from the governments, development partners, private sector leaders and educators on how we can work together to create a more inclusive and equitable digital ecosystem. The theme Girls in ICT “Girls in ICT for Inclusive Digital Transformation” is indeed a shared commitment. At NTA, we believe that true digital transformation can only be achieved, when it includes and uplifts every voice especially, those have traditionally been under represented to leave no one behind. One of our priority goals is to encourage girls and young women to pursue STEM education and inspire them to work in STEM carriers. All digital gaps need to be bridged regardless of the gender or age or the location that means urban or rural areas. We recognize the vital importance of addressing the digital gender divide. That is why, we continue to invest in programs that expand digital access, promote ICT educations and support innovation among young girls especially in rural and underserved areas. Our regulatory and policy efforts are guided by the vision of connected Nepal that is inclusive and secure for future readiness.

To all the young participants here today, your ideas matter, your dreams matter and your role in shaping digital future is essential. We encourage you to remain curious, courageous and committed to using technology as a force for good. And we also wish to have future cooperation and collaboration as applicable. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the International Telecommunications Union, our national partners, government agencies, industries, educators and advocates who have made this event possible and successful. Your efforts are building bridges of opportunity for girls in ICT and contributing to a brighter more inclusive Digital Nepal. Finally, I would like to thank to the event manager Global Spark Private Limited for the wonderful event management. Last but not least, I would like to thank Hotel Himalaya for the wonderful hospitality in arranging this event with best logistics. Let us carry the energy and insights of today forward. Together we can ensure that no girl and young women is left behind in our journey toward digital transformation.

Thank you all for your participation, your passion and your partnership. Thank you

Organizing Committee



Ms Roja Kiran Basukal, Head, Technology Research & Development Section, NTA

Ms. Kalpana Gyawali, Computer Engineer, MoCIT

Ms. Ranjana Pokharel, Women Development Officer, MoWCSC

Ms. Salina Dangol, ICT Director, MoEST

Ms. Samita Thapa, Section Officer, National Women Commission

Ms. Anku Jaiswal, Assistant Professor, Institute of Engineering

Mr. Pradeep Dhodari, Promotion Officer, NAST

Ms. Amrita Khakurel, Deputy Manager, Nepal Telecom

Ms. Yasmine Bhattarai, Unit Head, Information Security, Ncell Axiata Ltd.

Mr. Suvash Khadka, CEO, ISPAN

Ms. Anjana Devkota Khanal, Head Chairman's Secretariat & International Relation Section, NTA

Ms. Pratikshya Budhathoki, Assistant Director, Legal Section, NTA

Mr. Krishna Bahadur Karki, Assistant Director, Technology Research & Development Section, NTA