

Pathways to Power: Findings from the WePOWER Baseline Assessment

Women's representation in the South Asia Power Sector is low

"We are rediscovering the lost talent pool..."

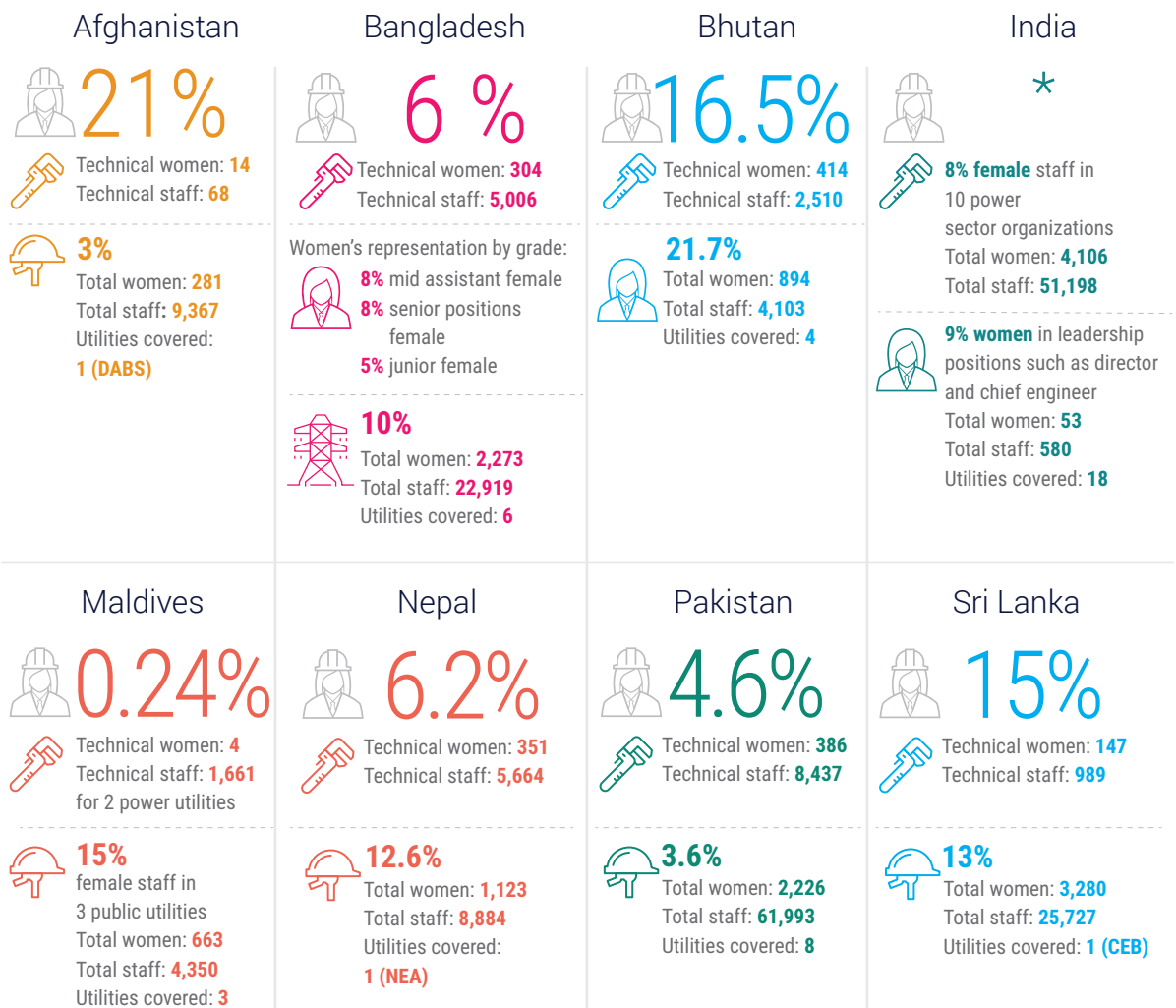
Gender Diverse workforce is crucial to tackling the future challenges of the growing power sector.

Baseline assessments were conducted for all 8 South Asian countries:

The share of women employees in the surveyed institutions ranges from 3% to 25% share of women total and share of women engineers and technicians is even lower – less than 1% to 21%.

- **It is encouraging** to find women in senior and leadership positions in energy ministries and public utilities.

- **However**, most women tend to work in the middle- to lower-level positions.



Promising Findings in the region:

- **Bhutan** | In total, 341 women accounted for 24% of executive and management level positions.
- **Afghanistan** | Presidential mandate to increase recruitment and improve working environment for women in the energy sector.
- **India** | Innovative efforts by Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) to improve female enrollment, including female-centric orientation and online help-desk.
- **Pakistan** | Women in Energy (WIE) hosts quarterly events for women to be placed on the boards of public utilities.
- **Tata Power DDL (India)** | benefits for women staff include support for returning mothers and mandatory mentoring for women managers.

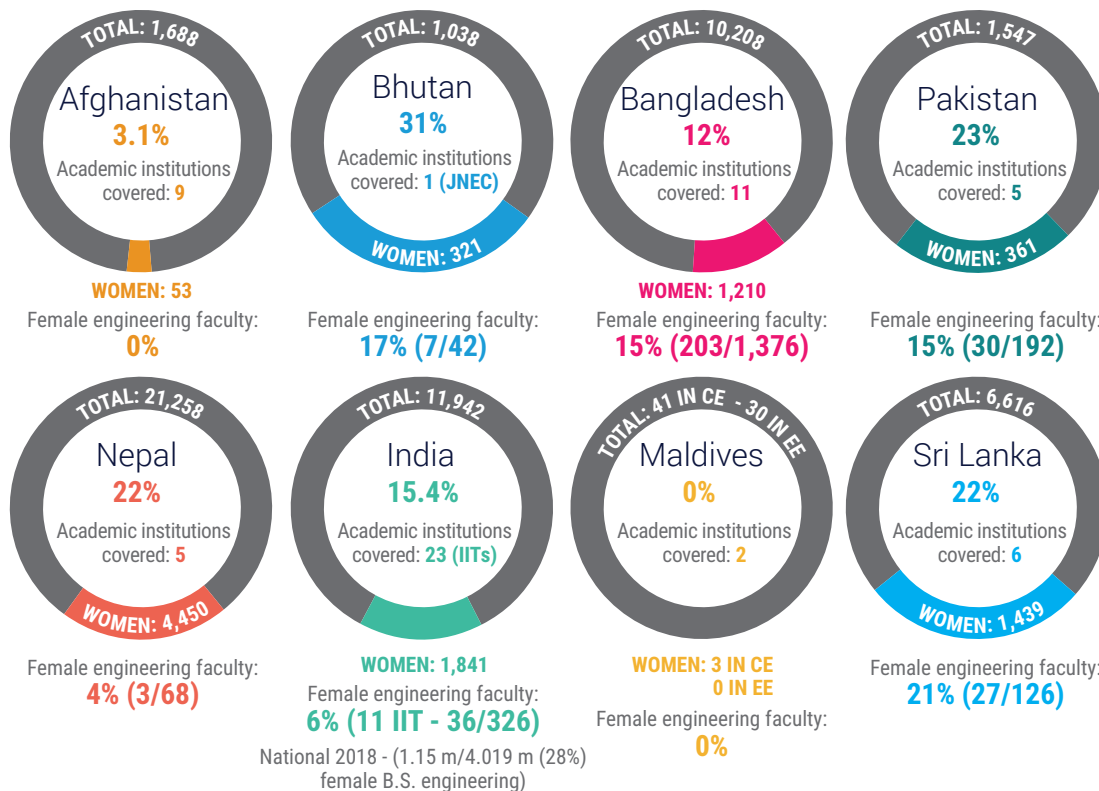
Expanding Job Opportunities for Women in the Energy in South Asia

Lessons and Talking Points

- **Various active and passive forms of discrimination** limit women's advancement in both studies and career.
- **There is startling overlap in the experiences of women** during their academic and professional lives, despite the diversity of the women interviewed. Balancing responsibilities at home and work is especially challenging.
- **Institutional cultures** at the schools and power sector organizations are very important – "gender-neutral" approach has not worked.
- **Key Enablers** - early exposure to STEM, role models, and family support are crucial.
- **The absence of basic facilities** and transportation for women restricts their job and training opportunities, especially in the field.
- **Childcare and Flex time** are the most wanted benefits, but are not always institutionalized. Women are dependent on empathetic and flexible bosses.
- **Utilities and men are generally supportive** and open to having more women working in their organizations – but cite lack of qualified women as a major barrier.

Female enrollment rates for graduate engineering programs range from 0% to 30%.

Female Engineering Faculty ranges from 0% to 21%.



WePOWER – Women's Professional Network for the Power Sector in South Asia

Goal: Support higher participation of women in energy projects and utilities, and promote normative change regarding women in STEM.

Joint initiative by the World Bank's South Asia Energy and Social Development units under the South Asia Gender and Energy (SAGE) Facility.

WePOWER partners include the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

To address the barriers and gaps, **WePOWER** is partnering with Strategic and Institutional partners to create a vibrant and self-sustaining professional network. The partners agreed to endorse the objectives of the network and implement incremental activities, which are of interest and priority to them, along WePOWER's five pillars: (i) **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education**; (ii) **Recruitment**; (iii) **Development**; (iv) **Retention**; and (v) **Policy and Institutional Change**.

The first regional conference formally launched **WePOWER** on Feb 20-21.

- The event showcased the work program and commitments of its partners for the next two years.
- Over 150 participants in addition to various regional and international stakeholders over the two-day conference focused on enhancing gender equality in the power sector.

