

Center for Strategic and International Studies

TRANSCRIPT

Event

**“Driving Impact: Championing Gender Equality with
Amb. Geeta Rao Gupta”**

DATE

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FEATURING

Geeta Rao Gupta

*Ambassador-at-Large for the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues,
U.S. Department of State*

CSIS EXPERTS

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Transcript By

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Hadeil Ali: How does a first-generation Indian American become a representative for women and girls around the world? How did a Ph.D. in social psychology lead to a career dedicated to women's equality and empowerment? Ambassador Geeta Rao Gupta, the United States ambassador at large for global women's issues at the State Department, joins us today to answer these questions, and more. I'm your host, Hadeil Ali. Welcome to Driving Impact.

Announcer: Driving Impact, an exclusive insight into the personal backgrounds and careers of trailblazers on the front lines of policy.

Ambassador Geeta Rao Gupta: It's a pleasure to be here. Thank you for inviting me.

Ms. Ali: Absolutely. Thank you for being here.

Well, let me get started here in asking you about your childhood, and what you dreamt of being. As a 10-year-old, what did Geeta want to be when she grew up? And we have a wonderful picture of you here with a notebook. (Laughter.) I'm not sure what you were doing.

Amb. Rao Gupta: I was doing my addition, learning how to add. My father was actually teaching me addition. What, at 10? At 10, I just wanted to be a good girl. I just wanted to please my parents, please my teachers. Had no strong ambitions or preferences of what I wanted to be at that age. That came much later.

Ms. Ali: When would you say it came about, when you started thinking about –

Amb. Rao Gupta: In college, I think. It was mostly in – yeah, by the end of college that I started thinking about, what did I want to be?

Ms. Ali: But before then it was just being a – being a good student –

Amb. Rao Gupta: Yeah, studying and moving ahead. Yeah.

Ms. Ali: It seems like your family had a – had a big influence and were strong supporters of what you wanted to do. Can you talk just a little bit about your parents and how they influenced your career?

Amb. Rao Gupta: Well, I credit them with everything that I am today and all that I have accomplished. I come from a family of three generations of women who worked outside the home, and lots of professional women in my extended family, and men who supported them. So an extremely progressive family, where equal opportunities for women and girls was

the norm. And they, you know, supported everything that I became, gave me all the opportunities that I needed. The role models that they provided me – my mother, my grandmother, my aunt – were what stuck with me throughout, and the values.

There were some very fundamental principles and values that were talked about, but also that they lived by. One of which was that integrity and honesty above all. Another was kindness is a must when you're talking – when you're dealing with others. A third one, which my father in particular truly believed in, is that hard work will get you results, but that you cannot control what those results will be. You can only control the amount of effort you put in. So he truly believed that, you know, working hard would ultimately give me the results that I wanted. So I lived by those principles.

Ms. Ali: And maybe it's not the results that you were intending for, but there are results. (Laughter.)

Amb. Rao Gupta: Not at all. I'll tell you, my life has quite – turned out to be quite the surprise.

Ms. Ali: And we have – you mentioned your father. We have a great picture of your family. Here is that your father, mother, and sibling?

Amb. Rao Gupta: Yes, my once – my sister wasn't born yet. So that's just my brother and me, and my little doll. (Laughs.)

Ms. Ali: Was your doll's name – you were talking to me –

Amb. Rao Gupta: Usha. Usha. My little doll, Usha. That was a gift to me from my grandfather, from my paternal grandfather. And I loved her a lot and looked after her. (Laughs.)

Ms. Ali: Ambassador, you talked about coming from three generations of working women. And as you were saying this, I was thinking about this word "feminism" that we talk about, or "feminist." Would you consider your mother or grandmother as feminists?

Amb. Rao Gupta: For certain, by the definition that we use now. I don't think they would use the terms for themselves. I don't think the term was even that popular then. I think the thread that ran through all of them – my aunt, my mother, and my grandma – was a dedication to serve their communities, especially communities who did not have the privileges that they had. And that's what I imbibed. So there was a certain commitment to social justice and equality that I saw in them.

My mother, for example, was trained as a physician, but she tried to set up a private practice for a few months and couldn't charge her low-income patients the fees. And so gave it up, and worked for the rest of her career in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in India and trained community health workers, family planning workers, and then worked in a university teaching medicine. But even there, focused on community medicine and public health. At the age of 40, she traveled to University of California, Berkeley to do her master's in public health, and brought that knowledge back to India because we didn't have a school of public health in those days in India. So she was amazing.

My grandma founded a school for low-income children – Muslim, Jewish, and Hindu children – in the area where she lived. And ran that till very late in her life, and ran it even when it was running at a loss because she wouldn't charge her students fees. She just – so all of them believed very strongly in education. Education was a value that they held dear. In other families I would say it was equivalent to religion. My parents were an inter-religion couple. My father was Hindu. My mother was Jewish – Indian-Jewish, Bene Israel Jewish. And they were very respectful of each other's religion. So we didn't have any rituals in the home of either religion. But what they brought to us from both those religions was the value of education, and community service.

Ms. Ali: You're reminding me of a book I read recently called "Everyday Feminists," and thinking about, you know, the women all over the world that might not use the word "feminism," but what they're doing on a daily basis, the way that they're impacting their local communities, is the way we would describe it here as feminism. As I think a lot about these role models that you've had that really focused on impact and giving back to the community.

Amb. Rao Gupta: Yeah. And they were powerful women. I mean, you know, there were women who stood up for their rights, who spoke up, who had opinions. And that's what I watched and learned from.

Ms. Ali: It's OK to speak up, right?

Amb. Rao Gupta: Absolutely.

Ms. Ali: Because sometimes you're taught to – you know, or not taught, but at least socialized to maybe make yourself small or I don't want to speak up. And seeing those role models where it's OK to do that. (Laughs.)

Amb. Rao Gupta: Oh, no. Either my aunt, or my mother, or my grandma, they were strong women who spoke up, had opinions, enjoyed life, had an optimism that was also infectious. Yeah, wonderful, wonderful women. I was blessed

to have them.

- Ms. Ali: Yeah. Ambassador, talk to us a little bit more about the different journeys that you've talked about with your maternal grandmother and paternal grandmother. Because you use those stories to talk about the value of access – access to education and healthcare – and how that can have huge effects and outcomes on livelihood and other pieces as well.
- Amb. Rao Gupta: It's an interesting story, because they were sort of parallel lives in two different parts of India. My paternal grandmother died at the age of 32. Died because of what we would now call maternal depletion. She'd had multiple pregnancies. Actually, 11 deliveries, but only six of her children survived. And I think with that depletion, she was more vulnerable to tuberculosis, and she finally died of tuberculosis.

And my maternal grandmother around the same time – almost the same years – living in a big city, my paternal grandmother and grandparents were in a smaller town in India. She lived in a bigger city. Both were of the same income level, both families, but my grandfather on the – on my mother's side was a professor of botany in a university, in a college in Bombay. And so they had sort of networks and access to knowledge and information. And so my maternal grandmother, after giving birth to her sixth child, decided that that was enough.

And my grandfather told her, I'm going to go out this morning and I'll come back late. Just tell everybody that I'm working late. And he came home probably having had the first vasectomy in all of India, because through his connections he had met a surgeon who'd returned from the U.K. having learned this technique. And that freed up my grandma from any further pregnancies. And she went back – she went to college. She got her degree in education and set up this school.

So the lives – the trajectory of those lives is so different, one from the other, because, as I like to say, one was able to control her own destiny and shape her future and the other had no ability to do that, despite having a husband who loved her dearly, who wanted nothing but the best for her. When she died, my grandfather was bereft. He was a natural musician, but he never played a musical instrument again.

And so it's just – and then, you know, as a result the trajectory of their children, so my father's siblings, as compared to my mother's siblings. My mother's siblings – every single one of them reached the highest ranks of their careers, of their education. Whereas on my father's side, many of them struggled to find the opportunities that they so richly deserved.

Ms. Ali: Thank you for sharing that. That last piece that you mentioned, the impact on the future generations, you've talked about intergenerational disadvantage.

Amb. Rao Gupta: Yes.

Ms. Ali: And even I think about a term that's often used in the in the United States, generational wealth, right? So thinking about not only the impact that it had on your grandmothers, but then the generations –

Amb. Rao Gupta: That followed.

Ms. Ali: That followed.

Amb. Rao Gupta: Yeah.

Ms. Ali: Exactly. And it's interesting you mentioned that the income wasn't necessarily the issue, right?

Amb. Rao Gupta: No.

Ms. Ali: There were other factors. And I think sometimes we think about income as a major factor, but you alluded to a lot of the other –

Amb. Rao Gupta: It's called social capital.

Ms. Ali: Social capital.

Amb. Rao Gupta: You know, you have – you have financial capital, but you also have social capital. And I think that counts for a lot as well. And where you live and the, you know, access to services and knowledge, that's what – those are also sources of power in society.

Ms. Ali: And I know that conversation is often happening in the United States, talking about housing, healthcare system, neighborhoods, you know, think about, you know, architecture, what neighborhoods have green spaces, have public spaces.

Amb. Rao Gupta: Absolutely, yeah.

Ms. Ali: All of these things are very much connected, like you said. I want to talk a little bit more about your college days. And, again, we have a – we have a picture of here of you, when you've – you studied at prominent universities. And you did a Ph.D. in social psychology. And typically, when someone is pursuing a Ph.D. there are questions that you're looking to answer. Were there particular questions that you were curious about as you decided to make that decision to pursue a Ph.D.?

Amb. Rao Gupta: Yes. I will say that growing up in India I was very aware of the gender inequalities that existed outside of my home. It took me a while to recognize them, because I was so cocooned within my family and my extended family. But when I realized that many of my peers didn't have the same privileges in terms of opportunities – I don't mean money – I was quite struck by how women are held back. And so that constantly was at the back of my head, that there's something wrong here. There's something wrong. I was very aware of the violence against women. I myself was – experienced physical intimidation, violence, you know, assault in just taking the bus to college every day.

And realized that women don't talk about it, that not much is done about it. I remember the first time I complained to my principal about it she said, you need to learn karate. You know, it's like, why was it on me to fix this problem? So it got me thinking about what is needed to fix this problem. And initially I picked psychology. So I truly thought this was a pathology that could be fixed an individual at a time, and learned very quickly that this is – in fact that the root causes are structural, they're societal.

As it happens, it was circumstances that led me to social psychology. The university that I moved to didn't offer the Ph.D. in clinical psychology. And so I started out on that, and did my M.Phil., which is the pre-Ph.D. degree in India, as well as my Ph.D., in fact, on women's roles and how they cope with the multiple demands on their time and the multiple roles that they have. And I did my Ph.D. in Bangalore city at a time when it was just – where women were just coming out of their homes to sort of enter service jobs.

And it was a very interesting time because their traditional roles were still held intact while they were taking on this new responsibility. So that was my Ph.D. It was on role conflicts that women experience and the coping strategies that they deploy. And I had this amazing opportunity to do a survey on almost 360 women across – of all levels in the service sector, as well as, you know, women who were not working and at home. And then I did in-depth interviews with 180 of them. And that was incredible, because I learned so much. I was newly married myself then. And the view that I got into their individual lives, and their daily struggles and battles, and how they negotiate so that they could deal with the conflicts that they experienced, was an eye opener to me.

So I think my research was very much motivated by what I saw around me, and wanted so desperately to be able to understand better, and to

figure out ways to fix it. And that basically was the thread throughout my career. That's what led me to focus my entire career on women's rights and gender equality.

Ms. Ali: So that was a very formative moment in your – in your life and career.

Amb. Rao Gupta: Extremely. Extremely. I should say that, you know, the other piece of it in India – growing up in India that I was so privileged to be able to witness firsthand was the beginnings of the of the Indian women's movement. And I was able to participate in some of those gatherings and meetings, and feel the energy of those really fierce activists who, you know, felt that this was something that they could – that by mobilizing and organizing, we could actually achieve.

And among them were very strong researchers, women who used their data to do their advocacy, and based it on their data. So famous women like Veena Mazumdar, Devaki Jain, these were women who inspired me, Kamla Bhasin. You know, we sang songs together. We would – I was very young. So I'd watch them from afar, and was truly inspired by them. And they are the ones who sort of convinced me that having data to back up the advocacy is the right way forward. And that's why I went down the track of research.

Ms. Ali: Mmm hmm. I was thinking, when you were talking about the women's movement, if – how well the Western media covers these movements. I think about – my family is from Egypt – I think about feminist or women's movements across the Middle East, that maybe are not, you know, covered, and given the – given the time to see that there are movements led by women, and also led by women that are in urban areas, in rural areas, that are Muslims, that are Christians, from every background. Sometimes we have a certain perception of who's a feminist.

Amb. Rao Gupta: Mmm hmm. I was thinking, when you were talking about the women's movement, if – how well the Western media covers these movements. I think about – my family is from Egypt – I think about feminist or women's movements across the Middle East, that maybe are not, you know, covered, and given the – given the time to see that there are movements led by women, and also led by women that are in urban areas, in rural areas, that are Muslims, that are Christians, from every background. Sometimes we have a certain perception of who's a feminist.

Ms. Ali: Let's talk more about education and curriculum as well. Because I think a part of it is the women's movements that you talked about, but also how are we teaching right, and how are we talking about these issues?

You worked to develop the first women's studies curriculum for graduate students in India. How did this opportunity come about? And how did this experience –

Amb. Rao Gupta: I have to say, that was one of the luckiest things that ever happened to me.

Ms. Ali: (Laughs.) It was the hard work that leads to results.

Amb. Rao Gupta: (Laughs.) But I – you know, I was picked by Professor Suma Chitnis, who was an expert on the sociology of education. Was teaching at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Bombay. And she picked me to, along with another young Ph.D. student – I was still doing my Ph.D. then – to come help her put together all of the background literature and material to develop a curriculum on what was called the Women's Studies Program. But the Women's Studies Programs here are more about history, and literature, and so on. That program was really about women and development, women and poverty. It was more relevant for India.

And she had a grant from the Ford Foundation to do that. And soon after I started, she won one of the most prestigious national awards for scholarship and was given a sabbatical to write a book, which of course she took. But she negotiated with the Ford Foundation that she would supervise us from a distance, from her home, but that we would pull together – Nasreen (sp) and I, my colleague and I – would pull together the curriculum, the reading materials for the students, and actually teach the first pilot program.

So can you imagine being, you know, 20-odd years old, sitting in a library, having literally a grant from a foundation to order any books from around the world, to make sure that the students had in the library resource material for the – for the course, and then to design these courses on status of women, women and the law, women's employment, women's health, and then to teach them to graduate students who were just a few years younger than us, and get feedback from them? So there's no better way to learn than to teach, because you have to really know your material.

And I had that – literally, I was being paid to sit and learn. And I learned about Western feminism. I learned about the movements around the world. I could put together articles. We got to interview legal experts and others in India and bring them in as guest lecturers and learn from them. So it was a fabulous experience. And that's when I decided for certain that women and development, in the context of economic development women's rights, was going to be the focus of my work.

Ms. Ali: Yeah. And I see how – throughout the stories that you mentioned, how it's getting more specific, right, in terms of your interest. So now your journey takes you to – brings you to the U.S. You moved to United States in 1980s. And I think a great way to share with our audience a little bit more about your work once you come to the U.S. is through a memento. So we ask all of our guests to bring a memento, something that symbolizes a memorable or meaningful moment in their career. Could you describe to us what you brought here, and why you decided to share that with us?

Amb. Rao Gupta: So this is the award that was given to me after 20 years of service at the International Center for Research on Women, an organization that I worked in for 20 years and led for 13. And it has in it not just the certificate acknowledging that I'd worked there for 20 years, but three photographs that I think sort of embody the opportunities that ICRW gave me that really positioned me to take off in my career. So I, you know, was incredibly blessed to be a part of ICRW's history.

So one of the pictures is of me giving a plenary speech at the Durban International AIDS Conference in 2000, which was based – which was on women's vulnerability to HIV and what causes that vulnerability. And it was based on a research program that I led, together with other colleagues. And I didn't realize it at the time, but it was a definite turning point in my career because – one of the high points of my career, because it was an audience of, I think, 12,000 people at that time in this massive hall that stood up and gave me a standing ovation at the end of that lecture.

And I didn't realize how different it was from what was known at the time. It's almost like, for me, it was obvious, because I'd seen it through the research. But it's the first time that I pointed out that gender norms affect both women and men, that they restrict – they're restrictive for both women and men. And I think that was an aha moment for many people. I also talked about how women's economic vulnerability causes their vulnerability to HIV, it contributes to their vulnerability. So that was a big one.

The other pictures me with Meryl Streep. (Laughs.)

Ms. Ali: I didn't notice that!

Amb. Rao Gupta: (Laughs.) At a gala. One of the fundraisers that we used to regularly do at ICRW. It's an important picture for two reasons. One, because it is Meryl Streep, and I had a wonderful evening with her then. But also, because it marked the end of my chemotherapy. So it's the first time that I came out to a big public event after my bout with cancer – breast

cancer, for that one year. And it was just wonderful to be out in public again. So the turban in that picture is because I had no hair.

And then the third picture is of a panel that I was invited to be a participant in by Time Magazine. And it's just for me a good illustration of the kinds of opportunities that I got through my job at ICRW to interact with, you know, esteemed sort of leaders in the field, with thinkers and innovators. In that picture is Bill Gates. You know, and I got to have a conversation with him about women's financial inclusion and economic empowerment. So it's just – it was an incredible opportunity to be at ICRW.

Ms. Ali: And you talked a lot about data, data, data. And I think your time there also emphasized the importance of – you mentioned bringing advocacy and data together.

Amb. Rao Gupta: Yeah, absolutely. That was what the center was built on. It was founded by Myra Buvinic. I was the second president of the organization. And the mission was really to make the invisible, visible. So it was using data. And the other way that we would describe our work was to turn insight into action, because – as someone once described us – we were a think tank and a do tank – (laughter) – because we would gather the evidence and then we would actually apply it through projects that we would do in the field, and then evaluate those to be able to assess the impact that they had.

So, yes, it was an – you know, an organization that that emphasized the importance of data and evidence-driven solutions and policy sort of options, in the hope of trying to influence U.S. foreign assistance and development assistance, as well as to influence some of the multilateral agencies, and banks, and so on.

Ms. Ali: I think this brings us to a great place to talk about the present, your current role. President Biden nominated you to be the U.S. ambassador-at-large for global women's issues in 2021. And you were confirmed last year. And we have a picture here of your confirmation.

Amb. Rao Gupta: With my husband and my daughter.

Ms. Ali: I was curious – I just wanted to ask you, OK, so your daughter and your husband. What was going through your mind in that in that moment? Do you remember?

Amb. Rao Gupta: Oh, I was so nervous. (Laughter.) You know, who would have imagined I would have been there, right, in front of VP Harris? It just was a staggering moment for me. I was emotional. I missed my parents. Yeah.

It was a pretty big moment. (Laughs.) It was such – it's such an honor, I cannot begin to tell you. It's a – it's immense for me.

Ms. Ali: Now, looking at – I took a minute, because I felt – I got emotional myself.

Amb. Rao Gupta: I did too. (Laughs.)

Ms. Ali: (Laughs.) So, sorry. I took a little bit of a moment there.

Thinking about – now that you're a year into the role, and I think a lot about – I used to – the term mainstreaming. And then I saw an interview of yours. You said, I don't like the word "mainstreaming." (Laughter.) And that really stuck with me. You talked about gender integration. And I want to hear from you more the importance of having this position, this role that you're in, but also the importance of integrating this work across everything that the State Department does.

Amb. Rao Gupta: Yeah. I mean, that's the purpose of the job, actually, is to really – you know, President Biden and Secretary Blinken have repeatedly said that gender equality is the cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy. And so one office sitting in the State Department is not going to achieve that. It has to be an interagency effort. And certainly within the State Department, all of the bureaus and all of the embassies have to be able to integrate this into all of the work that they do – whether that's diplomatic efforts, or partnerships, or policy proposals. And that's what we really want to be able to achieve through this office, is to influence that process, to provide the training, the technical support to do that. That's a big part of it.

Ms. Ali: Are you worried, Ambassador, about all the setbacks, the pushback that we're – that we're seeing, not just in the United States, I think, globally as well? Should we be worried?

Amb. Rao Gupta: Yeah, this has been a huge concern for me. You know this job is the capstone of a 40-year career for me. And to be at a point where progress on gender equality is being slowed and, in some cases, even being reversed, is hugely troubling. It's not as if in the past, it's always been a linear progression upward, but I don't think we've seen quite this level of pushback as we're seeing now. And you're right, it's global. It's also very well coordinated. It's very well financed. And it's a set of very disparate malign actors who are somehow using gender equality as the tip of the spear to set back progress on human rights, to undermine democratic institutions and ideals. And so I think this really is not just about gender equality, and it should be a huge concern to all of us who value democracy.

Ms. Ali: And I love that you said that last piece about democracy. It's really about upholding our democratic values.

Amb. Rao Gupta: Absolutely. And I hold those very dear. And so really feel this is the fight of a lifetime, that we have to hold onto it, that those of us who are likeminded need to come together to figure out strategies, and arguments, and, to the extent that it's data that can make the case, gather that data, to the extent that it's just strategy and tactics, what should those be? I think that's very important.

Ms. Ali: We need better coordination.

Amb. Rao Gupta: Yes, absolutely.

Ms. Ali: Ambassador, you're the fourth person in the role, but you're the first woman of color in the role. And you've talked about the importance of advancing gender equality for all women. And I know the term "intersectionality" can feel – you know, people feel, like, with, yeah –

Amb. Rao Gupta: (Laughs.) It sounds too academic, yeah.

Ms. Ali: Exactly. Or, you know, what do you actually mean by that? So talk to us about how you're making sure that all women are included in the work that you're doing in your office, both at home and abroad.

Amb. Rao Gupta: So, to explain the concept, you know, women are not a monolith entity. There are many different kinds of women. And we are, each of us, made up of different identities. As I said, I'm part Hindu. I'm part Jewish. I'm Indian American. I'm – there's so many parts to our individual identities. And so the concept of intersectionality is really to understand how these different aspects of your identity intersect with each other to contribute to disadvantage, or discrimination, or inequality. That's the concept of intersectionality. And our office states it as we deal with all women, or women and all their diversity, precisely to be able to underscore that we want to look at the difference that race, or ethnicity, or sexual identity, or other – class, you know? How do these factors intersect with gender inequality to create different forms of inequality, forms that we need to understand better in order to be able to intervene in the right way.

And I know that you're – you were just talking about how much you're traveling. And I know your work takes you to different parts of the world to have those conversations. We have a photo here from a recent trip that you took to Kenya.

Kenya, yes. Yes. Or, actually, this was in – this was in Rwanda.

Ms. Ali: In Rwanda.

Amb. Rao Gupta: But it was at the – at a conference in Rwanda, where I met with these incredible young women leaders who were organizing within their community. I often ask my team to help me do this in every country I go to, to meet with young women there, because they give me the energy and the inspiration that I need to keep going. And these young women were just amazing.

Ms. Ali: And at times they're doing the hardest and most important work, but maybe are not getting the spotlights.

Amb. Rao Gupta: Absolutely. And they are – you know, we often talk about young people as our future, but they're our present as well. They're here today. And they're dealing with all of the challenges that we see in front of us, but for them that's going to define who they become and what opportunities they have in the future. So it is their fight.

Ms. Ali: Absolutely. Ambassador, to close our conversation we like to ask our guests three questions.

Amb. Rao Gupta: OK.

Ms. Ali: Every episode of Driving Impact, rapid fire. Are you ready?

Amb. Rao Gupta: Oh, yes. I am.

Ms. Ali: Let's do it. What are three words you would use to describe your career?

Amb. Rao Gupta: Surprising, satisfying, humbling.

Ms. Ali: In your opinion, what does it mean to be American?

Amb. Rao Gupta: I think of the word "possibility," opportunity. That's what I get by being American. And I greatly, greatly feel privileged because of it.

Ms. Ali: And what is giving you hope right now, Ambassador?

Amb. Rao Gupta: Those young women.

Ms. Ali: That we saw in that photo?

Amb. Rao Gupta: In that picture. You know, it's young women around the world, as well

as the women who struggle quietly on a daily basis with the challenges in front of them, negotiating their own solutions. It was the same thing when I did my Ph.D. as it is today. I always marvel at how, you know, the daily struggles, the courage of women, courage to care for their own freedom, for the freedoms of their country, for their country's future. That's inspiring. That's what keeps me going.

Ms. Ali: Thank you so much, Ambassador, for your time. It's been such a pleasure to have you on Driving Impact and seeing your journey from a young girl doing math to becoming an ambassador and seeing here your photo with your confirmation. So, Ambassador, again, thank you very much for your time. It's been such a pleasure.

Amb. Rao Gupta: Thank you very much for inviting me. It's been an honor to be here, and to actually go through my life with you has been an eye opener for me. So thank you.

Ms. Ali: Thank you.

You heard it yourself, a remarkable journey of firsts – from developing India's first women's studies curriculum to becoming the first woman of color in her role. Ambassador Geeta Rao Gupta draws inspiration from the women in her family to advocate for women and girls around the world. Thank you for tuning in to today's conversation. You can find more episodes of Driving Impact on YouTube, or wherever you listen to podcasts.

(END.)