


Chapter 3

Attaining Sustainable Development Goals Through Gender Equality in Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

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ABSTRACT

When ICTs are brought into an economy, society, or culture, their ability to positively influence development depends heavily on the existing infrastructure. This chapter demonstrates the importance of gender in understanding information systems (IS) in developing nations by drawing on the extensive literature on gender and development. The report examined how gender equality may help or hinder women's engagement in ICT to achieve the SDG target. It's vital for women's empowerment in the digital era that they have equal involvement in ICT, and this chapter aims to do just that. An Indian manufacturing company that has implemented an ICT strategy aimed at creating development and employment through software creation is also the subject of this chapter. Women have more options thanks to ICTs, as evidenced by a gendered viewpoint on software development. As a result, they also perpetuate the gender inequality that permeates society. Gender-based roles, norms, and practices in both the workplace and the home directly impact the success and sustainability of ICT-based development.

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INTRODUCTION

Over tens of decades after the industrial revolution, we are in the position of a new change- new normal. This change is nothing but the ‘information revolution’ that has drastically made a shift in human civilization and is currently the most discussed phenomenon. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) will continue redefining and revolutionizing how we work and live, and so, is the most poignant part of society. ICT is dynamic, and as said in the chapter on sustainable development goal 5 and published in the ITU publication by UN Women Executive Director “Fast Forward progress: leveraging tech to achieve the global goals” (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2017). This propaganda further states that technology will help achieve global goals like gender equality by empowering women of various nations. To supplement the saying, over the past decade, there has been a growing understanding that technologies act as powerful instruments to advance economic and social societies (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2017). The rise in ICT is such that, per the ITU’s Measuring digital development, 4.9 billion people were using the Internet in 2021, that is roughly 63% of the world’s population. This resulted in a 17% rise in 2021 (Telecommunication Union, 2021). However, gender inequality in ICT remains a constant factor, such that only 57% of women use the Internet compared with 62% of men (Telecommunication Union, 2021). While this digital gender inequality remains throughout the world, however varies significantly in the least developed nations where online access is the least. Moreover, due to lesser educational opportunities and less exposure to the international or national arena, the language barrier only gives the platform to speak the local language. The most prominent factor that possesses or prevents gender equality and hinders women in ICT is beliefs, and myopic perception. To aid this idea, the researchers concluded that male students tend to have a positive attitude towards technology and have higher ICT self-efficacy than females (Siddiq & Scherer, 2019). This finding perhaps confirms the gender-gap in society. However, to what extent this conclusion stands true always remains a question. As in various countries of west and south Asia, Computer science is referred to as a women’s subject (Kituyi-Kwake, A. and Adigun, 2008). This further implies that the use of ICT, if given the resources and knowledge, will remain a subjective matter.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Much has been written on the topic of gender equality and ICT. However, little contribution remains to the approaches to sustainable development goals with the help of the two. Moreover, an explicit gender gap was focused upon in 1995 by the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development

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