



Digitalization and Women's Rights

Call for Book Chapters

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The Outline of Book

Section I: Women and Technology

Women's Access to and Participation in Technological Developments

Women and Cybersecurity Issues

Women and Artificial Intelligence Implementations

Section II: Women and Digital Business

Women Entrepreneurship in Digital Society

Women Leadership in Digital Society

Women and Business Law: Future Expectations

Section III: Women and Sustainability

The Impact of Climate Action on Women

Environment and Women

Women Empowerment and Gender Equality in Digital Society

Within the scope of our upcoming project conducted in cooperation with Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye (HREIT) and İzmir Bakırçay University, which aims to re-evaluate women's rights in the digital age, an academic book project titled “Digitalization and Women's Rights” will be carried out. We cordially invite all valuable scholars and researchers to contribute to this project with their articles.

Background:

Since the mid-18th century, women's rights activism has emerged as a response to numerous rights violations, particularly violence and discrimination stemming from historical challenges. Women have engaged in effective struggles to attain equal status as human rights subjects. Over time, the struggle for women's rights has evolved alongside social, economic, and technological changes, leading to the emergence of new rights and areas of advocacy. What initially began as the defense of women's rights has transformed into a broader fight against gender-based discrimination over the following centuries.

While the significance of “women's rights” remains paramount today, it is imperative to continually re-evaluate this area within evolving global contexts. The emergence of the digital age, in particular, necessitates a thorough re-evaluation of rights to ensure they remain relevant and effective in addressing contemporary challenges.

Digitalization permeates various aspects of everyday life, including socio-economic, political, psychological, and legal spheres. However, in this digital era, women often find themselves unable to fully capitalize on the opportunities and resources available, experiencing disparities compared to men. Addressing these inequalities and ensuring equitable access to digital technologies is crucial for fostering inclusive and sustainable development.

According to the final report (2018) titled “Women in the Digital Age”, drafted by the European Commission, women encounter several challenges in the digital realm, including unconscious biases, tokenism, difficulties balancing professional and personal life, and low transparency and inclusiveness in business policies. Establishing and running businesses present additional hurdles, such as the lack of role models, entrenched stereotypes, weaker business networks, and gender differences in sectoral activity.¹

¹ https://docs.euromedwomen.foundation/files/ermwf-documents/7745_4.78.womeninthedigitalage.pdf

The report emphasizes the potential impact of gender biases and prejudices in technology, stressing the importance of achieving equality in the digital sphere to harness talent, vision, resources, and wealth fully. Furthermore, a study conducted by the European Parliamentary Research Service (2023) reveals a shortage of information and communication technologies (ICT) professionals in the digital sector, indicating a need for improvement in work flexibility, particularly concerning work-life balance for women.²

Additionally, the “Women in Digital” Brochure (2019) from the European Commission highlights a large gender pay gap and challenges women face in accessing managerial and decision-making positions within the digital sector. These findings underscore the importance of addressing systemic barriers and promoting gender equality in the digital realm.³

Cybersecurity poses a significant challenge for women in the digital age, as highlighted in the Action Brief titled 'Women, Peace & (Cyber) Security: In Asia & Pacific' by the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Issues such as cybercrime, online sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as trafficking and migrant smuggling, are prevalent concerns related to cybersecurity. The Action Brief recommends addressing gender blind spots in cybersecurity frameworks, supporting the digital citizenship of women and girls for online peacebuilding, and protecting the security of women and girls in the cyberworld. These recommendations underscore the importance of promoting gender-inclusive approaches to cybersecurity and ensuring the safety and well-being of women and girls in the digital realm.⁴

The OECD's report “Bridging the Digital Gender Divide: Include, Upskill, Innovate” (2018) identifies significant hurdles to women and girls' access to and utilization of digital technologies. These challenges include barriers related to access, affordability, lack of education, and entrenched biases and sociocultural norms. Furthermore, the report highlights disparities in educational enrollment, with girls exhibiting relatively lower participation in disciplines crucial for success in the digital world, such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and information and communication technologies. Coupled with women's and

² [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/739380/EPRS_ATAG\(2023\)739380_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/739380/EPRS_ATAG(2023)739380_EN.pdf)

³ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/women-digital>

⁴ <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/ap-wps-221130BLS22555-Peace-and-cyber-insecurity-brief-v03-ENG.pdf>

girls' limited use of digital tools, these factors risk widening gaps and exacerbating inequality in the digital sphere.⁵

The significance of women's involvement in digitalization for shaping a fair and sustainable future is a crucial topic of discussion. As emphasized by The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), neglecting gender considerations in our approach to the future risks depriving us of the full benefits of women's contributions. This oversight perpetuates gender disparities and undermines our efforts to achieve optimal results in terms of sustainability.⁶

The evaluations and data presented highlight the critical need to assess the status of women in the digital age. With the rapid pace of digitalization, it is imperative to question the readiness of women for this evolving landscape and pinpoint areas that require improvement or are falling short. Understanding and addressing these challenges are essential steps towards fostering gender equality and ensuring women's full participation and empowerment in the digital era. There is a need to address women's rights in the context of digitalization from different dimensions such as "Women and Technology", "Women and Digital Business" and "Women and Sustainability". From technology side, the women's situation should be discussed in terms of "women's access to and participation in technological developments", "women and cybersecurity issues", "women and artificial intelligence implementations" including the risk of being subjected to bias by artificial intelligence. From digital business side, the women's situation should be addressed in terms of "women entrepreneurship in digital society", "women leadership in digital society" and "women and business law with future expectations". From sustainability side, the women's situation should be projected in terms of "the impact of climate action on women", "environment and women", "women empowerment and gender equality in digital society".

International human rights conventions prohibit discrimination based on sex in the exercise of rights and freedoms. Pursuant to the Article 1 of the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; *"discrimination against women" shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their*

⁵ <https://www.oecd.org/digital/bridging-the-digital-gender-divide.pdf>

⁶ <https://unece.org/info/Trade/WP.6-Meetings/events/366794>

marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.” According to the Article 2, States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end.

The first paragraph of Article 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye guarantees that everyone is equal before the law. Pursuant to the second paragraph of the relevant article, *“Men and women have equal rights. The State has the obligation to ensure that this equality exists in practice. Measures taken for this purpose shall not be interpreted as contrary to the principle of equality.”* Article 3 of the Law with No. 6701 on the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye (HREIT) guarantees that everyone is equal in benefiting from the legally recognized rights and freedoms, and prohibits discrimination based on sex.

Pursuant to the Law No. 6701, HREIT is established to work on the basis of human dignity, towards protection and promotion of human rights, guaranteeing individuals’ right to equal treatment, prevention of discrimination in the exercise of legally recognized rights and freedoms and to carry out actions in line with these principles, to effectively fight against torture and ill-treatment and to act as National Preventive Mechanism. According to the 1st paragraph of Article 9 of the HREIT Law, *“to raise public awareness on human rights and fight against discrimination by means of information and education by using mass media”* is among the duties of the Institution. In this context, it has been decided to initiate this project of composition of this academic book in order to deal with the women’s rights in the context of digitalization which increasingly surround every aspect of individuals' and specifically women’s lives.

On the occasion of International Women's Day which was determined as the starting date for abstract submission, we wish for a world where all kinds of discrimination against women are eradicated, and every individual enjoys equal rights.

Respectfully announced to the public.

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