Gender Governance, Diverse Contexts and Justice: Embedding Equality, Women's Rights and Voices into Every Stage of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Development

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ender Governance, Diverse Contexts and Justice?: Embedding Equality, Women's Rights and Voices into Every Stage of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Development

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Abstract

This paper discusses how gender equality, equity and justice can be successfully embedded in technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI). The paper observes that in era marked by widespread development, deployment and use of AI, sound gender governance is necessary towards achieving equity, justice, fairness and inclusivity in the age of technology. The paper discusses the key gender risks and challenges arising from the development and use of AI. In particular, the paper notes that AI can fuel gender biases, injustices and inequalities. In light of its impact on gender justice, equality and equity, the paper posits that effective gender governance is vital towards ensuring that the development and use of AI respects diverse contexts and justice. The paper suggests how this agenda can be achieved by embedding women's rights and voices into every stage of AI development for justice, equity and inclusivity.

1.0 Introduction

Gender equity, equality and justice is vital towards promoting Sustainable Development. For instance, it has been argued that gender equity, equality, justice and inclusivity, centered in human rights, is both a development goal on its own and a vital tool to accelerating Sustainable Development and unless women, girls and the boy-child are able to fully realize their rights in all spheres of life, an all-inclusive human development will not be achieved[1]. The United Nations observes that gender equality, equity and justice is not only a fundamental human right, but it is also a necessary foundation for a more peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world[2].

The ideal of gender equality, equity and justice envisions giving men, women, girls and boys just, fair and equitable treatment when it comes to rights, responsibilities and opportunities[3]. This ideal enshrines equal and fair outcomes for women, men, girls, boys and gender-diverse people

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[1] United Nations Development Programme, 'Gender Equality' available at http://www.africa.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/gender-equality/overview.html (Accessed on 02/11/2026)

[2] United Nations., 'Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls' Available at https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/ (Accessed on 02/11/2026)

[3] Crabtree. E., 'Why we Need Gender Equity, Not Just Equality.' Available at https://iqeq.com/insights/why-Fwe-need-gender-equity-not-just-equality/#:~:text=Gender%20equality%20is%20giving%20all,limit%20how%20people%20access%20opportunities. (Accessed on 02/11/2026)

in all spheres of life[4]. According to this concept, women, men, girls and boys have equal conditions, treatment and opportunities for realizing their full potential, human rights and dignity, and for contributing to (and benefitting from) economic, social, cultural and political development[5]. In particular, it has been observed that this approach entails the equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences of men and women, and the roles they play in society[6].

The United Nations *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*[7] is anchored in gender equality, equity and justice. The Agenda acknowledges that fostering gender equality and justice with focus on empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution towards progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their targets[8]. In particular, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 seeks to uphold gender justice, equity and equality and empowerment of all women and girls by ensuring effective, meaningful and full participation of women and equal opportunities at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life including access to ownership and control over land and natural resources[9]. Promoting gender equality, justice and equity is therefore necessary towards Sustainable Development.

This paper discusses how gender equality, equity and justice can be successfully embedded in technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI). The paper observes that in era marked by widespread development, deployment and use of AI, sound gender governance is necessary towards achieving equity, justice, fairness and inclusivity in the age of technology. The paper discusses the key gender risks and challenges arising from the development and use of AI. In particular, the paper notes that AI can fuel gender biases, injustices and inequalities. In light of its impact on gender justice, equality and equity, the paper posits that effective gender governance is vital towards ensuring that the development and use of AI respects diverse contexts and justice. The paper suggests how this agenda can be achieved by embedding women's rights and voices into every stage of AI development for justice, equity and inclusivity.

[4] Ibid
[5] United Nations Children's Fund., 'Gender Equality: Glossary of Terms and Concepts' Available at https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/1761/file/Genderglossarytermsandconcepts.pdf (Accessed on 02/11/2026)
[6] Ibid
[7] United Nations General Assembly., 'Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.' 21 October 2015, A/RES/70/1., Available at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf (Accessed on 02/11/2026)
[8] Ibid
[9] Ibid

2.0 The Intersection of Artificial Intelligence and Gender

AI has developed as a key technology with immense benefits for people and planet. For example, the deployment of AI in education, delivery of public services, transportation, finance, data storage, communications, healthcare, environmental governance, access to justice and law enforcement is providing numerous opportunities to unlock Sustainable Development[10]. It has been observed that AI is empowering traditionally marginalized and disadvantaged groups including people of colour, women, the youth and indigenous and local communities to access economic and social opportunities towards social justice, equity and fairness[11]. In addition, by strengthening climate action, bolstering biodiversity conservation efforts and providing effective solutions towards tackling pollution, AI is improving environmental governance towards sustainability[12].

AI therefore provides solutions that promote Sustainable Development. However, despite its transformative potential, AI is also associated with risks and challenges such as skewed and biased data sets, digital colonialism, inadequate transparency and accountability, breach of data sovereignty, digital divides, errors and the potential for human right violations[13]. AI risks and challenges also include its potential to magnify and worsen gender biases, inequalities and injustices. For example, it has been observed that the digital divide in AI disproportionately impacts women especially those in developing countries with few of them being able to access and utilise modern digital technologies including AI[14]. The digital divide can amplify existing socio-economic inequalities by locking marginalized groups including women out of the digital transformation hindering their ability to access essential services such as education, healthcare and financial services which have increasingly become digitalized[15].

Algorithmic biases in AI also disproportionately impact women. For instance, it has been observed that AI models usually display gender biases by linking women to subordinate and

[10] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development., 'Governing with Artificial Intelligence' Available at https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2025/06/governing-with-artificial-intelligence_398fa287.html (Accessed on 03/11/2026)

[11] United Nations., 'Artificial Intelligence (AI)' Available at https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/artificial-intelligence (Accessed on 03/11/2026)

[12] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization., 'AI for Environment and Ecosystems Toolkit for Policymakers' Available at https://www.unesco.org/ethics-ai/en/node/288#:~:text=While%20AI%20can%20support%20climate,dynamics%20is%20no%20longer%20optional (Accessed on 03/11/2026)

[13] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development., 'Governing with Artificial Intelligence' Op Cit

[14] United Nations Women., 'Artificial Intelligence and gender equality' Available at https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/explainer/artificial-intelligence-and-gender-equality (Accessed on 03/11/2026)

[15] United Nations University., 'Examining the Causes and Consequences of the Digital Divide(s)' Available at https://unu.edu/merit/blog-post/examining-causes-and-consequences-digital-divides (Accessed on 03/11/2026)

domestic roles with men being associated with leadership positions and business[16]. The United Nations notes that AI technologies such as Large Language Models (LLMs) have associated women with the home, family and childcare, while linking men to business, leadership and career success[17]. In addition, AI can also encode technology-facilitated gender-based violence[18]. In particular, it has been observed that AI is increasing the landscape of digital violence against women and girls by enabling deepfakes, disinformation, automated harassment, impersonation, sextortion, and data-driven stalking among other technology-facilitated violence[19]. Women and girls already face disproportionate levels of online abuse, and AI is making some forms of digital violence easier to create and spread[20].

Exclusion and underrepresentation of women in AI's development and deployment also fuels gender inequalities and injustices. For example, it has been observed that women and girls remain significantly underrepresented in AI fields and decision-making positions undermining their unique perspectives, skills and experiences which can strengthen global AI governance[21]. The International Labour Organization (ILO) notes that women remain underrepresented in AI-related jobs, limiting their access to emerging opportunities and ability to influence how AI technologies are designed and deployed[22]. It has been observed that women all over the world are missing out on jobs in the widening AI sector and are more likely to lose their jobs as AI is increasingly automating service delivery[23]. At the same time, AI-powered gender biases can worsen injustices and inequalities in society through unfair hiring algorithms that systematically disadvantage women by limiting access to job opportunities and career advancement[24].

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[16] International Labour Organization., 'Gen AI, occupational segregation and gender equality in the world of work' Available at https://www.ilo.org/publications/gen-ai-occupational-segregation-and-gender-equality-world-work (Accessed on 03/11/2026)

[17] United Nations., 'AI is getting women wrong as gender bias persists, data reveals' Available at https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/06/1167776 (Accessed on 03/11/2026)

[18] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization., 'Gender Equality in AI' Available at https://www.unesco.org/en/gender-equality-ai (Accessed on 03/11/2026)

[19] United Nations Women., 'How AI is exacerbating technology-facilitated violence against women and girls' Available at https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2025/12/how-ai-is-exacerbating-technology-facilitated-violence-against-women-and-girls (Accessed on 03/11/2026)

[20] United Nations., 'AI is getting women wrong as gender bias persists, data reveals' Op Cit

[21] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization., 'Gender Equality in AI' Op Cit

[22] International Labour Organization., 'Gen AI, occupational segregation and gender equality in the world of work' Op Cit

[23] World Economic Forum., 'What to know about AI and the gender gap' Available at https://www.weforum.org/stories/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/amnc25-what-to-know-about-ai-and-the-gender-gap?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=22228224717&gbraid=0AAAAAoVy5F56bjHZWVw-75-FlRXRU1ADg&gclid=CjwKCAiAhqHXBhAXEiwATbksU2L0kfKTt2URWKw-DPzpbvuuwIdY7j9z-jQBe5lEisCfyzvsPWE73RoCCt4QAvD_BwE (Accessed on 03/11/2026)

[24] Ho. J et al., 'Gender biases within Artificial Intelligence and ChatGPT: Evidence, Sources of Biases and Solutions' *Computers in Human Behavior: Artificial Humans*., Volume 4, No. 100145., 2025

From the foregoing, it emerges that AI can undermine gender equality, justice and human rights. Consequently, effective gender governance is key towards ensuring that technology and AI uphold justice, equity, equality and human rights.

3.0 Embedding Equality, Women's Rights and Voices into Every Stage of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Development

The growth of AI provides solutions that can transform nations, societies and the environment. With the right policies, AI can fast-track global progress towards Sustainable Development. However, AI is also associated with risks and challenges that fuel injustices, biases, discrimination, inequalities and human rights violations. For example, AI can undermine gender equality and justice by worsening the digital divide with adverse effects on women, reinforcing gender biases and discrimination against women, and enabling digital violence against women and girls[25].

In light of the foregoing, there is need to embrace gender governance, diverse contexts and justice in AI. Due to its potential to fuel injustices, biases and discrimination against women and girls, gender equality and justice is key towards ensuring that the rights and experiences of women and girls are integrated at every stage of the AI lifecycle, from development through to deployment and governance[26]. It has been observed that who develops AI systems and models, and what kind of data that AI technologies are trained on, has gender implications[27]. Without adequate governance and safeguards, AI systems can amplify existing societal power hierarchies which disadvantage women thus reinforcing gender injustices and inequalities[28].

Embracing gender governance, diverse contexts and justice is therefore key towards promoting the safe, ethical and responsible development of AI towards gender equality. Through this approach, it is possible to ensure that the development and use of AI promotes inclusion and fairness, ensuring that technology works for all, rather than reinforcing biases and discrimination[29]. In order to achieve this goal, it is imperative to embed equality, women's rights and voices into every stage of AI development. In particular, there is need for greater participation of women and other underrepresented groups in AI governance in order to promote justice, equality and human rights. Through this, it is possible to effectively assess data for biases and misrepresentation, include data that is representative of diverse gender and racial

[25] Three ways artificial intelligence (AI) is putting gender equality at risk., Available at https://www.minderoo.org/stories/artificial-intelligence-gender-equality/ (Accessed on 03/11/2026)
[26] United Nations., 'AI is getting women wrong as gender bias persists, data reveals' Op Cit
[27] United Nations Women., 'Artificial Intelligence and gender equality' Op Cit
[28] International Training Centre., 'Promoting Gender Equality in the AI-Driven World of Work' Available at https://www.itcilo.org/courses/promoting-gender-equality-ai-driven-world-work (Accessed on 03/11/2026)
[29] Artificial Intelligence and Gender Equality., Available at https://futureofwork.fes.de/our-projects/artificial-intelligence-and-gender-equality.html (Accessed on 03/11/2026)

experiences, and reshape the teams developing AI to make them more diverse and inclusive[30]. Inclusive AI governance has been identified as a key approach towards identifying and eliminating gender stereotypes and biases in AI software and systems that increase the risks of discrimination, online harassment, cyberbullying and the trafficking of girls and women[31].

Including women and girls in AI governance is therefore necessary towards harnessing their unique perspective, values, experiences and skills in order to ensure that the development of AI is safe, fair, inclusive, equitable and responsive in line with human rights. In particular, co-design and co-creation of AI models with women and girls ensures that these technologies are trained on inclusive data sets while also promoting transparency and accountability towards promoting gender equality and justice[32]. Further, supporting women-led technology startups and firms can also encourage the development of AI systems that take into account the unique needs and perspectives of women[33]. It has been observed that support schemes that ensure the full participation of women entrepreneurs in digital/AI companies as well as women scientists, innovators and researchers in universities and other public institutions can encourage the safe, ethical, inclusive and responsible AI research and development that upholds gender justice[34]. Embracing women leadership in AI-related positions can also promote sound governance that promotes gender equality, justice and women's rights[35].

Bridging the digital divide in AI is also necessary towards empowering women for equity, justice and human rights. For instance, empowering women and girls through access to AI and other digital tools is key towards enabling them to access essential services such as education, healthcare and financial services which have increasingly become digitalized[36]. In addition, by strengthening AI literacy, it is possible to enable women and girls and other disadvantaged groups to effectively participate in AI governance towards gender justice[37]. Countries have been urged to increase opportunities for AI literacy for women and girls and other disadvantaged groups through targeted training programmes towards the safe, equitable and inclusive development and adoption of this technology[38].

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[30] United Nations Women., 'Artificial Intelligence and gender equality' Op Cit
[31] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization., 'Gender Equality in AI' Op Cit
[32] United Nations Children's Fund., 'Artificial Intelligence in Gender-Based Violence in Emergency Programming: Perils and Potentials' Available at https://clearinghouse.unicef.org/sites/ch/files/ch/sites-PD-ChildProtection-Knowledge%20at%20UNICEF-AI%20in%20GBV%20Emergencies-5.0.pdf (Accessed on 03/11/2026)
[33] Ibid
[34] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization., 'Gender Equality in AI' Op Cit
[35] International Labour Organization., 'Gen AI, occupational segregation and gender equality in the world of work' Op Cit
[36] United Nations University., 'Examining the Causes and Consequences of the Digital Divide(s)' Op Cit
[37] World Economic Forum., 'Why AI literacy is crucial for safe, inclusive and strategic AI transformation' Available at https://www.weforum.org/stories/emerging-technologies/ai-literacy-and-strategic-transformation/ (Accessed on 03/11/2026)
[38] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization., 'Gender Equality in AI' Op Cit

Through the foregoing, it is possible to encode gender equality, women's rights and voices into every stage of AI development. A gender-inclusive approach to AI governance embraces diverse contexts, rights, justice and fairness towards ensuring that nations and societies can harness the transformative potential of AI for development without leaving anyone behind.

4.0 Conclusion

The widespread development of AI can fuel gender injustices and inequalities. Consequently, embracing gender governance, diverse contexts and justice is key towards ensuring that the benefits of technology and AI are enjoyed by all. In particular, it is imperative to embed equality, women's rights and voices into every stage of AI development towards the safe, just, ethical, fair, inclusive and responsive use of AI as a driver of Sustainable Development.

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Ho. J et al., 'Gender biases within Artificial Intelligence and ChatGPT: Evidence, Sources of Biases and Solutions' *Computers in Human Behavior: Artificial Humans*., Volume 4, No. 100145., 2025

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ai/en/node/288#:~:text=While%20AI%20can%20support%20climate,dynamics%20is%20no%20longer%20optional

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