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The Chair of Commission on the Status of Women's 67th session stated that “digital technologies are bringing unique advances for the empowerment of women and girls, but are also giving rise to profound new challenges for the rights of women and girls”. Women are still 19% less likely to use mobile internet and 17% less likely own a mobile phone than men1. The session emphasizes that need for women’s representation in STEAM fields is vital for economic growth, global challenges, role models, equity, social justice, progress, challenging gender stereotypes, and driving innovation. This issue has been considered in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals2 and the Beijing Declaration3 and in NGOs such as Women in Tech4, Girls Who Code5, and the Global Fund for Women6. Singapore's 99% digitizedgovernment services7 have enhanced women's access to essential services, education, and employment opportunities. Also leading to increased economic participation, and diverse employment opportunities for women. Yet it has acknowledged the challenges faced in employment, education, innovation, and global competitiveness due to the digital gender divide, with women comprising only 30%8 of the labour force in 2020, with an unadjusted pay gap of 14.4%9.

Singapore's initiatives aim to increase women's participation in digital education and employment. These include SkillsFuture Singapore courses10, SG Digital Office workshops11, TeSA programs12, digital literacy programs13, Singtel SUTD Women in Tech Scholarship14 aim to boost women's STEM education (average percentage of women in STEM degree programs to 48.25%16). Singapore supports female tech entrepreneurs through SWEN17, offering funding, mentorship, and networking. Digital Access Programme18, and Daughters of Tomorrow19. These initiatives, reduce financial barriers, and ease childminding burdens for low-income households. Singapore faces workplace harassment, particularly gender (1 in 3 respondents)20 and sexual (2 in 5 respondents)21, contributing to its pay gap. This issue, coupled with a lack of women in leadership roles and balancing work and family responsibilities, hinders career progression and earnings. Organizations like Aware22 and the White Paper on Singapore Women's Development23 are addressing discrimination and promoting flexible working options for women.

Implementing online safety and digital violence policies using advanced algorithms24 is crucial. Users should have greater control over their online interactions, and a centralized social media policy framework25 should prevent harassment and hate speech. Various cybersecurity tools and efficient reporting mechanisms are also needed. Furthermore, utilizing AI algorithms to analyse workplace data to address pay gaps, promote diversity, and create inclusive work environments, reducing gender bias26.

Singapore's digital initiatives aim to empower women, bridging the gender gap through education, entrepreneurship, and safety, fostering a more equitable future where women can contribute to innovation and progress.

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