

ABSTRACT

The study aims to examine the impact of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) penetration on gender disparities in seven developing countries in Southeast Asia. ICT indicators are assessed through metrics such as individual internet usage, mobile broadband subscriptions, and internet subscriptions. The countries analyzed—Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam—were chosen due to their comparable stages of economic development, ranging from lower to upper-middle income economies according to the World Bank's 2022 Country Income Classification. Using panel data econometrics, the study measures the influence of these ICT variables on gender disparity, represented by the Gender Inequality Index, over the period from 2000 to 2022. The findings reveal that higher individual internet usage and subscriptions significantly reduce gender disparity in these countries. This suggests that increased internet penetration can contribute to lowering gender inequality. Academically, the study underscores the importance of considering economic policies that promote greater internet access to mitigate gender disparities. From a policy-making perspective, our research highlights the critical role of enhancing internet accessibility as a means to achieve gender equality, recognizing the internet as a vital source of information and knowledge for society.

Keywords : Gender Disparity, Digitalization, Econometrics, Southeast Asia