Chapter XIII

Capacity Development Initiatives for Marginal Communities: A Few Case Studies

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Abstract

Capacity development initiatives for marginal communities with information and knowledge under the contemporary global scenario perhaps could be one of the effective instruments to make a meaningful change towards sustainable human development in developing countries. Information networking can play a key role in the initiatives toward enhancing opportunities for improved livelihood, health for all, food security, disaster...
management, and sustainable development. Best practices are already known in this regard such as e-commerce for better livelihood and employment, telemedicine for health, tele-food for food security, early warning for disaster preparedness, and sustainable development network as a comprehensive treatment for the sustainable development. This chapter focuses on how capacity development initiatives for marginal communities work with reference toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in developing countries. It approaches the issues and concerns related with the empowerment of the marginal communities, problems, and apprehensions in human and social capacity development in the information and communications technology (ICT) sector. A lot more effort is required from governments, NGOs, and other multilateral agencies in order to bring about a sustainable mechanism of ICT planning, implementations, and development in developing countries. This chapter aims at highlighting the importance of ICT development, and the issues and concerns that are related for its expansion in the developing world for securing sustainable development.

**Introduction**

The 21st century predominately constitutes an information- and knowledge-based society, where every country hopes to achieve its goal of social and economic development, including education, food security, health, environment, gender equity, and cultural pluralism. However, the most important problem remains attaining and sustaining these goals. Therefore, every continent should concentrate on building its own information society, until a global village is formed.

In contrast to the developed countries that have been steadily capitalizing the rapid pace of information and communications technology (ICT), a large number of developing countries, particularly low-income countries, have failed in the adaptation of these technologies by contributing to the digital-divide (UNDP, 2001). This is also true for rural villages where modern technologies have yet to reach. The majority of people living in rural areas has neither access nor the means to obtain modern ICT because of their low economic position (Gunatunge & Karunanayake, 2004).

For the past seven years, it has been fashionable to speak of the global village, yet the Human Development Report of 1998, published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 1998), indicates that not everyone is a full member of this village. The benefits of globalization have largely gone to the