

# Dr k m baharul islam

Parts of the World, Asia



Dr K M Baharul Islam MA, LLB, B. Ed., PhD, Post-Doctorate (Bangkok), LLM (Glasgow) Chairman & CEO South Asian Regional Development Gateway 25 May 2007 Professor Klaus BRUNNSTEIN President IFIP - International Federation for Information Processing Hofstra 3, A-2361 Laxenburg, Austria Dear Professor Klaus: Hope you are keeping well. It has been long time since we met at WITFOR 2005 in Botswana. I am pleased to learn that IFIF is organizing the WOTFOR 2007 in Addis Ababa that was my workplace till recently. As the WITFOR 2007 will focus on an area of my close interest and long time research ie, ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY, I would like to participate in the event and share my experiences from African-Asian contexts and perhaps, discuss gender related issues at a plenary presentation/focal paper. I am sending an abstract of the paper / plenary presentation entitled “ Challenges and Prospects of Information Technology Based Commercial Enterprises for Women" for your kind consideration. Hope you find the paper useful for a plenary presentation. Looking forward to meeting you soon. Sincerely, K M Baharul Islam 46, Sijubari Chariali, Guwahati 781038 Assam India Tel /Fax: +91 361 2235655 Cell: +91 94350 72356 Email: drbahar@gmail. com Challenges and Prospects of Information Technology Based Commercial Enterprises for Women Dr K M Baharul Islam Chairman & CEO South Asia Development Gateway Email: sardeg@gmail. com In understanding the impact of Information Technology (IT) based commercial enterprises on women, especially in respect of their poverty alleviation in poorer countries, it is important to understand the problems and challenges of commercial ventures led by women in the global perspective. The position of women, even in the developing world, has been

far from uniform or nonlinear in this emerging global scenario. In some developing countries, such as India or the Philippines, women have become major recipients of this globally distributed commercial opportunity. In fact, digitization of information and the Internet have made it possible to sell goods and services beyond the boundaries of national states. In several exemplary cases around the world indicate that women entrepreneurs have made some gains. The market for e- business and e-commerce is, at least potentially, has strengthened their ability to more effectively compete even in the domestic market. When they have been included in the digital economy, women have benefited albeit to a lesser degree than men. Women face major challenges as a result of changes in the world economy arising from rapid globalization, fast-paced technological progress and a growing informalisation of work. As a result, women's labour market status has greatly altered. Although women's representation in the labour force is increasing all over the world — to at least one-third in all regions except Northern Africa and Western Asia — their participation rates are still lower than men's, and they are disproportionately represented in non-standard and lowerpaid forms of work, such as temporary and casual employment, part-time jobs, homebased work, self-employment and work in micro enterprises. Nevertheless, in spite of the new opportunities that IT has offered to women, one can only be cautiously optimistic. The success of women has so far been limited to a handful of (mostly Asian) countries. The beneficiaries are generally from urban areas, whereas the majority of women, even in the high profile Asian countries, live in rural areas where connectivity is rare or non-existent. Women are generally engaged in

meeting local and family needs and are overwhelmingly not linked to a global digital economy that is essentially geared to trade and anchored in market transactions. The paper / presentation offers a broad understanding of how women's IT-based commercial enterprises are a new way of harnessing IT for socio-economic development of women though faced with special challenges from gender and commercial perspectives. The study is supported by an analytical study of a selected number of recent successes in women's IT-based commercial enterprises in India and in other countries. ----