

Need Analysis: the ICT and Gender Issues¹

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ABSTRACT

The fact remains that the increase and diversification of the information and communications technologies, have continued to usher in a new era in human development. Often mainstream views depict that such technologies have only technical rather than social implications. Their position is based on the notion that the remarkable affirmative transformations introduced by these technologies (ICT) have not touched all level of societies. To some extent such views are affirmative. This may be attributed to the fact that the existing power relations and structures in societies often determine the levels of benefits groups or classes in given society enjoys. In view of this, we argue that ICT's projects or technologies are not often gender neutral. Because the vital questions here are: Who benefits from ICTs? Who is dictating the course of ICTs? Is it possible to harness ICTs to serve larger goals of equality and justice? And is there any hidden costs in terms of human development should such technology is made available without gender equality? Is it compulsory for any research on 'need analysis' to pay a special attention to gender issue in that community?

The last question provoked much interest in this study as it is the corner stone for this paper. Indeed, views on the above made it unavoidable necessary to critically examine ICT and gender issues in relation to the Orang Asil of Malaysia. In addition, this article explores ICTs and gender relation in giving voice to Orang Asli women.

KEYWORD: Giving Voice, Need Analysis, Gender Issues, Gender equality

¹ This project includes three other pillars. These are social capital, political structure and decision making process and natural resource use.