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Development of e-specialists

Information technology (IT) has emerged as a powerful tool for productivity improvement. This fact has been well documented. However, IT remains a complex tool with a wide range of products and a variety of possible applications. The situation is made more complicated by relatively short product life cycles. The pursuit of higher productivity using advanced IT capabilities in a country requires a pool of competent IT or electronic specialists (e-specialists) who can promote the use of IT, diagnose IT-related problems, and implement various applications for enhancing productivity and expanding business opportunities.



(L-R) Mr. Lovneesh Chanana, Head (IT), NPC, Mr. R.C. Monga, Deputy Director-General, NPC, Dr. S.K. Pachauri, Mr. M.D. Bhattarai, Senior IT Program Officer, APO, Mr. S. Bhargavan, Deputy Director-General, NPC, at the opening session

In response to the urgent need to develop IT capabilities in its member countries, the APO organized a training course on the "Development of e-Specialists" in New Delhi, India, 23-27 February 2004. Nineteen productivity specialists from 11 member countries attended the program, which was implemented by the National Productivity Council (NPC) of India. Dr. S.K. Pachauri, NPC Director-General, inaugurated the program. In his address to the participants, Dr. Pachauri expressed gratitude to the APO for promoting IT as a productivity tool. India, he said, has made significant progress in adopting IT at all levels of the economy. According to the Global Information Technology Report, it ranks second world-wide in the increase rate of IT and communications technology diffusion. India is also a favorite venue for business process outsourcing. Dr. Pachauri suggested that any IT intervention would require: 1) IT infrastructure planning, establishment, and management; 2) reengineering of work practices; 3) human resources development; and 4) change management. In this context, NPOs must act as change agents.

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"Unless it produces action, information is overhead."

Thomas Petzinger Jr.

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The program comprised 12 expert presentations and two observational field visits. The presentations covered a diversity of topics, including: Concept of information systems; IT tools for information processing; Linking IT to productivity; The Internet and intranets; IT in manufacturing; IT applications in SMEs; APO and e-services; IT-enabled business process engineering; Business process outsourcing; e-Governance: The Indian experience; Organizational management and the role of IT; and Security in IT applications. For field studies, participants visited a call center of Hero Limited which was outsourced by an American company to communicate

with its customers in the USA and a company that produces software applications for a wide range of productivity tools.

Participants evaluated the program as highly useful, comprehensive, and content rich. Devendra Pradhan, a participant from Nepal, described it as a “must course for productivity specialists.” Maria Lourdes Pacis Aquilizan of the Philippines congratulated the APO and NPC India for a most timely course. She suggested that future similar courses should cover both success stories and unsuccessful ones as e-specialists must also know how to avoid failure. 🎯