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FOURTH REVOLUTION AND THE BOTTOM FOUR BILLION

MAKING TECHNOLOGIES WORK FOR THE POOR

Nir Kshetri

Products and services based on advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence and blockchain are normally considered to be for rich consumers in advanced countries. This book demonstrates how marginalized and vulnerable groups with limited resources, specifically the world's bottom four billion population, can also benefit from these technologies. Nir Kshetri suggests that the falling costs and ease with which applications based on these technologies can be developed and deployed are making them increasingly more accessible. He illustrates how key emerging technologies are transforming major industries and application areas such as healthcare and pandemic preparedness, agriculture, finance, banking, and insurance and looks at how such transformations are affecting the lives of low-income people in low- and middle-income countries. It considers entrepreneurial activities and the creation of new markets facilitated by technologies in those countries. The book also highlights the areas needing regulatory attention for the adequate protection of marginalized and vulnerable groups from the abuse and misuse of these technologies. Kshetri discusses how various barriers such as the lack of data, low resource languages, underdeveloped technology infrastructures, lack of computing power and shortage of skill and talent have hindered the adoption of these technologies among marginalized and vulnerable groups. The book argues that most of these barriers are not insurmountable and suggests that it is the responsibility of diverse stakeholders—governments, NGOs, international development organizations, academic institutions, the private sector, and others—to ensure that marginal groups also benefit from these transformative innovations.

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Nir Kshetri is Professor in the Bryan School of Business and Economics at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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