A Village Goes Mobile: Telephony, Mediation, and Social Change in Rural India. *By Sirpa Tenhunen.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018. 212 pp. ISBN: 9780190630287.

In her most recent book, Sirpa Tenhunen aims to understand the role that mobile telephony plays in contributing to social change by observing everyday mobile use in Janta, an Indian village in the eastern state of West Bengal. Based on long-term ethnographic research carried out over fourteen years from 1999 until 2013, Tenhunen observes how mobile phones are adopted and used in the developing world. By tracking the development of mobile telephony, Tenhunen explores how this process brings about changes in economic opportunities, politics, women's agency, and social status. Moreover, Tenhunen aims to survey changes in user preferences as people switch from one mobile technology to another, mapping the ways these choices impact the routines of everyday people. Throughout the book, Tenhunen makes use of terms such as appropriation and affordances to refer to mobile telephone's adoption, incorporation, and consumption in the lives of users.

Tenhunen surveys previous work on mobile telephony in the developing world by Jonathan Donner (2008), which distinguishes between two types of approaches: evaluating the impact of mobile phones on development, and how users actively choose to use their phones. Combining these approaches allows researchers to observe the ways users decide to adopt mobile phones into their everyday lives and reveal the repeated trends that can accumulate as data to be utilized for analysis of its larger impact on various fields for social change. With this, Tenhunen notices that most of the villagers were acquiring smartphones, although their main purpose was largely limited to receiving and making phone calls; many of the users were not aware of the enormous opportunities and functionalities that their smartphones carried, such as browsing the internet. This points to an engaging question for readers: While these users have access to mobile devices, what restricts them from utilizing the vital features of their smartphones? After smartphones became the established communication device for the villagers, Tenhunen keenly examines the factors that constrain the exploitation of the full set of smartphone features. To give readers some context of the on-ground social environment and dynamics in rural India, Tenhunen explains the social segregation of the population based on caste system, social status, and financial disparity that is deeply rooted in the segregated neighbourhoods in the village. Tenhunen also describes the divide of mobile users based on gender roles, education, and literacy levels. This allows readers to better appreciate the social constraints characteristic of rural India.

Tenhunen makes a well-informed analysis of the scholarship on the digital divide, a concept that refers to unequal access and usage of digital technologies. Tenhunen asserts that although earlier debates on the digital divide stated that providing ICTs access would empower marginalized groups, now she observes that as these technologies are becoming ubiquitous, "for access to matter, people must find the use of ICTs

socially and culturally meaningful" (p. 148). Is the idea of bridging the digital divide through access to ICTs alone, capable of empowering people? And how does the use of various mobile affordances differ according to people's social position? To investigate these questions, Tenhunen looks into the concept of intersectionalities to bring "attention to how multiple axes of identity and modes of power relate to mobile phone use" (p. 34). Also, these inequalities do not always just add up but can also change one another; they are fluid and simultaneously evolve by the dynamics of power. For the population in the Janta village, the identities and modes of power in question are gender, education, digital-literacy level, caste, class, and poverty. This analysis demonstrates the speculative nature of the interplay between power and identities, and the uncertain ways they could operate in combination. It is also fascinating to note that villagers only take advantage of the affordances of their smartphones based on their level of exposure and understanding. For instance, Tenhunen finds that villagers were more intrigued with the memory capacity of their smartphones and their ability to deliver entertainment services, which challenges the notion of "users as rational individuals in search of useful information" (p. 160).

Certain villagers commonly used their smartphone to listen to music, download images, and watch videos. This challenges utopian notions of all the villagers eagerly waiting for the chance to use their smartphones as an education tool, or to enhance their health, or uplift their social status. Tenhunen concludes with a final thought, "People's social positions constrain the way in which they can use smartphones, but their positions also provide motivation to use digital media to maneuver within the intersectionalities of their identity" (p. 166). Earlier it was believed that access to ICTs in under-developed areas suffices to bridge the digital divide. But Tenhunen's statement evokes a thought-provoking insight for readers, that is, the significance of education and digital-literacy to overcome the digital divide in addition to the access to ICTs.

The book impressively explores the ICTs environment in rural India and serves as a seminal text in the scholarship on the development of mobile telephony in the developing world. Tenhunen has developed a theoretical framework for understanding the appropriation of mobile telephony in rural India where people's media use is constrained by the intersectionalities of poverty, caste, class, gender, and education. This framework could apply to many villages across India serving as a foundation and groundwork for future research. This research provides a framework that can help readers understand the context of ICTs, mobile phones, and smartphones in rural India. Tenhunen succeeds in engaging readers seeking information about the mobile telephony usage pattern in rural India. The intended readership for the book would be anyone aiming to understand digital habits and how they are impacted by the intersectionalities of rural users. Such readers might include ICTD researchers, social workers, marketers, policymakers, and community-level organizations.

Reference

Donner, Jonathan. (2008). Research Approaches to Mobile Use in the Developing World: A Review of the Literature. *The Information Society, 24*(3), 140–159.

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