BOOK REVIEW

Indian society is undergoing through significant transformations brought about by ICT's. It won't be an exaggeration to say that the mobile phone is the forerunner of them, which has already been embedded into everyday routines of the millions of people from both urban and rural areas. Today, the Indian mobile market is second largest after China, a fact which demonstrates the ubiquity and social significance of the mobile media. Given its massive visibility and increasing social usages, its consequences seem multidimensional. However, from the viewpoint of social science in general and sociology or social anthropology in particular, very little scholarly efforts have been given to understand them. This particular book by Sirpa Tenhunen is an exception to it.

The present study is the first of its kind which gives a holistic account of mobile led transformations in Rural India. The book is an outcome of a long term fieldwork (1999-2013) in the village of Janta which is situated in the Bankura district of the state of West Bengal. In the course of research, the author brought several meaningful social patterns of mobile use by utilizing social anthropological perspective. In order to achieve its objectives, the study employs the diachronic ethnography method. The book is organized into eight chapters which includes introduction and conclusion. The first introductory chapter provides an overview of some of the prevailing debates and studies related to a newly formed interdisciplinary field called *Mobile Communication Studies*. These include researches on social implications of the device, debates related with M4D (mobile for development discourse), inequality of access in global south and cultural appropriation processes of mobile use. The author informs that in the course of fieldwork, she gradually developed her interview questions from motivation to buy phone, use patterns, advantages and disadvantages to more rounded questions related with political action, gender relationships, economic utilization, including Smartphone use patterns. The author also filmed phone calls by using the method called sensory ethnography. It is evident from the study that her time-to-time visits in the field helped in forming a dynamic understanding regarding the subject.

The second chapter forms a theoretical outline of the book which draws from multiplicity of paradigms and concepts in the existing scholarship such as domestication, polymedia, mediation and remediation. These concepts are well established in media studies, which move beyond simplistic frameworks and save the author from falling into deterministic trap where causal priority is given to the specificity of the technology. As an effect, throughout the book, the author refuses to look at technologies without the socio-cultural context in which they are embedded. The next chapter explains the ubiquity under the concept of remediation where mobile remediated earlier communication practices in the village. For doing this, she located it under broader media ecology which includes preexisting media systems such as radio, television, landline and computers. She observes that the device developed in a gradual manner and proved to be helpful in building connection between and outside the village. Furthermore, mobile use resulted in increasing translocal connections,

including strengthening of next door neighborhood bonds. However, interestingly, the author found that unlike television context, where different neighborhoods come together, private mobile decreases sociability. This finding reveals the double edged nature of mobile media consequences, which is useful to grasp the inherent complexities of mobile implications. The fourth chapter goes beyond the remediation process and interrogates the economic as well as relational patterns of mobile use. The author said that mobile surely help in logistical efficiency, economic activities and health care. However, it does not explicitly correlated with better income or groundbreaking economic transformations as envisaged by development economists. This finding adds in the heated debate among mobile communication scholars regarding the development discourse where grounds of scholarly agreements are scant. However, in the relational domain, mobile does positively correlated with kinship ties and social solidarity.

Next three chapters deal with gender mediation, political uses, and the interplay between Smartphone and social intersectionalities. Gender based chapter provides how the phone is used by married women to widen their domestic spaces and to keep in touch with natal families. It establishes that the phone is mainly used to maintain existing ties such as those of mother and daughter. However, in some cases, phone is used to challenge authority and found enabling secret romantic communication by young college students, which transgresses the communicational boundaries erected by traditional structures. The chapter on political use gives an insight on how the phone has become instrumental in the party organization and for political coordination. The study of activists from parties like BJP and Trinamul reveals that mobile helped in the organization of strikes, party meetings and protesting activities. The chapter on intersectionalities and Smartphone deals with the question that whether internet enabled device disrupt local hierarchy. Although the author denies any revolutionary potentials of Smartphone and exemplifies how the device mediates the intersecting of class and caste hierarchy, however, new changes are also recognized where hierarchies are challenged by young women, children and low caste people. The last chapter concludes the book within previous mentioned framework.

Overall, the study provides a fine-grained analysis of how structure, culture and technology interact over time and what consequences they unleash. Its locally grounded observations offer deep insight into not only the changing dynamics of communicative and interactional practices but also appropriation patterns grounded on cultural specificities, therefore, epitomising a well balanced research. However, despite of such strengths and merits, the major drawback of the study is that it fails in bringing general patterns of mobile usage and little efforts have been given to explicate cross cultural similarities. Perhaps the main reason behind this setback is internal to the approach which gives primacy to locality, therefore, excluding serious elaboration on the commonalities. Furthermore, the tendency to view East and West in a sharp binary also hinders her in recognizing general processes. For example, she said that western studies primarily gravitate towards individualism and mobile was not seen as reinforcing societal norms, which, given the richness of the empirical datum, is a partial understanding. This approach also erects obstructions in developing a general system of theory, whose scarcity is prominent in the mobile communication scholarship. Apart from methodological drawbacks, the study also provides a very little understanding of Smartphone led transformations since only one chapter is devoted to new affordances whose intensive study is required.

Despite aforementioned limitations, Tenhunen did a remarkable job by studying transformative processes in the countryside. In India, mobile communication studies faces paucity

of published researches. Whatever literature is there is of low quality and spurious in dealing with the deep intricacies of mobile related socio-cultural consequences. Much public as well as academic discussion is guided either by optimistic celebrations or pessimistic denouncements. However, this study stands above such dualism of normative orientations by maintaining a delicate balance between abstract concepts with local contextualities. The core strength of the study is its micro level, multidimensional insights, which will definitely be helpful in guiding scholars who are curious in understanding social implications of mobile phone in the village India.

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THE LEGACY OF M.N. SRINIVAS: HIS CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN INDIA, by A.M. Shah (2020), London and New York: Routledge.P.90+vi, price. Rs.495/-(paperback)

This volume : The Legacy of M.N. Srinivas is a welcome addition to the repertoire of knowledge on Srinivas. Who else could have been better other than Professor A.M. Shah who knew him for five decades, that is, Shah joined as a student of B.A. in 1951 at Baroda and continued to be associated with him till the death of Srinivas in 1999. The present book consists of seven papers: Introduction, five papers on Srinivas written by Shah which were already published between 1996-2000 as well as one interview with M.M. Srinivas which was published in Current Anthropology (Vol.41, no.4). In fact five papers including the Introduction are about the life and works of M.N. Srinivas and two chapters are devoted to the influence of Max Weber and functionalism on Srinivas and on Sanskritization.

Shah narrates about Srinivas passionately and also objectively through his research and writings. He says, "M.N. Srinivas (1916-1999) is acclaimed in India as well as in other parts of the world as a Sociologist and Social Anthropologist who contributed immensely to development of Sociology and Social Anthropology in India through his research, teaching and institution building." Shah writes the details about Srinivas starting from his student days from Bombay to Oxford and then his teaching days from Oxford to Baroda to Delhi and subsequently about his last phase as a researcher in Bangalore. Srinivas was born on 16th November, 1916 in the city of Mysore where he did his schooling in 1931 and B.A.(Hons.) in Social Philosophy from Maharaja's College of Mysore. Later on, he did his M.A. in Sociology in 1938 and published his M.A. dissertation as a book: Marriage and Family in Mysore in 1942. Then he joined for his Doctorate under the supervision of G.S. Ghurye in 1940 and completed it in 1944 which was a lengthy Dissertation of about 900 pages. It was based on the ethnographic material on the Coorgs of Mysore. Then Srinivas went to Oxford in 1945 to do D.Phil (his second Doctorate Degree) under Professor Radcliffe-Brown. He completed the thesis in 1947 under Evans- Pritchard as Radcliffe-Brown had retired in 1946. It was published in 1952: Religion and Society Among the Coorgs of South India.

Srinivas was appointed as a Lecturer in Oxford in 1947. Then he was permitted to do a fieldwork for which he chose Rampura, a village in Mysore and did his fieldwork in 1948. Srinivas joined the Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda and established the Department of Sociology in 1951. Subsequently Srinivas joined Delhi School of Economics, Delhi University in 1959 and

established the Department of Sociology. He brought many qualified researchers as teachers including Andre Beteille, A.M. Shah, B.S. Baviskar, J.P.S Uberoi and many more. He tried to make it as one of the best departments in the world. The Department was made Centre for Advanced Studies in 1968 by University Grants Commission. Srinivas left Delhi University in 1972 and joined the Institute for Social and Economic Change in Bangalore where he worked till 1979.

On Weber's influence on Srinivas both T.N. Madan and Dipankar Gupta said that Srinivas did not have much engagement with Weber (p.39). But Shah disagrees with the fact that the dominance of functionalism was more important during those days than Weberian ideas. Shah argued that Srinivas on many occasions used Weber's ideas, particularly on Hinduism (p.40). Undoubtedly Srinivas has been taught to students of B.A. and M.A. level through his structural-functional approach. His Coorg book was a testimony to the influence of structural-functional approach of A.R. Radcliffe-Brown.

In the chapter on "Sanskritization Revisited", Shah wrote details about the evolution of the concept; about the meaning of the word; Sanskritization and Caste; culture and structure; new agents of Sanskritization; Sanskritization amongst the Dalits and Adivasis and so on. Shah concludes the chapter by saying, "In the changing social scenario, the process of Sanskritization is getting delinked from caste including the so called untouchable caste and from the so called tribes, the upper castes are no longer the sole or main agents of Sanskritization"(p.54).

The chapter "An Interview With M.N. Srinivas" is based on Shah's interview with Srinivas on several sessions in Delhi during August-November, 1998. The first question was linked with status of Sociology and Social Anthropology in India in 1951 and Srinivas's reply was that nationalist Indians were suspicious of anthropology as they were studying tribals and pursued the policy of isolation for them. On the other hand, there was low status of Sociology because of British academic prejudice against the subject. Then Srinivas went on saying about his experiences at Oxford, Baroda and Delhi Universities. He wanted a judicious mix of Durkheimian sociology and British social anthropology at the B.A. and M.A. levels with insistence on experience of intensive fieldwork at the Ph.D. (p.56). He implemented it at Baroda. He said that in the first year at Baroda, he became nostalgic for Oxford, where academic conventions were several centuries old. However, since he wanted to stay in India, hence, he chose Baroda. Regarding the status of Sociology and Social Anthropology in India, Srinivas said that they have made much progress in the country as they are taught in many universities. He was appreciative of the Indian Sociological Society and the two journals: Sociological Bulletin and Contribution to Indian Sociology. Further he expressed his dissatisfaction over the fact that a large number of undergraduate students took sociology because it is regarded as a soft option and they are able to do well in examinations by reading cram books written by mediocre teachers.

On the distinction between field view and book view, Srinivas said that people in India started reading books particularly Ramayana, Mahabharata, Puranas, ancient Indian folktales and the Almanac (Panchang) quite late. Then gradually books became the part of life of people. Further he said that Dumont's Homo Hierarchicus (1970) brought back the book view with a bang and the field is now regarded by many as only a reflection of the book.On the whole it is a worth reading material for students, researchers and teachers for clarifying their doubts on Srinivas.

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