

Shorter Notices

Pradip Ninan Thomas and Jan Servaes (ed.). *Intellectual Property Rights and Communications in India: Conflicting Traditions.* New Delhi: Sage Publications. 2006. 262 pages. Hardback. Price not given.

The issue of intellectual property rights forms a major plank in trade negotiations between the developed and developing world. Intellectual piracy has caused billions of dollars in losses to companies engaged in software development, and entertainment, particularly music and movies. If piracy is to continue, then ultimately, those who innovate would suffer and innovation would come to a dead stop.

This book suggests an equitable way through which the innovator's interest can be reconciled with those who are the ultimate consumers—i.e., the general public. As the world progresses, it is knowledge and the acquisition thereof which is going to lay the foundation of further economic growth which, in turn, is expected to improve the quality of living. A fair distribution of knowledge as represented in intellectual property rights is required. In such a case, an appropriate mechanism needs to be put in place which safeguards the interests of both the desire of the general public to access knowledge and the innovators to recover their investment. A mechanism that would also minimise the deleterious effects of piracy. This then is the main argument of the edited volume dealing with a topic of great and immediate concern. The main argument in the book is supported by a number of case studies from Asia, China, and India.

Of particular interest are Chapters 6 and 7 of the book that are appropriately entitled "Indigenous Knowledge in the Age of New Technologies: Whose Knowledge?" by Levi Obijiofor and "Indigenous Knowledge and Intellectual Property Rights—The Interface" by Kamal Puri. These chapters deal with the impact modern technologies have on traditional societies in particular their culture and way of living. In short, the book adds to the literature on intellectual property rights and communications and can also serve as a foundation for future research in this area. [Samina Nazli]

Anos Owen Thomas. *Imagi-Nations and Borderless Television: Media, Culture, and Politics across Asia.* New Delhi: Sage Publications. 2005. 289 pages. Paperback. Indian Rs 380.00.

This book examines in detail the impact of the globalisation of the media, in particular, television, on societies. Television, which was previously limited to national borders is now, thanks to satellites in space, available across borders. This, of course, has significant cultural, political, and social implications. The main focus of this book is on discussing the ramifications of how the media industry operates in Southeast, South and Northeast Asia.

The book consists of nine chapters, three of which are devoted to television in India, in the Malay Archipelago and in China. The remaining chapters of the book discuss the history and development of transnational television. Emphasis is also laid on globalisation and its impact on the economy, culture and society. The question of regulation versus

liberalisation, ownership versus citizenship, nationality versus ethnicity are discussed in the last chapter, Chapter 9. Four appendices of the book include data sources, interviews sources, research protocols and the appropriate websites. An extensive bibliography reflects the research already undertaken in this area and further accessed by the author.

The strength of the book lies in its approach to the problems, cultural, social, and political that globalisation of the electronic media has brought to the developing world. The book is well written and deals with a topic of great current concern—the role the electronic media plays at the international level in affecting the cultural, social and political lives of indigenous populations, particularly in the developing countries. Students of media studies, multinational businesses and non-governmental organisations would find this book of great use and relevance. [Samina Nazli]

E. T. Mathew. *Employment and Unemployment in India: Emerging Tendencies during the Post-Reform Period.* New Delhi: Sage Publications. 2006. 166 pages. Paperback. Indian Rs 295.00.

The Indian economy has undergone a series of structural reforms in the past two decades. These structural reforms have impacted in a number of areas including employment. This book focuses basically on how structural reforms have affected employment in India. The data used in the analysis of employment is from the quinquennial surveys carried out by the National Sample Survey Organisation during the 1980s and 1990s. Census data as well as secondary data have also been used where necessary.

Five major areas with respect to employment are analysed in this book in light of the structural reforms that were introduced in India in 1991 under the guidance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Stabilisation Programme and the Structural Adjustment Programme under the World Bank. These programmes relate to reforms in Industrial Policy, Trade Policy, the Public Sector, the Financial Sector, Capital Markets, and conditions for promoting foreign capital inflows. Thus, keeping the reform agenda in view the book examines the issue of employment generation in a rural/urban; agricultural/non-agricultural; organised/non-organised settings. Other beliefs that are associated with these reforms such as ‘causalisation’ of employment ‘informalisation’ of employment and feminisation of employment are also discussed. Furthermore, questions are asked whether in a reform regime as outlined by the IMF and World Bank does the fear of unemployment and under-employment increase. The book is cohesive with respect to its central focus that of the impact on employment after structural and other reforms have been initiated. In particular, it is important to comprehend the changing nature of employment in a post-reform world. Labour economists, gender specialists and policy-makers should find book of interest. [Samina Nazli]

R. K. Bagga, Kenneth Keriston, and Rohit Raj Mathur (ed.). *The State, IT and Development.* New Delhi: Sage Publications. 2005. 325 pages. Paperback. Indian Rs 380.00.

This book deals with the growth of information technology (IT) and its impact on the economy by increasing productivity of business enterprises as well as improving the

functioning of governments. However, It can be a negative influence as well by marginalising the less empowered sections of society, thereby creating a digital divide.

In India, also, IT has helped promote development but its scope has been limited. New ideas and approaches are called for to make IT an integral part of the development process. This book proposes how this can be achieved in twenty-one chapters.

The President of India, H. E. Dr A. P. J. Abdul Kalaam and others have contributed these chapters. A number of chapters deal with e-governance, the development of cyber laws, how IT can reduce/minimise corruption, and how these technologies can be accessed by the general public. Furthermore, the book includes case studies of how IT has been used in agriculture and in public service delivery systems in India. The book would be of use to those dealing in IT and its applications across the economy. [Samina Nazli]

Meenakshi Thapan (ed.). *Transnational Migration and the Politics of Identity*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005. 320 pages. Paperback. Indian Rs 385.00.

“Transnational Migration and the Politics of Identity” is the first one in the series of five volumes on various aspects of *Women and Migration in Asia*. This initiative is a critical response to migration theories that have failed to account for the intricate experience of migrant women. Migration is often perceived as males moving out with women either being left behind or following their men folk as dependents. In Asia the number of female migrants is increasing but still they are not perceived as equal actors as compared to men in migration.

This volume examines the impact of migration on women’s identity in the context of transnational migration. The focus is mainly on Asian (including Central Asian) women. However, there is one paper that examines the experience of women of North African descent in France. This paper is included to substantiate the debate around notions of race, ethnicity, religion and the exclusionary nature of citizenship, in the context of women’s practice of using a religious symbol to assert their identity.

The volume in general has thrown light on the complexities that women face in the process of migration. The contributors have stressed not only on constraints women experience, but also reflect on various strategies of resistance, rebellion and collective organisation women deploy in their everyday lives. It provides the better understanding of women as active participants in the process of migration rather than as dependents and as victims of suppression and exploitation in ethnic and racial terms.

They have also highlighted the fact that immigrant communities are never homogeneous, therefore, any attempt to understand their experience must account for the diversity of their socio-cultural, historical past that significantly shapes their differentially articulated present. The identity of the migrant is created in fluid terms, in the range between past and present, that is, a combination of their native habits and culture and the culture of the host society. Briefly, migrant women live in a contrasting world at the same time.

The papers selected for this volume have explored a new dimension of women’s migration highlighting the complexities associated with the concept of identity. The book is interesting to read and useful for those working in the field of migration and women studies. [Afia Malik]

Ronnie Vernooy (ed.). *Social and Gender Analysis in Natural Resource Management: Learning Studies and Lessons from Asia*. Beijing: China Agriculture Press, Ottawa: IDRC, and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006. 250 pages. Paperback. Indian Rs 280.00.

Despite rapid industrialisation and urbanisation the majority in Asia are dependent on a productive natural resource base for their livelihood. However, urban-biased industrial development and non-locally managed international investments in export-oriented resource development are resulting in the degradation of those resources. Complexities in Asian societies are substantial and so are the problems associated with the management of natural resources. In such circumstances, notions of gender, class, caste, ethnicity and age plays a vital role in understanding the social relations and decision-making processes concerning access to, and use and management of natural resources.

This book documents various initiatives researchers are already taking to establish social and gender analysis (including questions of class, caste and ethnicity) in natural resource management. It presents six case studies from South and Southeast Asia (India, Nepal, China, Viet Nam and Mongolia). Introduction is followed by these six cases. All these cases start with a description of the context of the study. This is followed by a brief explanation of the reasons for addressing social and gender questions, research objectives and research questions. The main part of the case studies is based on the findings of the fieldwork carried out to address specific research questions. The main conclusion drawn is that natural resource management questions, whether addresses from a macro or micro perspective, are not social or gender neutral at the same time. These cases also reveal that the processes that shape everyday management practices are never identical by definition.

The case studies are followed by a comparative analysis of a number of key common issues and challenges identified by the six research teams. These issues are examined in the last two chapters. The first one (that is Chapter Eight) focuses on social and gender insights. It compares the main underlying forces or factors that shape particular management practices and some of the emerging issues in terms of equity and environmental sustainability. The chapter reflects on the similarities and differences in how social and gender relations enlighten natural resource management practices in the study areas. The chapter analyses the cases along a continuum from descriptive to transformative, with reference to the key features of the WID (women in development) and GAD (gender and development) approaches.

In Chapter Nine the focus is on the process of integrating social and gender analysis in research and development. It summarises the main achievements and remaining challenges of the research processes in terms of capacity building. The chapter wraps up with the identification of some key challenges still to be addressed: organisational change and mainstreaming of social and gender research; enduring inequities and the empowerment of women; the improvement of the quality of participation; and dealing with macro forces.

This volume in addition to bringing at the forefront the learning experiences and scientific results from five Asian countries, covers a wide range of topics from agriculture marketing to social capital among women. It is valuable for professionals in rural development, natural resource management and women studies. [Afia Malik]