international news, foreign' movies, fashion magazines and romantic books. The older youths are virtually independent of parental mediation or interference with personal media decisions. The teenagers gratify their specific needs by using not only television and movies but also books and magazines. They show a tendency to diversify their media experiences and stretch themselves in new media ways, as they are likely expanding their versatility in other aspects of their adolescent development.

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• Acknowledgement

Bradley S. Greenberg is Professor of Telecommunication and Communication at Michigan State University. His current research focuses on cross-national studies of mass communication behavior among young people.

Hairong Li is a PhD candidate in Advertising at MSU. His research interests are in advertising, media planning and direct marketing. He also is active in several international studies of young people and media.

Linlin Ku is a PhD candidate in Journalism at MSU, where her work is examining public responsiveness to advertising and the role of new communication technologies in organizations.

Jiangang Wang is a faculty member in Journalism at the People's University of China, with research in broadcasting systems and television production.

Book Reviews

Singhal, Arbind and Everett M. Rogers,
India's Information Revolution
New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1989 .

Ila Patel

The information revolution in the recent decades in many developed nations, such as the United States, Japan, and most West European has highlighted the role of technology as an engine of social and economic change. Rapid upsurge in a convergence of several communications technologies and their applications in the 1980s has also sparked off the information revolution in a Third World country such as India. What is the nature of recent social changes in Indian society resulting from the use of new information and communication technologies? How will India's emerging information revolution impact upon its development? To what extent will the development promise of the new communication technologies be fulfilled? *India's Information Revolution* is an attempt to provide answers to these questions.

The authors perceive technology as· an important cause of social change in a society. However, they avoid an extreme position of technological determinism and argue that technology per se does not contribute to social change. Other factors such as government policies are just as important. What is really crucial about communication technology is how it is organized and used in society to serve its development goals.

The book is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter highlights the 'dominant' and 'new' paradigms of development underlying the field of development communication, discusses the role of communication technology in development, and describes the status of communication research. Diffusion of television and its social impact in Indian society are discussed in chapters three and four, while new information technologies and their impact on society are examined in chapters two, five, six, and seven. The final chapter summarizes the lessons learned from India's information revolution.

The authors express guarded optimism about the impact of the

information revolution on development. They acknowledge the potential of new communication technologies (such as satellite television, video, and microelectronics applications in computers and telecommunication to facilitate development in India. However, they argue that technology per se is not a panacea for social and economic problems faced by India. While charting the course of India's information revolution, Singhal and Rogers draw our attention to how new communication technologies mainly serve urban elites and contribute to widening social inequality between the information-rich and information-poor in Indian society.

While *India's Information Revolution* is rich in descriptive details, the book's theoretical structure is weak. The conceptual approach within which the development and impact of new communication technologies is examined ignores a deeper analysis of the national and international context which conditions how technologies are organized and used. Without an adequate and critical appraisal of the sociocultural and political context within which technologies function, we are apt to misread their social impacts and problems associated with their adoption and use in developing countries.

Unlike in previous technologies, new communication technologies appear heavily dependent on highly skilled labour. Case studies of successful professionals and entrepreneurs in the book highlight the role of individuals in promoting new communication technologies in Indian society. However, such focus on 'individuals' diverts our attention from the role of transnationally-oriented vanguard of the information revolution in maintaining unequal social order in Indian society. Although the widening gap between information-rich and information-poor and the dominance of urban elites over adoption and use of technology do figure prominently in the book, more could have been made of these issues. No serious attempt is made to analyse information inequalities between different social classes within the national and international division of labour.

While analysing the role of communication technologies in development, the authors highlight the role of the state in promoting social change and 'inequality and equity' issues of communication policies in India. The underlying assumption is that changes in the technological base with government-intervention will be sufficient to redress chronic structural inequality. However, neither the class nature of the state is analysed nor changes taking place in state capitalism are discussed in the context of information revolution. The question of how much economic and political restructuring will be required at national and international levels to create the conditions that will allow the majority

of the Indian population to overcome information inequalities in the larger society is simply ignored.

In summary, the book describes recent developments in Indian society resulting from the application of communication technologies. However, it fails to situate these changes in the broader context of the world capitalist system and changes taking place in the nature of state capitalism in India and gives us a limited and lopsided picture of the information revolution in India. While the book has several shortcomings in its conceptual framework, it is an important book that needs to be read and argued upon by policymakers, scholars, and entrepreneurs concerned with the information revolution.

Ila Patel is a Consultant, Social Research Group of Development and Educational Communication Unit, Indian Space Research Organization, Ahmedabad, India.

Milton Mueller, *International Telecommunications in Hong Kong: The Case for Liberalization*
The Chinese University Press, Hong Kong for the
Hong Kong Centre for Economic Research, 1991.

Linda Low

This book is a timely contribution to the subject of liberalization in the area of telecommunications in general and applied to Hong Kong in particular. It is written in a very compact and readable manner in six chapters which cover a broad discussion of the theory and practice of liberalization and the Hong Kong case study. The author provides invaluable information on the workings and management of the local telecommunication system and the international network in Hong Kong, drawing from various official and confidential reports of the government.

The author argues that while the local telecommunication network is fairly competitive under the Hong Kong Telephone Company and the Hong Kong Telecommunications Limited, international telecommunications remains a monopoly. The latter is monopolized by a single company, Hong Kong Telecommunications which is a subsidiary of