India's Response to the Information Age

Marina Sirota, William Lu, Jim DeLaHunt

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In Their Own Words
Courtesy of a major Silicon Valley firm

A video was presented to class,
but is not included in this edition
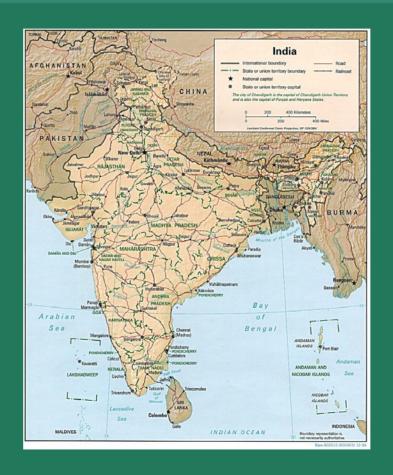at request of the maker.

Agenda

- About India
- Gender and class issues
  - Simputer: Computer device for 3rd World
- Outsourcing from the Indian side
- Intellectual property rights (IPR)
  - "Copying culture", Copyright and patents
- Community and Indian diaspora
- In Their Own Words

About India

About India

- One of the oldest civilizations
- People and Language
  - Hindu 81%, Muslim 12%, Other 7%
  - English: political, commercial use
- Economy
  - Agriculture, handicraft and industry
  - Overpopulation, poverty, ethnic strife
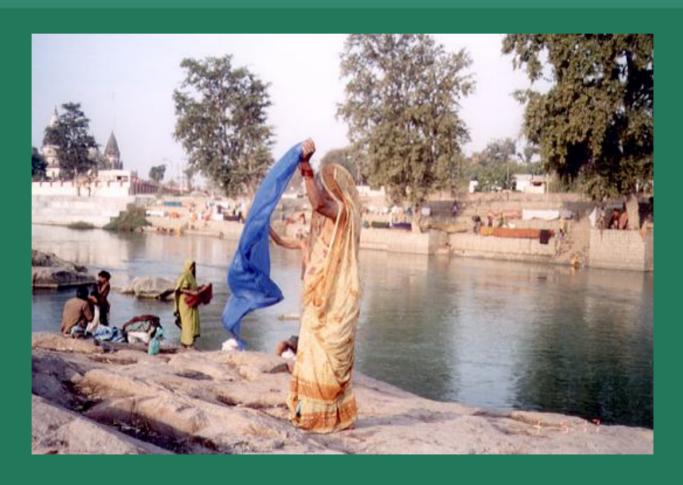 - Exports software services, workers

Class Issues

Class Issues

- Class and Caste
  - Ranked, named, endogamous groups
  - Impossible to move up
  - Traditionally associated with occupation
- Discrimination illegal, but still happens
- Economic correlation exists
- Information Technology
  - Unfair advantages to English speakers
  - Economic opportunities to succeed

Gender Issues

Gender Issues

- Impacts of religion and caste system
- Labor and education (IT)
  - 51% of women are literate (Men - 75%)
  - Sixth Plan (1980s), Eighth Plan (1990s)
- Women are:
  - 1% of engineering students
  - 23% of internet users, 37% of IT staff
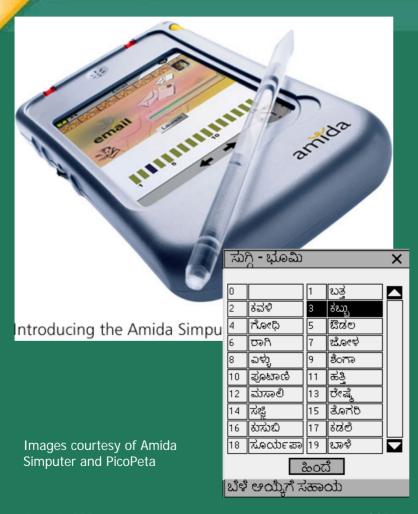- Policy Framework (IT)
  - Ministry of Education

Gender Issues

Simputer: Computer for 3rd World

Introducing the Amida Simpu...

Images courtesy of Amida
Simputer and PicoPeta

- Crop prices, village accounting, health surveys, ...
- Low cost
  - Data card, share CPU
- Untrained users
  - Text to speech
  - Simple, tapping UI
- Digidivide or niche?
  - Lose to cell phones?

Outsourcing from the Indian side

- A poor country rich in people resources
  - 1bn people; many educated, good English
- "Back office to the world"
  - Business process outsourcing, call centres, software, remote radiology, …
- +: wealth, new station in society
- -: night shifts, low status, "phoniness"
- Globalisation cuts both ways
  - A window, then Philippines, Russia,…

Copying Culture

Photos courtesy of Coca-Cola (L and R), and Tobbe at wwww.abc.se/~m8582/

History of Indian IP Rights

- Nehruvian Socialism
  - Self-sufficiency - promote dom. industries
  - High barriers against foreign imports
  - Large public spending
- Copying Culture
  - Patent Act of 1970
  - Easy to make domestic substitutes
  - Created most of India's companies

Liberalization and Global IPR

- Public spending led to near bankruptcy
  - Borrowing money from World Bank, IMF
- Radical liberalization
  - Opening industries
  - Reduce trade deficit
  - IPR as a way to lure foreign companies
- World Trade Organization (WTO)
  - IPR required of member nations; TRIPS

Digital Diaspora

- Diaspora of Indians around the world
  - Originally created due to high-tech boom
- Online communities unite Indians
  - A way to communicate with fellow Indians
  - Recruit others to form a community
- Reversing the trend
  - Communities bringing change to India
  - Indians moving back to India

In Their Own Words

[Indian attitude is] "If you don't know the person, then doing something wrong [to them] is OK."

In Their Own Words
From interview with Indian tech exec

"India is a very close-knit culture. It's very common for people at the work-place to know everyone's salaries. So there's no strong concern about data privacy."

In Their Own Words
From interview with Indian tech exec

"[In North America,] working with a software firm is a regular job. In India, it's a means to escape from one level of society to another."

Thank You!

Marina Sirota

William Lu

Jim DeLaHunt

http://www.stanford.edu/~msirota/cs201/