Visions of Development

Films Division of India and Imagination of Progress, 1948-75

Peter Sutoris

Film as a medium of social development has a distinguished if little-known history in independent India; this book tells that fascinating story.

October 2015  £25.00

Visions of Development examines the Indian state’s postcolonial development ideology between Independence in 1947 and the Emergency of 1975-77. Sutoris pioneers a novel methodology for the study of development thought and its cinematic representations, analysing films made by the Films Division of India between 1948 and 1975. By comparing these documentaries to late-colonial films on ‘progress’, his book highlights continuities with and departures from colonial notions of development in modern India. It is the first scholarly volume to be published on the history of Indian documentary film. Of the approximately 250 documentaries analysed by Peter Sutoris, many of which have never been discussed in the existing literature, most are concerned with economic planning and industrialisation, large dams, family planning, schemes aimed at the integration of tribal peoples (Adivasis) into society, and civic education.

The Films Division has made all films analysed in this volume available for free online streaming, which will be accessible through their site as well as a companion website released on publication of the book.

‘Through the original prism of film documentaries, this captivating book sheds new light on the continuities and contrasts between economic policies in colonial and independent India.’
– Professor Jean Drèze

Peter Sutoris is a scholar of development and film. Visions of Development is his first book.

October 2015  256pp
Paperback  9781849045711  £25.00
South Asia / Politics