

Cinema and Culture in Indian Sociology: A Comparative Perspective

Amit Kumar Sharma

Abstract

This essay is a theoretical excursus towards a comparative history of the institution of sociology in Indian universities and the evolution of cinema as a sacred institution in Indic civilization. The imperative of this presentation is to understand the structure, process and function of the two institutions both synchronically as well as diachronically. In any vibrant society, the task of reinterpreting institutional history often takes the form of recognizing and developing a new perspective on already well-known events. This presentation outlines a new reading or rewriting of the already-known history of sociology and cinema in India. This process of the new reading tries to accommodate the different facets of the institutional unfolding of sociology and cinema in the Indian state, market, civil society, and culture.

Keywords: Sociology of culture in India, Cinema and Sociology in India, Cinema and Culture in India, Cinema and Society in India.

Introduction

Cinema is an element of culture as well as technology to transmit, preserve, promote, and transform. The cinema is a better index of culture than painting, music, or poetry as it visibly partakes in cultural life. As a popular art, set in the economic, cultural, and political spheres, cinema inevitably bears the birthmarks of its passage into the light. As a technological art, crucially defined by its capacity for the automatic registration of sights and sounds, it is composed of pieces of the culture it represents. In order to recover the full discourse of the films, the student of film must be a historian and an interpreter of art simultaneously, shifting constantly between the objective examination of the context of film and the subjective immersion in the experience it offers. The director of cinema initiates collaboration with the future possible audience for making a rich and meaningful live experience in the cinema hall by filling open-ended details within the screenplay.

Amit Kumar Sharma, Professor, Centre for the Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi 110067. Email: aksharma@mail.jnu.ac.in, amitjnu@icloud.com