



Research Repository

Introduction: Indigenous Cinemas from South Asia: Agency, Mediation, Representation

Accepted for publication in Studies in World Cinema

Research Repository link: <https://repository.essex.ac.uk/43076/>

Please note:

Changes made as a result of publishing processes such as copy-editing, formatting and page numbers may not be reflected in this version. For the definitive version of this publication, please refer to the published source. You are advised to consult the published version if you wish to cite this paper.

<https://doi.org/10.1163/26659891-bja10069>

Introduction

Indigenous Cinemas from South Asia: Agency, Mediation, Representation

Shohini Chaudhuri | ORCID: 0000-0003-0611-5346

Department of Literature, Film and Theatre Studies, University of Essex, UK

Corresponding author

schaudh@essex.ac.uk

Swapna Gopinath | ORCID: 0000-0003-0925-3592

Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication, Pune, India

swapna.gopinath@simc.edu

An introduction to a special issue on ‘Indigenous Cinemas from South Asia: Agency, Mediation, Representation’, published in *Studies in World Cinema* 6 (2026): 1–22.

DOI:10.1163/26659891-bja10069

In *Maw Theng Gaari (My Bicycle)*, Aung Rakhine 2015), the first internationally-fêted Indigenous Chakma-language film from Bangladesh’s Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), a man named Kamal returns from the city to his village with a bicycle – an unusual object in this remote community. Having lost his job in the city and with his family struggling to survive, he devises the idea of earning money by transporting people and goods on his vehicle. His venture, however, meets opposition from local leaders and thugs. When his bicycle is stolen and vandalised, he is devastated to lose the source of his livelihood. Taking his damaged bicycle, he travels back to the city as he came, a passenger on a traditional wooden rowboat floating along with the slow, melancholic drift of the Karnaphuli River. Towards him glide several other small wooden boats. One carries a gleaming, new bicycle, another has a motorbike and yet another has a television. The film ends with this

enigmatic image, suggesting that the Chakma are not fixed in 'timeless' ethnographic images of the past, but dynamic agents adapting to the modern world with its constantly changing technologies.

Since the 1990s, transnational flows of technology, finance and knowledge have significantly altered independent filmmaking in South Asia. A new development here is Indigenous cinema, in a multitude of languages and formats including feature-length fiction films, documentaries, short films and videos posted on social media. Among the more high-profile films are the already-mentioned *Maw Theng Gaari* from the CHT, Bangladesh; *Dhabari Quruvi* (Priyanandan, 2022) from the Indian state of Kerala, which has an exclusively Indigenous cast; *Numafung* (Nabin Subba, 2001) from Nepal which addresses patriarchy among the Limbu people and has amateur actors from that community acting in the film; and *Village Rockstars* (Rima Das, 2017), a Kamrupiya-language film from Assam, India. A coming-of-age story about a young girl's aspirations to become a rock star and her community's struggles to survive in a rural environment devastated by floods, *Village Rockstars* screened at over 70 festivals internationally, won numerous awards, was selected as India's official entry for the 2019 Oscars, and was followed by a sequel, *Village Rockstars 2* (2024). It was produced almost singlehandedly by its director, Rima Das, with only her cousin and her non-professional child actors as her impromptu crew.

Although Indigenous communities were often stereotyped or erased in earlier ethnographic and mainstream South Asian cinemas, they have become more vocal and visible in the contemporary, globalised arena, raising new sets of questions around their agency, mediation and representation. Their films often shatter former constructs of Indigeneity, refashioning Indigenous images. Taking advantage of new media technologies entering their lives, Indigenous filmmakers have been narrating local stories that reflect the concerns of their communities as well as their campaigns for their rights. Traditionally shown in communal screenings, their films now circulate more widely to local, regional or international audiences via film festivals, NGOs, universities, galleries, court hearings, television and the Internet.

While other Indigenous cinemas – for example, of North America, Australasia and the Arctic (Wood 2008, Columpar 2010, Pearson and Knabe 2015) and of Latin America (Salazar and Córdova 2008, Gonzalez Rodriguez 2022) – have been widely studied, in the South Asian context, there is a paucity of research on Indigenous cinema and its varied dimensions, its dynamics within the hegemonic structures of the nation and its role in depicting a community's lived experiences. Besides Markus Schleiter and Erik de Maaker's edited collection *Media, Indigeneity and Nation in South Asia* (2020) – the only long-form work on Indigenous media practices in this region – scholarly attention has largely been confined to Indigenous film production and consumption in localised contexts (for example, Hasan 2011; Matta 2016; Hill and Chakma 2020). This special issue intervenes by providing a dedicated focus on South Asian Indigenous cinemas – from production and distribution to archiving and preservation. Crucially, its comparative scope moves beyond localised analysis to illuminate shared struggles and distinct strategies across South Asia and beyond.

Given the different understanding of Indigeneity in South Asia compared to settler-colonial nations, we acknowledge the challenges in linking together 'Indigenous' (a controversial term in this context) and 'cinema' (itself part of a broader, ever-changing media landscape). Within the region, there is a vast variety of linguistic and ethnic groups that call themselves 'Indigenous' while others reject the term, preferring to self-identify as 'Adivasi' or 'tribal'. In India alone, the Adivasi population is 104 million, according to the last census in 2011 (Population Census Data n.d.). The multiple partitions of Britain's Indian Empire – comprising modern-day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar – alongside its Himalayan protectorates, Nepal and Bhutan, left many communities as minorities in newly formed states where they did not share the majority's religion, language or ethnicity (Dalrymple 2025). Furthermore, the long and complex histories of migration across the region make it difficult to establish who the earliest inhabitants were in specific locales (Shah 2010, 10). Officially, all South Asian nations deny the existence of Indigenous peoples within their

borders. Although their constitutions may acknowledge ‘tribes’ as distinctive communities, they stop short of recognising claims to Indigeneity.

In the remainder of this introduction, we first trace the historical and cultural contexts of Indigeneity in the region. We then examine the dominant representations of Indigenous peoples in Bollywood and other mainstream cinemas which South Asian Indigenous films often challenge. Next, we place the theoretical frameworks of global Indigenous media studies in dialogue with the practices of South Asian Indigenous cinemas and themes explored in this special issue, concluding with a preview of the articles.

Indigeneity in South Asia: Historical and Cultural Contexts

Adivasi (meaning ‘first inhabitants’) is a common term by which Indigenous groups are known in South Asia. In Bangladesh, they are also called *upajati* (‘sub-nation’) or *pahari* (‘hill people’). In Nepal, they are known as *janajati* (‘tribe’) and in Pakistan, they are identified as *qaum* (‘nation’). Across South Asia, the English word ‘tribe’ is also widely used for these groups. The terminology has colonial roots. With the help of nineteenth-century anthropologists, British colonial administrators imposed the term ‘tribe’ on communities dwelling in hills and forests believed to exist outside the caste system and mainstream society. Initially, they sought to categorise South Asians by physical type, attributing ‘finer’ European characteristics to purported descendants of Aryan invaders and, by contrast, darker complexions and flattened noses to the tribes, whom they cast as the subcontinent’s ‘lowest’ and most ancient population (Shah 2010, 13). Their classifications set up a series of oppositions: civilised/wild; fully clothed/naked; people from the plains/jungle- or hill-dwellers. Later, influenced by theories of social evolution, anthropologists measured South Asian society against Europe – regarded as the pinnacle of development – and relegated tribes to a ‘primitive’ category they claimed to have discovered globally.

Evolutionary ideology supported imperialist interests, justifying rule by so-called superior races. It found ready acceptance by some Indian elites, since it matched their own hierarchical stance towards tribes (Van Schendel 2011, 21). The colonial label 'tribal' fixed relations of unequal power, institutionalising stereotypes of Indigenous groups – as isolated, timeless, unified with nature, primitive, and backward – that persist to this day. The census conducted by the British in India in 1881 further consolidated this by frequently clubbing these communities under the umbrella term of 'Hindu', thereby erasing the heterogeneity of Adivasi communities and placing them in the lowest strata of the Hindu social hierarchy (Plowden 1883). In the colonial era, another facet of tribal identity was resistance to British rule. Since tribal groups were dispossessed, deprived of access to their land and its resources, and forcibly resettled, they instigated numerous rebellions. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Christian missionaries also played a role in formulating a separate identity for Indigenous groups. Some scholars even trace usage of the term Adivasi to these Christian missionaries (Shah 2010, 15).

This colonial mindset endures within postcolonial South Asian nation-states. Today, the region is characterised by majoritarian societies defined by religion or language which marginalise minorities. During the struggle for independence, Indian nationalists such as Jawaharlal Nehru and Gandhi were keen to assimilate tribal groups into mainstream society in a unified stand against the British. After independence, India's Constitution gave special protections to so-called 'backward' classes: 'scheduled castes' (Dalits) and 'scheduled tribes', reserving for them a quota of public-sector jobs and promotions, seats in parliament and state assemblies, places and scholarships in state-run educational establishments and preferential loans for starting businesses. Furthermore, tribal areas, named 'scheduled areas', were given safeguards to secure scheduled tribes' rights over their land and resources. Not unlike the colonial era, in which an evolutionary master narrative served to present colonial rulers as benevolent, 'improving' the natives, Indian government policies sought to 'fast-track' so-called backward communities towards 'the benefits of civilisation and modernity' (Van

Schendel 2011, 22). Nehru's government revised the Criminal Tribes Act which, under the British, had designated certain tribes as criminal because they were nomadic and justified repressive measures, such as imprisoning them in corrective settlements (Sawhney 2011, 203). Following independence, they became 'DeNotified Tribes' (DNTs). Nevertheless, the legislation failed to reverse associations of criminality, which remained attached to DNT communities.

The transnational term 'Indigenous', with its association of rights, agency and dignity, has risen in popularity since the International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) was established in 1968 and the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007. In the twenty-first century, however, legal protections for 'scheduled tribes' in India's constitution are continually overridden to permit transfers of Indigenous lands to corporations. Many scheduled areas are rich with mineral resources which private companies attempt to exploit with the aid of the government's neoliberal policies. Furthermore, the creation of special economic zones has lent private companies legal rights to buy land, leading to campaigns by NGOs, activists and Indigenous groups to prevent these acquisitions. In these struggles, the notion of Indigenous rights is often harnessed as a weapon to fight on behalf of marginalised people oppressed by neoliberal forces. As Adit Dewan, a filmmaker and artistic director of the Hill Film Festival in the CHT, Bangladesh, describes it in an interview published in this special issue, the notion of Indigeneity provides 'a timely framework to give rights to people who are far from the dominant power structure, to include us within the present mode of justice and governance'.

Yet, asserting Indigenous identity remains a precarious act in a climate of heightened majoritarianism. In India, the Hindutva movement's project of cultural homogenisation often targets Adivasis to bring them into the Hindu fold, while in Bangladesh, Islamist-leaning nationalists have carried out violent attacks on Indigenous communities, especially in the CHT. These pressures have been compounded by clampdowns on free speech and heightened state surveillance (Jaffrelot 2021; Amnesty International 2024), resulting in minority self-censorship.

Dominant Constructs of Indigeneity: Exotic Spectacle and Developmental Lack

For much of the twentieth century, cinematic representations of South Asian Indigenous communities were constructed by outsiders – more powerful groups who had the means to produce images and project them nationally and internationally. Ethnographic documentaries ‘shaped mainstream audiences’ imaginations of people that appeared not only different, but also “simple”, “pure”, “timeless” and hence traditional’ (de Maaker and Schleiter 2020, 16). Drawing on nineteenth-century anthropology, it is not surprising that these films looked at Indigenous people with a colonial gaze, positioning them as exotic, backward and in need of development. Such representations fueled the dominant culture’s orientalist fantasies of race, class and gender, perpetuating historic hierarchies.

Indian popular cinema, in the form of Bollywood and the film industries of south India, is a dominant force throughout the region, shaping cultural discourses of Indigenous cultures that are heavily influenced by state agendas. Similar trends can be observed in dominant cinemas of other South Asian countries. As Glen Hill and Kabita Chakma argue, in the context of Bangladesh, consumption of these films by minorities has a ‘colonizing effect’ (2020, 77). Since Indigenous peoples are not considered part of the masses to which dominant cinema appeals, it has tended to stereotype or erase these diverse groups, rendering them as passive backdrops and homogenising their distinctive cultures with ‘the same mumbo-jumbo chanting’ and parodic tribal costumes (Hasan 2011, 32).

In the decades after independence, Indigenous appearances in Bollywood were generally accompanied by tropes of primitivism, backwardness, violence, closeness to nature, pre-modernity, and need for assistance, in line with the postcolonial Indian state’s development policies in the 1950s and 60s. The state agendas of modernisation and assimilation into a pan-Indian identity are exemplified in *Yeh Gulistan Hamara* (*The Garden is Ours*, Atma Ram 1972) in which a government engineer builds a bridge in India’s underdeveloped and remote northeast frontier, encountering

opposition from tribes in the area. The bridge itself offers a metaphor for integration into the nation, as does the romance that blooms between the engineer and a tribal leader's daughter. Regarded as a compendium of racist stereotypes of the 'backward' Northeast, the film angered the Ao Naga community whose protests led to the removal of some offensive song lyrics and a disclaimer at the beginning: 'The customs depicted in this film, folk dances, dresses etc. have no parallel with any of the tribes in Nagaland.'

Indigenous communities have exerted a fascination for some of South Asia's most prominent art cinema directors. One of Ritwik Ghatak's early films is a documentary titled *The Life of the Adivasis* (1955), and his fiction films *Ajantrik* (1958) and *Subarnarekha* (1965) feature tribes, albeit mainly as backdrops or mysterious presences. Adivasis appear in several films directed by Satyajit Ray, most notably *Aranyer Din Ratri* (*Days and Nights in the Forest*, 1970) where, during a trip to Palamau district, Bihar (now in Jharkhand), four middle-class young men meet a Santhal tribal community, including a young woman named Duli. Despite Ray's subtle critique of the colonial mimicry of his middle-class Bengali characters, as Surangama Guha argues in her contribution to this special issue, the representation of the Adivasi woman remains one-dimensional: an exotic spectacle, devoid of history or complexity.

Tanvir Mokammel, one of Bangladesh's foremost alternative filmmakers, made the documentary *Karnaphulir Kanna* (*Teardrops of Karnaphuli*, 2005) which offers a sympathetic portrait of Indigenous groups in the CHT, their daily struggles and the rifts between them and Bengali settlers. Its trenchant criticism of government actions – the building of the Kaptai hydro-electric dam which created an artificial lake, flooding Indigenous peoples' lands and displacing them, the sponsoring of migration by Bengali settlers from the plains to alter the area's demographics, and military rule – led to its banning in Bangladesh. Nonetheless, its rhetorical strategies, including voiceover narration and montages of traditional lifestyles, seem to favour assimilation of this 'underdeveloped' area.

Both Bollywood and art cinemas have tended to tell their stories through viewpoints of characters who enter tribal areas and interact with or exploit the people they meet, rather than from perspectives within those communities. In contemporary cinema, these trends have largely continued with films such as *Sherni (Tigress)*, Amit Masurkar 2021) which centres on the struggles of a forest department officer rather than the Adivasi people who live there. In contrast, the mainstream film industries of south India have paid closer attention to Indigenous cultures, as in the case of *Kanthara (Mysterious Forest)*, Rishab Shetty 2022), a film from Karnataka. The Oscar-winning *RRR (Rise Roar Revolt)*, S.S. Rajamouli 2022), from the state of Telangana, even celebrates an Adivasi freedom fighter, although somewhat controversially (see Mukherjee 2024).

South Asian Indigenous Cinemas: Theory and Praxis

Faye Ginsburg's work has been pivotal in framing Indigenous film and media as a form of activism in which Indigenous peoples 'talk back' to power structures that have deprived them of their rights and distorted their realities (2002, 63). In her influential wake, scholars have explored how Indigenous communities attempt to achieve control over their own representation, making media on their own terms, whether to challenge their distortion and erasure by dismantling the colonial gaze of dominant film industries, or to contribute to claims for rights and cultural recognition. A common form of Indigenous film production in South Asia are documentaries, often used as testimonies of displacement of Indigenous peoples and destruction of their lands by industrialisation, mining and modern agriculture, events that resonate with attempts to destroy Indigenous lands and exploit their resources worldwide. Several contributors to this special issue contrast this output, which privileges community voices and perspectives, with state-funded documentaries that exoticise communities and depict them as if they were frozen in time.

One notable documentary filmmaker from the Kurukh community is Biju Toppo, National Film Award winner, anthropologist, social activist and co-founder of Akhra, a film production house

in Jharkhand, who has successfully used the medium of cinema to discuss the challenges faced by his community. In this special issue, Aparna Sharma utilises Ginsberg's concept of 'screen memories' to analyse Toppo's film *Kora Rajee (Land of the Diggers, 2006)*, showing how Indigenous people use screen media 'to recuperate their own collective stories and histories' erased by dominant national narratives and 'in danger of being forgotten within local worlds' (Ginsberg 2002, 57). Sharma's article explores how the documentaries *Kora Rajee* and *Where is My Home* (Samiran Deka and Bhaskar Jyoti Das, 2021) represent Indigenous histories of displacement, labour migration and rebellions against colonial rule from an Indigenous perspective – for example, through folksongs that act as a storehouse of collective memories in *Kora Rajee*.

As Michelle Raheja (2010, x) says of Hollywood images of Native Americans, it is vital to analyse earlier cinematic representations to understand how later films, some of them produced by Indigenous filmmakers, interact with them. In a lecture delivered at Auckland University in 2002, Maori filmmaker Barry Barclay proposed the concept of 'Fourth Cinema' in response to Argentine filmmakers Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino's model of First, Second, and Third cinemas. In that model, First Cinema is dominant commercial cinema (exemplified by Hollywood, though in South Asia Bollywood is hegemonic), Second Cinema is Art Cinema and Third Cinema is revolutionary collective filmmaking in a decolonising Third World. By contrast, Fourth Cinema, Barclay claims, is defined by an Indigenous perspective, one with a distinctive film grammar that opposes the imperial gazes of both dominant and art cinema (Barclay 2003, 7-8). In their introductory chapter to *Global Indigenous Media: Cultures, Poetics and Politics* (2008), Wilson and Stewart likewise claim that Indigenous cinematic practices are counter-discourses, initiating conversations on Indigenous identities, aesthetics, struggles and rights with other Indigenous communities and a wider public. As shown in this special issue, by depicting the phenomenology of their everyday life-worlds and drawing on their own languages, South Asian Indigenous cinemas have potential to subvert hegemonic practices.

However, while Barclay's framework, rooted in Indigenous experiences and worldviews, is valuable for understanding films made by Indigenous people for Indigenous communities, two of our contributors (notably both from Indigenous communities themselves) point out that Indigenous filmmakers do not always make overt claims to Indigeneity or consciously position their films as Indigenous activism. In this issue, Lallianpui's article on Mizo films demonstrates how they go beyond the parameters of global Indigenous cinema discourses since they are predominantly popular entertainment. Nevertheless, she argues, Mizo films reflect the community's stories, perspectives and aesthetics. Dewan, himself an experimental filmmaker, does not classify his films as outwardly 'activist', as he explains in his interview in this issue. Neither are his films conscious attempts to tackle stereotypes about his community; rather, his starting-point was his dilemma about his identity, together with his desire to make films in his own language: 'In between this, I was trying to explore Indigenous realities. If you ask what drives me, of course, Indigenous politics drives me but, alongside this, equally what drives me is self-exploration.'

Decolonial theory and praxis in contemporary cultural studies have opened new perspectives for interpreting Indigenous representation and filmmaking in South Asia. To analyse how Indigenous filmmakers negotiate power structures, challenge the colonial gaze, and resist dominant developmental narratives, several contributors in this special issue draw on the work of Walter Dignolo. Dignolo captures the precarious position of Adivasi communities when he says that while a 'democratic state is supposed to be a plurinational state' (2021, 132), it frequently seeks 'to marginalize, expel and eliminate' its marginalised populations when convenient (*ibid.*, 154). He describes Indigenous practices as liberating 'the production of knowledge, reflection and communication from the pitfalls of European rationality/modernity' (*ibid.*, 54), a process in which 'the nation state is no longer a desirable decolonial horizon' (*ibid.*, 66).

In her contribution on the Jungle Rani Facebook Initiative – where young Indigenous women are trained to produce and circulate their own media – Lakshmi Priya invokes Dignolo's (2010)

concept of ‘epistemic disobedience’. This concept represents a refusal to remain within the representational frameworks imposed by colonial, nation-state or mainstream media discourses. For the Jungle Rani Initiative, epistemic disobedience is ‘not merely a theoretical gesture; it is a lived, visual practice’ that rejects the exoticisation or erasure of Adivasi life-worlds. Instead, it offers ‘alternative visual epistemologies rooted in everyday ecological relations, collective labor, interdependence, and community knowledge’ (Priya, in this issue). This ‘decolonial visibility’ emphasises lived experience alongside ‘Indigenous modes of sensing, knowing, and inhabiting the world’. Furthermore, Priya connects the initiative’s practice to Mignolo and Rolando Vázquez’s (2013) ‘decolonial aestheSis’, which disturbs Eurocentric representation through place-based perception rooted in Indigenous sensory traditions. Consequently, Adivasi voices emerge as a counterpublic and their cinema as a decolonial praxis; they reclaim their histories and revitalise their languages to own their worlds (Tuhiwai Smith 1998). These collective endeavors allow heterogeneity to thrive, healing the wounds of colonial violence through art that ‘engages in communal praxis of decolonial healing through epistemic and aesthetic reconstitution’ (Mignolo 2021, 19).

This special issue explores South Asian Indigenous communities’ transition from ‘othering’ to agency, particularly their desire to control their own narratives and how their images circulate in public which Indigenous scholars have defined as ‘visual sovereignty’ (Raheja 2010). The Jungle Rani Initiative advocates for stories told ‘by us, for us’, positioning Adivasi women as media producers deciding how their communities are understood (see Priya, in this issue). The formation of alliances such as the Indigenous Film and Media Alliance (IFMA), discussed in Rashmi Devi Sawhney’s contribution, further exemplifies agency through collective action by Indigenous and non-Indigenous filmmakers, scholars and activists to address ways in which Indigenous communities have been overlooked or misinterpreted. In her article, Lallianpui shows how Mizo tech developers

and filmmakers have demonstrated agency by creating their own streaming platform which has revived Mizo cinema.

Everyday practices and contemporary struggles form an important site in this reclaiming of representational agency. Whereas dominant representations have tended to confine Indigenous peoples into ‘timeless’ traditions or sought to assimilate them into modernity, the articles in this issue emphasise the ‘continuum of daily practices’ (Priya) and the ‘living and processual’ character of Adivasi cultures ‘in conversation with the wider forces of history’ (Sharma) in the films they discuss. This not only offers more nuanced depictions of the communities but also highlights Indigenous epistemologies, whereby everyday life and practices are often connected to ecological knowledge, the land and sustainable living.

Indigenous filmmaking is further enriched by the burgeoning practice of Adivasi feminism. Often overlooked by mainstream feminism’s universalising frameworks, the principles of Adivasi feminism are rooted in women’s intimate connections to land and communities and livelihoods that are shaped by it (Ekka and Giangthandunliu 2024). As Swapna Gopinath (2025) has observed, the Adivasi filmmaker Leela Santhosh from Kerala reflects these realities through a raw, stark realism. The practice is also found among Indigenous women filmmakers from Northeast India such as Chajo Lowang, Sheela Lepcha, and Serlibon Timungpi who have won Green Hub Fellowships. Since its inception, the Green Hub Fellowship, intended to encourage recipients to use filmmaking as a tool for social change (Banerji 2022), has been won by twenty Indigenous women. The filmmaking of these Indigenous women artists is also a decolonial practice since it is an act of resistance and assertion of their subjectivities, stemming from the desire for social justice (Bacchetta et al. 2019, ix). In this special issue, Priya discusses how women participating in the Jungle Rani Initiative use their media skills to challenge patriarchal silences around topics like menstrual health, making narration of their everyday lives political acts. The initiative’s work is grounded in a ‘decolonial Adivasi feminism’ that links bodily autonomy to land and community life. Beyond this, the initiative

is committed to mutual empowerment and nurturing leadership skills. As Priya argues in her article, *Jungle Rani* counters the systemic erasure of Adivasi women by emphasising their leadership and struggles. This commitment to visibility mirrors the primary goal of Adivasi feminism: to provide a space for political representation of Indigenous women. Similarly, the documentary *Kora Rajee* highlights gendered labour in tea gardens in India's Northeast by including folksongs and interviews with women tea labourers, thus also making visible the role of Adivasi women in the tea garden economy, as Sharma shows in her contribution.

Wendy Gay Pearson and Susan Knabe note that Indigenous filmmakers have 'rare and decidedly uneven access to funding, production facilities, and promotion and distribution deals' (2015, 14). Cultural industries often display greater interest in non-Indigenous filmmakers, who find it easier to secure resources, further marginalising the marginalised and perpetuating a colonial dynamic in which 'outsiders' are more readily supported to tell Indigenous stories. 'As a minority, it is very difficult to be recognised', says Aung Rakhine (WhatsApp communication, August 31, 2025). He is a filmmaker who hails from Bangladesh's Rakhine community. In Bangladesh, there is no sustainable market for independent films and being from a minority creates further challenges. That is why Rakhine sets his sights, more optimistically, on global markets. His first feature, *Maw Theng Gaari*, was shot on a micro-budget, financed by crowdfunding and family support, including from his wife who sold her jewellery to meet the costs (Paul 2025). For his next film, *Mru*, about an indigenous community with the world's newest religion (the Krama religion, created in 1985), he does not yet have a producer nor funding to complete it. Envisaged on a more ambitious scale, creatively engaging with ethnographic tropes to present a different image to the world, *Mru* has a much higher budget of 15 million Bangladeshi taka (around a quarter of a million USD).

The current profusion of Indigenous cinemas in South Asia is undoubtedly linked to the greater affordability of digital technologies for film production and distribution and their penetration into remote rural regions where many Indigenous communities live. This matches the embrace of

new technologies by Indigenous communities for their own media creation observed elsewhere (Ginsberg et al. 2002). Before, these communities seldom had access to means of making their own films. The transition from traditional film technology to digital and mobile platforms is a critical thread across articles in this special issue, which challenges the idea of Indigenous communities as ‘pre-modern’ or ‘isolated’ by showcasing how they are repurposing the software and hardware of capitalist modernity for Indigenous storytelling and assertion of collective agency. The rise of over-the-top (OTT) streaming platforms and messaging apps that deliver media content directly to users over the Internet, bypassing state and other broadcast, cable or satellite providers, has offered new possibilities for South Asian Indigenous cinemas to reach their audiences. In Mizoram, the launch of the Lersia Play OTT platform represents a significant shift from ‘roadshows’ (communal screenings in public spaces) to digital distribution. This locally owned platform allows Indigenous filmmakers to bypass the disinterest of global giants like Netflix and raise more sustainable revenues for their cinema (see Lallianpuii, in this issue). The Jungle Rani Initiative repurposes smartphone cameras and Facebook, reimagining the social media platform as a virtual Indigenous community space on which to share and circulate women’s everyday stories and acts of political self-representation. On the other hand, the interview with Dewan reminds us that Indigenous filmmaking does not stem exclusively from harnessing new technologies but also from other motivations, such as construction of cultural identity.

Language is a key site for asserting cultural identity in South Asian Indigenous cinemas. Within India, there are at least 200 different Indigenous languages, many of them transmitted orally from generation to generation and at risk of being lost due to only officially recognised languages (of which there are twenty-two in India’s constitution) being permitted in schools and mainstream media. In Bangladesh, the hegemony of Bengali marginalises over thirty Indigenous languages. Because films use dialogue, they are a means of challenging this marginalisation: each language is a carrier of a distinct cultural identity and therefore a form of resistance to state-imposed identity (see

Dewan and Chaudhuri, in this issue). However, the market for a film in an Indigenous language is restricted by the small size of its community relative to the population that speaks the major language(s) of any given state or nation: ‘filmmakers who decide to shoot a film in a tribal language may be unable to find a producer, therefore having to rely on a very low budget to make a film that may never be screened or might alienate a potential audience’ (Matta 2016, 339).

For her first raft of feature films, Rima Das sidestepped this financial gatekeeping; by deciding that she did not want a producer and funding her own projects, she retained complete creative control. This included using the Kamrupiya language spoken by Indigenous people in the Chaygaon region where the film is set and where Das herself comes from (Das 2017). The Mizo film industry offers a more systemic counter-strategy. By harnessing local networks and OTT platforms, as Lallianpuii discusses, Mizo filmmakers have bypassed the ‘low budget, no audience’ trap that Matta highlights, reaching diasporic Mizo-speaking communities in neighbouring northeastern Indian states and abroad. Her work demonstrates that Indigenous cinema can thrive outside the shadow of the major-language industry.

Partly owing to a lack of traditional distribution, Indigenous films are dependent on the festival circuit. Festivals, such as the Nepal International Indigenous Film Festival, founded by Nabin Subba, and the Samuday ke Saath Indigenous Film Festival, co-hosted by Biju Toppo and Meghnath, have proliferated both within the region and beyond. In a further display of their agency, several Indigenous filmmakers have established their own platforms. In Bangladesh, the Hill Film Festival – co-founded by Dewan and held in both Rangamati and Dhaka – was specifically designed to introduce Indigenous-language films to both local communities and wider national audiences. As Dewan discusses in his interview in this issue, these venues serve as vital forums for dialogue and visibility. Besides film screenings and panels, they offer filmmaking workshops and opportunities for Indigenous filmmakers to meet each other, building networks. The International Indigenous Film Festival of Bhubaneswar, Odisha, co-founded by filmmaker Surya Shankar Dash, even integrates

solidarity trips to Indigenous communities into its programming, transforming the festival into a site of interactive experience and political mobilisation (If Not Us Then Who n.d.).

Archiving and preservation emerge as an important endeavour in this issue, serving as a proactive defence against erasure. As platforms that foreground the microhistories of people who have found themselves silenced within hegemonic narratives, festivals become archives that chronicle distinct identities and linguistic differences. Along with new submissions, older films that trace sociocultural histories, especially in the context of marginalised community practices, are screened and sometimes restored. The 2021 edition of the Hill Film Festival, for example, featured the first two Chakma-language films from Bangladesh, *Dulu Kumori* (1996) and *Andolot Pahr* (2006) under the ‘Hill Classic’ category (Daily Star 2021). In a special screening, *Felim - Cinema for Identity* (Adit Dewan and Turin Tanchangya, 2017), a documentary on CHT filmmaking culture, was also shown. Alongside such curatorial efforts, there are attempts to develop community-driven archives such as the Indigenous Film and Media Alliance (IFMA), discussed in Sawhney’s contribution. The IFMA also curates film festivals and initiates dialogues with wider audiences (Bhasha Research and Publication Centre n.d.). It provides an important forum for preserving and disseminating films by Adivasi, tribal and DNT communities along with independent, colonial and state-funded films that represent them. In this issue, Priya analyses the Jungle Rani Initiative as an alternative archive, as films shared on its Facebook page are a repository of everyday Indigenous practices and traditional ecological knowledge. As with other Indigenous communities worldwide, the creation of such archives is a powerful assertion of the right to safeguard collective memory and resist denial of their histories.

Collaborative filmmaking with Indigenous communities remains ethically fraught, as the production and circulation of images often carry unforeseen repercussions for local lives and environments. In this context, Gayatri Spivak’s inquiry, ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ (2010), serves as a critical – if pessimistic – reference point for assessing whether marginalised groups can articulate

their experiences within dominant power structures. While Spivak identified ‘tribals’ as part of a subaltern class whose voices are often mediated or erased, she also cautioned that emerging educated elites within these groups might fail to represent their less privileged counterparts. However, the contributions in this issue (notably Lallianpui and Dewan) offer necessary nuances to this argument. They demonstrate that university-educated practitioners, by choosing to remain rooted in their communities rather than operating from a distant base, play crucial roles in cultural revitalisation. Rather than speaking for the subaltern, these individuals utilise their institutional access to create platforms for collective self-representation. As Raheja (2010) suggests, collaborations – even those involving non-Indigenous partners – do not inherently signify a loss of autonomy; instead, they represent strategic opportunities for Indigenous peoples to assert their own identities and change the dominant culture’s attitudes.

Collaborative practices in South Asian Indigenous cinemas have evolved beyond the historical model of the non-Indigenous director – whether independent or state-commissioned – coming to film an Indigenous community or casting its members as non-professional actors. While this special issue prioritises Indigenous-led work, the contributors pay attention to the ethics of positionality, recognising that filmmakers often occupy a complex, liminal space between insiders and outsiders. This nuance is central to Sharma’s analysis, which juxtaposes Deka and Das’s *Where Is My Home* with Toppo’s *Kora Rajee*. Although Toppo is himself Indigenous, Sharma highlights that he remains distinct from the tea labourer communities he documents. By framing these directors as ‘neither purely insiders nor fully outsiders’, her work shows that ethical representation is not guaranteed by heritage alone; rather, it is forged through a respectful engagement with the lived experiences of the community.

Collectives of filmmakers and activists, often involving Indigenous and non-Indigenous alliances, are becoming a popular mode of collaboration in attempts to secure rights and social justice for Indigenous communities. The IFMA, which includes both Indigenous and non-Indigenous

filmmakers and scholars, deserves a special mention in this context. In her contribution, Sawhney maps its politics of alliance-making and identifies it as an experiment in ‘collaborative praxis’, a reciprocal engagement that produces a ‘dialectical transformation’ for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants. Led by Jayanti Buruda from the Koya Indigenous community in Odisha with support from several partner organisations (including the International Land and Forest Tenure Facility, Indian School of Business, and Jamia Millia Islamia University), the Jungle Rani Initiative is another collective that seeks to empower Indigenous voices (Tenure Facility 2023), yielding results in the form of video training and short films on its Facebook page. It thus produces a form of collaborative authorship more allied with communal and relational Indigenous modes of knowledge production than individualistic, auteur-focused models of mainstream filmmaking.

Outline of the special issue

This special issue offers fascinating insights into the complex relationship between the lived experiences of South Asian Indigenous communities and cinematic practices employed by their filmmakers. As the editors, we are non-Indigenous allies who have sought to bring together other scholars engaged in these issues who either belong to Indigenous communities or are their professed allies. Previously, Gopinath has conducted extensive field visits and in-depth interviews with community members, especially in South India, using a decolonial lens to analyse their art practices. The revival of cultural spaces by community members using digital mediascapes was a dynamic component of her study. To this work, Shohini Chaudhuri brings her wide-ranging research background in film and human rights, in particular a critical engagement with notions of agency, mediation and representation, and her interest in transnational frameworks for understanding film cultures. In their contributions, several authors explicitly address their own positions as researchers. For example, Sawhney’s article on the IFMA observes her own ‘dialectical transformation’ in the process of alliance-making, while Priya acknowledges her non-Indigenous status and resulting issues

of ‘authority, positionality and representational agency’ entailed in her study of the Jungle Rani project.

The contributors have adopted diverse methodologies, ranging from textual analysis (including of *Aranyer Din Ratri* in Guha’s contribution, Facebook videos in Priya’s article and Sharma’s comparative analysis of documentary aesthetics) to contemporary visual anthropology. A methodological thread running through the majority of articles is direct dialogue and engagement with Indigenous practitioners. In her study of the Mizo film industry, Lallianpuii utilises semi-structured interviews with local OTT developers and filmmakers, along with her own participant observation and fieldwork in Mizoram. Priya’s Jungle Rani Initiative research is built upon conversations with its founder Jayanti Buruda, and Chaudhuri’s interview with Dewan is an exploration of CHT cinema through his oral history and reflection on practice. In her IFMA article, Sawhney employs a methodology of ‘writing a history of the present’. Unlike a traditional retrospective study, this innovative approach documents a process of alliance-making as it unfolds, shifting between conceptual, anecdotal, historical and speculative modes. Like several other contributions, it draws on Indigenous research methodologies, such as those by Linda Tuhiwai Smith, which prioritise Indigenous epistemologies over Western academic models.

As a central argument of this special issue is the shift from an external ‘othering’ gaze to Indigenous self-representation, we begin with Surangama Guha’s article, ‘The Othering of Duli: Performing Indigeneity in Satyajit Ray’s *Aranyer Din Ratri*’, which critiques the 1970 film’s portrayal of its Santhali female protagonist. Her analysis highlights how Ray’s voyeuristic camera fragments Duli into an eroticised object, while his casting of a non-Indigenous actress in ‘blackface’ reinforces racist tropes of inferiority. Guha exposes ‘the tricky terrain that Ray traverses’ where the very tools that he uses to analyse his other characters (whether through the humanism of his early phase or the more pessimistic edge of his later films) are not extended to the subaltern character of Duli. The article challenges the sanctification of the auteur that often shields canonical directors from

scrutiny regarding their treatment of minorities. Guha's argument gains another meaningful layer by contrasting Ray's reductive imagery with the complex representation of the tribal woman Dopdi in Mahasweta Devi's short story 'Draupadi' (1978), thereby underscoring the director's reliance on clichéd, neocolonial tropes.

Moving from the historical reduction of Indigenous identities to 'ethnographic spectacles', this issue examines trends of the new millennium in which members of Indigenous communities have emerged as filmmakers, empowering themselves in mediated spaces, owning their voices and expanding their presence through collaborations, with resulting shifts in representations. Sawhney's article, 'The Indigenous Film and Media Alliance: An Experiment in Collaborative Praxis', traces the IFMA's formation in 2024 and evolution from a 'Media Lab' into a trans-regional network uniting Adivasi, tribal, and DNT filmmakers with non-Indigenous allies. Drawing on her own journey within the collective, Sawhney documents a work-in-progress infrastructure designed to dismantle Indigenous invisibility through community-driven archiving, curated screenings, and workshops. She argues that this resilient ecosystem is essential for reclaiming Indigenous epistemologies and challenging both mainstream media and the hostile climate of Hindutva politics.

In her contribution, 'Minority Media: Shifting Practices in Screening Indigenous Films', Lallianpuii explores community-led initiatives that have reinvigorated regional Indigenous filmmaking in Mizoram. She charts the transition from communal screenings to OTT platforms, and details the genres preferred by Mizo audiences – namely, comedy, romance, and drama that reflects local values and concerns. Multidimensional approaches to popularise these films include high-profile red-carpet events, cleverly combined with promotion and publicity on streaming platforms. Lallianpuii argues that the agency of local tech developers and filmmakers is the driving force behind the revitalisation of Mizo cinema. Her account introduces us to a sustainable business model that decentres global giants like Netflix and provides a platform for Mizo filmmakers that allows them to protect themselves from piracy while fostering a unique, modern Indigenous identity.

Indigenous storytelling using new media spaces is a practice that Jayanti Buruda has adopted in her journey towards building an environment for Indigenous communities to speak up and be heard. Her Jungle Rani Initiative is a women's collective in Odisha that, since 2023, has used smartphone cameras and Facebook to tell 'our story through ourselves for ourselves'. Priya's article 'The Jungle Rani Initiative and Indigenous Media Futures' discusses this work, informed by her interview with Buruda. By training women in media skills, the initiative transforms technology – a tool of capitalist modernity – into an instrument of Adivasi feminism in which the women document everyday practices, such as pottery and medicinal knowledge. The article seeks to understand Adivasi feminism and its practices, along with the reclaiming of visual sovereignty, which is an act intended to counter the gaze from outside as well as patriarchal silences within the communities.

Internal migration, where community members make arduous journeys in search of livelihood or due to displacement, forms another dimension of Adivasi lives. In her article, 'Tea Gardens and Temporary Settlements: Documentary Depictions of Tribal Displacements and Adivasi Migrations in Northeast India', Sharma explores two documentaries, *Where is My Home?* (2021) and *Kora Rajee* (2006), that depict Bru displacement and tea tribe migration in Northeast India, respectively. She covers contexts of internal migration, the impact of colonial policies on these movements and postcolonial India's attempt to integrate this 'peripheral' region into the larger national entity. Sharma argues that these films 'reverse the gaze' by privileging community voices and their collective memories of migration over outsider analysis. Thus, she contends, the films provide a vital subaltern historiography, documenting how Indigenous communities handle trauma and build resilience.

The final piece, 'Cinema for Identity', Chaudhuri's interview with Dewan, serves as a crucial practitioner-led contribution to the special issue. By documenting his dual role as a filmmaker and co-founder of the Hill Film Festival, it explores the challenges of running an Indigenous film festival and making Indigenous films in Bangladesh, where the state has imposed a unified Bengali national

identity and military rule in the CHT. Dewan explains his focus on making Chakma-language films and programming Indigenous-language films: both are ways of resisting state-imposed identity and exploring ‘identities that fall in between’. Drawing on his research for the documentary *Felim – Cinema for Identity* and his own experiences, he recounts how filmmaking developed in the CHT and trends in CHT film production and circulation. His contribution brings together lived experience and reflection on practice, and highlights how Indigenous cultural organisations, collaboration with external partners, networking and skill-sharing act as essential ways of navigating – and surviving – state-imposed marginalisation.

This special issue foregrounds Indigenous filmmaking practices and documents initiatives, alliances and collectives that seek to empower and sustain this artistic community. It analyses film and media as means of exploring Indigenous identities and histories from their own perspectives. We hope that the articles act as pointers towards new ways of reading screen media from Indigenous worlds and contextualising them within the pluriverse of Adivasi and tribal communities.

References

- Amnesty International. 2024. “Repackaging Repression: The Cyber Security Act and the Continuing Lawfare Against Dissent in Bangladesh.” <https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Repackaging-Repression-The-Cyber-Security-Act-and-the-Continuing-Lawfare-Against-Dissent-in-Bangladesh.pdf>
- Bacchetta, Paulo, Sunaina Maira and Howard Winant, eds. 2019. *Global Raciality: Empire, Postcoloniality, Decoloniality*. Routledge.
- Banerji, Rita. 2022. “Through the Lens of Indigenous Filmmakers.” <https://sanctuarynaturefoundation.org/article/through-the-lens-of-indigenous-women-filmmakers>
- Barclay, Barry. 2003. “Celebrating Fourth Cinema.” *Illusions* 35: 7-11.

- Bhasha Research and Publication Centre. n.d. "Indigenous Film and Media Archive." Accessed February 6, 2026. <http://bhasharesearch.org/ifma>
- Columpar, Corinn. 2010. *Unsettling Sights: The Fourth World on Film*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- The Daily Star. 2021. "5th Hill Film Festival kicks off tomorrow." November 3. <https://www.thedailystar.net/entertainment/tv-film/news/5th-hill-film-festival-kicks-tomorrow-2221131>
- Dalrymple, Sam. 2025. *Shattered Lands: Five Partitions and the Making of Modern Asia*. William Collins.
- Das, Rima. 2017. "Rima Das Interview with Anupama Chopra". September 12. www.youtube.com/watch?v=loxnLCZMY4
- De Maaker, Erik and Markus Schleiter. 2020. "Introduction: Screening indigeneity and nation." In *Media, Indigeneity and Nation in South Asia*, edited by Markus Schleiter and Erik de Maaker. Routledge.
- Ekka, Kanchan Thomasina, and Pheiga Amanda Giangthandunliu. 2024. "Theorizing Adivasi/Tribal Feminism: Decoding Voices from Chotanagpur and the Northeast Region of India." *Journal of International Women's Studies* 26 (2). <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol26/iss2/3>
- Ginsburg, Faye D., Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin. 2002. "Introduction." In *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*, edited by Faye D. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin. University of California Press.
- Ginsburg, Faye D. 2002. "Screen Memories: Resignifying the Traditional in Indigenous Media." In *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*, edited by Faye D. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin. University of California Press.
- Gonzalez Rodriguez, Milton Fernando. 2022. *Indigeneity in Latin American Cinema*. Bloomsbury.

- Gopinath, Swapna. 2025. "Decolonial Practices in Indigenous Film Making: Tracing the Cinematic Journey of Leela Santhosh." Paper presented at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference, "New Visions of/In Indigenous Sovereignty Media," Chicago, April 4.
- Hasan, Daisy. 2011. "Talking Back to 'Bollywood': Hindi Commercial Cinema in North-East India." In *South Asian Media Cultures: Audiences, Representations, Contexts*, edited by Shakuntala Banaji. Anthem Press.
- Hill, Glen and Kabita Chakma. 2020. "Silencing Films from The Chittagong Hill Tracts: Indigenous Cinema's Challenge to the Imagined Cultural Homogeneity of Bangladesh." In *South Asian Filmscapes: Transregional Encounters*, edited by Elora Halim Chowdhury and Esha Niyogi De. University of Washington Press.
- If Not Us Then Who? n.d. "Indigenous film festivals: Opening spaces for justice and inclusion." <https://ifnotusthenwho.me/indigenous-film-festivals-opening-spaces-for-justice-and-inclusion/>
- Jaffrelot, Christophe. 2021. *Modi's India: Hindu Nationalism and the Rise of Ethnic Democracy*. Princeton University Press.
- Matta, Mara. 2016. "Multilingualism and Indigenous Cinema in Northeast India: The Case of Kokborok Language Films." In *The Multilingual Screen: New Reflections on Cinema and Linguistic Difference*, edited by Tijana Mamula and Lisa Patti. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Mignolo, Walter D. 2010. "Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and Decolonial Freedom." *Theory, Culture & Society* 26 (7-8): 1-23.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276409349275>
- Mignolo, Walter D. 2021. *The Politics of Decolonial Investigations*. Duke University Press.
- Mignolo, Walter, and Rolando Vázquez. 2013. "Decolonial AestheSis: Colonial Wounds/Decolonial Healings." *Social Text Online*, July 15.

https://socialtextjournal.org/periscope_article/decolonial-aesthetics-colonial-woundsdecolonial-healings/

Mukherjee, Madhuja. 2024. "RRR: Rebellious Heroes, Roaring Stars, and Myth-making." *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media*, no. 62 (Winter).

<https://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/JC62.2024/MadhujaMukherjee/>

Paul, Priyam. 2025. "Indigenous Lives on Screen: Breaking Silence with Cinema." *The Daily Star*.

August 30. <https://www.thedailystar.net/slow-reads/unheard-voices/news/indigenous-lives-screen-3973976>

Pearson, Wendy Gay, and Susan Knabe. 2015. "Introduction: Globalizing Indigenous Film and Media." In *Reverse Shots: Indigenous Film and Media in an International Context*, edited by Wendy Gay Pearson and Susan Knabe. Wilfred Laurier University Press.

Plowden, W. Chichele. 1883. *Report on the Census of British India taken on the 17th February 1881*. Eyre and Spottiswoode. Retrieved from Pari: People's Archive of Rural India.

<https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/library/resource/report-on-the-census-of-british-india-taken-on-the-17th-of-february-1881-vols-i-iii/>

Population Census Data. n.d. "Scheduled Tribe Population in India [as per Census 2011]." Accessed February 3, 2026. <https://www.census2011.co.in/scheduled-tribes.php>.

Raheja, Michelle H. 2010. *Reservation Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film*. University of Nebraska Press.

Rakhine, Aung. 2015. Interview. "Ranger Mela." SATV.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8OZQ7T1wSN0>

Salazar, Juan Francisco and Amalia Córdova. 2008. "Imperfect media and the poetics of indigenous video in Latin America." In *Global Indigenous Media: Cultures, Poetics and Politics*, edited by Pamela Wilson and Michelle Stewart. Duke University Press.

- Sawhney, Rashmi Devi. 2011. "Through the Lens of a 'Branded Criminal': The Politics of Marginal Cinema in India." In *South Asian Media Cultures: Audiences, Representations, Contexts*, edited by Shakuntala Banaji. Anthem Press.
- Schleiter, Markus, and Erik de Maaker, eds. 2020. *Media, Indigeneity and Nation in South Asia*. Routledge.
- Shah, Alpa. 2010. *In the Shadows of the State: Indigenous Politics, Environmentalism, and Insurgency in Jharkhand, India*. Duke University Press.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 2010. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea*, edited by Rosalind C. Morris. Columbia University Press.
- Tenure Facility. 2023. "Lights, camera, action: Indigenous women use film to make the invisible visible." <https://thetenurefacility.org/article/lights-camera-action-indigenous-girls-and-young-women-use-film-to-make-the-invisible-visible/>
- Tuhiwai Smith, Linda. 1998. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Zed Books.
- Van Schendel, Willem. 2011. "The dangers of belonging: Tribes, indigenous peoples and homelands in South Asia". In *The Politics of Belonging in India: Becoming Adivasi*, edited by Daniel J. Rycroft and Sangeeta Dasgupta. Routledge.
- Wilson, Pamela and Michelle Stewart. 2008. "Indigeneity and Indigenous Media on the Global Stage." In *Global Indigenous Media: Cultures, Poetics, And Politics*, edited By Pamela Wilson and Michelle Stewart. Duke University Press.
- Wood, Houston. 2008. *Native Features: Indigenous Films from Around the World*. Continuum.