



# House Full: Indian Cinema and the Active Audience (Fieldwork Encounters and Discoveries)

*Lakshmi Srinivas*

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India is the largest producer and consumer of feature films in the world, far outstripping Hollywood in the number of movies released and tickets sold every year. Cinema quite simply dominates Indian popular culture, and has for many decades exerted an influence that extends from clothing trends to music tastes to everyday conversations, which are peppered with dialogue quotes.

With *House Full*, Lakshmi Srinivas takes readers deep into the moviegoing experience in India, showing us what it's actually like to line up for a hot ticket and see a movie in a jam-packed theater with more than a thousand seats. Building her account on countless trips to the cinema and hundreds of hours of conversation with film audiences, fans, and industry insiders, Srinivas brings the moviegoing experience to life, revealing a kind of audience that, far from passively consuming the images on the screen, is actively engaged with them. People talk, shout, whistle, cheer; others sing along, mimic, or dance; at times audiences even bring some of the ritual practices of Hindu worship into the cinema, propitiating the stars onscreen with incense and camphor. The picture Srinivas paints of Indian filmgoing is immersive, fascinating, and deeply empathetic, giving us an unprecedented understanding of the audience's lived experience—an aspect of Indian film studies that has been largely overlooked.

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