21607 150022333 Peoples and Products of India 1931
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Marketing film promotes India's rural economy

Made to promote inter-Empire trade, this film depicts India as a land of social diversity and primitive but abundant agricultural production

This Empire Marketing Board film opens with Delhi's mosques and temples but focuses on India's villages which it puts at the heart of India's economy. It highlights the 'primitive' nature of Indian farming but all the goods shown (wheat, sugar, rice and jute) were cash crops grown for international export. While the film's tone is upbeat, trade in these goods was badly hit in the 1930s depression.

British demand for Indian agricultural produce dropped during the interwar years but colonial officials hoped that campaigns to 'buy empire goods' and promote trade between colonies would bolster the Indian economy, a project that met with only limited success. The Great Depression greatly weakened Indian agriculture and by the 1930s rural moneylenders, who are depicted in the film, had become the targets of popular and government criticism. Indian nationalists, such as Jawaharlal Nehru, argued that only government funding and intervention could secure a strong and productive Indian economy.

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