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India

India has a population of over 1.2 billion people. India boasts some of the world's richest men, with four billionaires on the *Forbes* Top 10 list for 2008. Yet, it also possesses the world's largest concentration of people living below the poverty line. About half of the country's population, or 458 million people, are counted as part of the total workforce. Mapping this workforce is complex, and as we attempt to account for the range of different occupations in India, from agricultural to industrial and postindustrial workplaces, we consider the history of organized labor, the informal sector, enduring dynamics of caste and class, as well as the rise of high-tech industries and care work. In doing so, we spotlight issues of globalization, technology, marginalization, and migration.

India's industrial labor force has only constituted a small proportion of its total working population. At the peak of colonial industrialization, in the 1920s, only 7.5 percent of India's population were employed in urban industries, and toward the end of the 1990s, it was estimated that only 30 million people out of a workforce of 400 million were employed in the formal industrial sector. Yet, as the historian of India's working classes, Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, wrote, the social, political, and cultural significance of the industrial sector has been considerably greater than these "stark figures" suggest. At the end of the 19th century, Mumbai became India's major port, a booming commercial center, one of the largest markets in Asia for the cotton trade, and a rapidly growing home to enormous numbers of industrial workers. The history of organized labor in India is tied to this city and the foundation of the first workers' organization, the Bombay Mill Hands Association, in 1890. During the 1920s and 1930s, Mumbai's cotton mills saw unprecedented political action, as disputes over pay and conditions spread from single mills to the whole industry, and general strikes periodically convulsed the city's leather industries, railways, and docks. The government of India responded by nominating the first representative of labor to its central legislative assembly, and trade union leaders in Bombay gained their first seats on municipal councils, making organized labor a powerful political constituency.

Since the 1920s, all of India's national political parties have fostered a labor union, just as they might a student or youth wing. These federations have regularly served as useful vehicles for aspiring politicians, from India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who was once president of the All India National Trade Union Congress; to the trade unionist V. V. Giri, who was to become president of India. Today, there are 12 trade union centers in India, variously affiliated to national political parties. They act as umbrella bodies for nationwide unions in specific sectors of industry or services, and as bargaining agents between groups of workers, employers, and organs of government.

Following independence from Great Britain in 1947, the Indian government oversaw a massive program of industrial modernization. Large-scale industrial infrastructure projects like the country's new steel plants were to be "temples of modernity," in which old divisions of caste, region, and religion could be transcended for the greater good of the nation. In the 1970s, books like Mark Holmstrom's *South Indian Factory Workers* (1976) established this urban labor force and their trade unions as specific objects of sociological enquiry. The trade union was recognized as a lens through which to understand the wider social impacts of industrialization, including changes in caste, gender, and community relations. In the 1970s, the sociology of organized labor documented a shift away from community-based unionism, and the rise of what was frequently termed political unionism, led by people who occupied different socioeconomic positions in hierarchies of caste

and class vis-à-vis those they claimed to represent and whose chief assets were frequently their party political affiliations. For many sociologists, the role of "outsiders" is pivotal to understanding India's labor movement. As Dipesh Chakrabarty wrote of Bengali socialists in early-20th-century Calcutta, when high-caste or middle-class labor activists set out to identify with the working class by making a public "sacrifice" of material comforts, they reproduced relationships of caste hierarchy, rather than challenging the social order.

The period between 1989 and 1992 was a moment of rupture in contemporary Indian history, and a series of structural adjustments in India's economy saw the decline of a state-centered model of industrial development to one driven by the market. Disinvestment in public-sector industries saw the deindustrialization of many of India's old industrial centers, a process that has been linked to an emergent public politics of right-wing Hindu nationalism and to a rise in domestic violence. Yet, deindustrialization in India did not follow the same trajectory as that of northern European countries. Instead, while spaces of large-scale formal industry, like Navi-Mumbai, were eviscerated by real estate speculation, new spaces of informal and decentralized manufacturing industry emerged. Prominent examples include the cluster of knitwear and ready-made garment manufacturers in Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu, and the diamond- and gemstone-cutting workshops of Surat, Gujarat. With his detailed study of decentralized garment manufacturing in Tiruppur, Sharad Chari made a major contribution to our understanding of regional history in the making of a global industry, showing how the caste-based social networks of south India's rural agricultural communities and their commitment to an idea of social mobility through work or toil could become the foundation of a successful global industry.

During the 1990s, the framework for industrialization in India became firmly embedded within a neoliberal paradigm. India's state and central governments focused on building an "enabling environment" for business export-oriented manufacturing, which became an increasingly central feature of state strategies for social and economic transformation. The offshore economic zone, or enclave, has been an important part of these strategies. Economic zones were to act, in the words of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, as "policy laboratories" that could pioneer the freedoms from government controls and labor laws that neoliberal economists and business lobbyists considered the final structural impediments to growth in India's manufacturing economy. These zones made legible, legitimate, and visible the conditions of informality and precariousness under which most economic activity already takes place in India.

Informal and Agricultural Work

Sociologists of work, labor, and industry in India have long considered economic dualisms like formal/informal, rural/urban, and agricultural/industrial empirically untenable. Instead, they have repeatedly blurred the conceptual boundaries between these sectors of the economy by showing how public and private industries simultaneously incorporate diverse forms of labor into the production processes; how village agricultural economies provide the security for industrial labor migrants; and how global manufacturing industries rely on decentralized production systems. The lines between the worlds of rural-agricultural-informal labor and urban-industrial-formal labor are "optical illusions," according to Holmstrom, and as people seek to secure livelihoods and status, they may segue from one to another over the course of a lifetime, a season, or even a working day.

Estimates suggest that the overwhelming majority (85 percent) of Indians continue to work in informal work. Official statistics usually identify two categories in this "unorganized" sector, "self-employed workers" (57 percent) and "casual workers" (24 percent). These are jobs that operate on a part-time, seasonal, or otherwise nonpermanent basis. In contrast to the other 15 percent of workers in the "organized sector," informal work is neither waged/salaried labor, nor represented by unions. Further, while regular workers are protected by a minimum wage of 115 rupees per day ($2.25), there is no such coverage for informal workers. At least 67 percent of the rural workforce continues to be employed in agriculture. They do intensive work in fields and plantations, growing tea, cotton, wheat, oilseed, and sugarcane. Globalization has intensified the precariousness of farming in India. Economic liberalization in 1992 shifted agriculture from food production to cash

A woman works on her sewing machine by candlelight in Varanasi, India. Patterns of social discrimination and marginalization in India's labor force are framed in part by caste, a form of social hierarchy composed of varnas*—priests, warriors, traders, and workmen—in classic Hinduism. Gender is also a significant element of labor subordination. The vast majority of the 148 million women in India's workforce—96 percent—are in the unorganized or informal economy, which includes weaving and home production.*

crops, removed state subsidies, introduced costly bank loans, and ushered in expensive seeds and pesticides from multinational corporations in the global north. The resulting indebtedness among the mass of farmers has led to a rash of farmer suicides. There have been 250,000 suicides in this time period, nearly one every 30 minutes in 2009. In an act of global symbolism, some carry out the act by drinking the pesticides from the United States that they use on their crops.

Labor Marginalization

There are enduring patterns of social discrimination and marginalization in India's labor force. Many of these are framed by caste, a hierarchical system of social stratification. Caste relationships are normally associated with the fourfold classification of society into *varnas*—priests, warriors, traders, and workmen—in classic Hinduism. However, caste-based identities and divisions can also be found in India's Muslim, Sikh, and Christian communities. At the bottom of the caste hierarchy, and excluded from it, are the "untouchables," or *Dalits*. This includes one-sixth of India's population, over 160 million people. One of the central operating principles of the caste system has been a hereditary caste-based division of occupations, as ritual purity is linked to daily activities. Historically, Dalits can be found performing jobs that are considered too dirty or polluted for members of the other higher castes to do. The Indian state has attempted to address the marginalization of Dalit communities with quotas in education and government jobs. However, Dalits can continue to be found exclusively employed in certain kinds of work, like "manual scavenging"—the removal of human waste from public and private toilets—and street sweeping.

Gender is an important element of labor subordination, and women have disproportionately

borne the strains of globalization in India. Women represent 148 million workers in India, or about 32 percent of the total workforce. The vast majority, 96 percent, are in the unorganized or informal economy, including activities like street vending, home-based goods production, weaving, fishing, and dairy work. Women can most commonly be found in the "self-employed" category, doing unpaid work for the family, rather than for other "employers or account holders." The government projects that 2.8 million women and children are trafficked for commercial sex across its borders, with 3 million prostitutes in the country. The labor force participation rate of women in the Indian economy has increased in the last two decades, with women pushed out of the export-manufacturing sector, where they compete with men for factory work.

Rise of Services

For urban workers, employment is most often found in services or government jobs: trades, hotels, and restaurants (24 percent); public administration (19 percent); and construction (10 percent). The burgeoning of service work has contributed to the expansion of the middle class in India. Care work is an important element of this service economy. At the lower end are domestic care workers. This group includes maids, cooks, dishwashers, gardeners, and *ayahs,* or "nannies." Home-based servitude has a long history in India, especially under British colonial rule, but scholars like R. Ray and S. Qayam note that this kind of labor is not withering away, as some would expect. Rather, it is a marker of the new middle class. What changes are the composition and character of the workers: from predominantly male live-in servants for life, to female live-out domestic workers who are part-time. The work is labeled as feminine, devalued for involving dirty or bodily tasks and for taking place in female spaces of the home. Men who perform domestic work often conceive of themselves as "failed patriarchs," driven from respectable work in offices, factory, or the land. Globalization has penetrated the care sector in India, especially at the upper end of the service workforce. An example is in the health sector. State governments in the southern region of India have educated their populations very effectively, but at the same time, failed to provide enough jobs. This paradox has prompted widespread labor out-migration and a "care drain" (a counterpart to the "brain drain") as large numbers of south Indian nurses travel to Dubai and the United Arab Emirates for work in hospitals and health facilities.

Technology Professionals

The professional occupations have also been growing in India, none perhaps as well publicized as the information and communication technology (ICT) workforce. The Indian government has carefully groomed this workforce through the development of IT colleges, industrial parks, and tax subsidies to firms. India is now among the top destinations for "outsourcing," that is, the transfer of ICT work projects across borders to subcontracting firms. Close to 3 million Indians now work in this sector, and many of them women, who now comprise 35 to 40 percent of its workers. The linkages of Indian technology professionals and entrepreneurs with those overseas, especially in the United States, have created what Carol Upadhya calls a new "transnational capitalist class." The upper end of ICT work is in software engineering. Through outsourcing contracts, these employees write code and develop computer programs for firms in the global north. Because the work is digitally mobile in its production, labor process, and output, but stable in the placement of workers' bodies, A. Aneesh has referred to this process as "virtual migration." Outsourcing creates an invisible workforce that can be paid a fraction of the wages in the United States, and is decoupled from that country's employment laws, policies, and benefits.

High-skilled technical workers also migrate physically, at times. They travel to the United States, Australia, and other destinations in the global north for short or long periods of time. The lower end is outsourced for back-office clerical work, such as data entry, transcription, and customer service. Call center employees, as a prime example, work as inbound help-desk operators or outbound telemarketers and collections agents for customers in the United States, United Kingdom, and elsewhere. These jobs have noteworthy returns for the young, educated workforce. At the same time, there are unique and highly globalized costs. Workers face extreme routinization in the scripts they recite, intense pressure of answering hundreds of calls per shift, and high-tech surveillance

monitoring through their computers. According to W. Poster, they also endure a reversal of work time, reconfiguring their work schedules completely to the night, as they cater to foreign daylight hours, Some are asked by employers to perform "national identity management," in which they pose as Americans (and other nationalities) for the job, changing their names, accents, and/or styles of conversation to convey that they are in the United States.

Enduring issues for labor in India will be providing employment opportunities for the huge and expanding middle class; managing a transnationally mobile professional class; responsibly coordinating employment for a service underclass in urban areas, especially in slums as rural workers move to cities; transferring the benefits of the growing IT industry to rural communities and its impoverished workers; and respecting the human rights of workers according to gender, caste, ethnicity, and sexuality. As 100 million workers recently took to the streets (in what some call the world's largest strike), protesting the degradation of employment supports by neoliberal policies, this will be challenge for India's leaders.

See Also: Blue-Collar Jobs; Call Centers; Care Work; Child Labor; Domestic Work, Paid; Engineers; Factory Work, Globalization of; Globalization; High-Tech and Internet Industry, Employment in; Human Trafficking; Information Technology Workers; Organized Labor; Outsourcing and Subcontracting; Poverty; Race and Ethnic Groups; Sex Work; Strikes and Protests.

Winifred R. Poster
Washington University, St. Louis
Jamie Cross
University of Edinburgh

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Indonesia

Indonesia has the largest population in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), is the world's largest Muslim nation, and has the fourth-largest population globally, at 242 million people. It is a member of the prestigious Group of 20 (G20). Indonesia is composed of 17,508 islands, of which 6,000 are inhabited, and its 0.7 million square miles (1.9 million square kilometers) make it the 15th largest country by land area. It is a major oil, coal, and natural gas producer, with other natural resources being tin, nickel, timber, bauxite, copper, gold, and silver. Its population is 44 percent rural, though just 11 percent of the land is arable, with only 7 percent under cultivation. According to the World Bank, Indonesia had a 2010 gross domestic product of