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0521568242 - Footloose Labour: Working in India's Informal Economy

Jan Breman

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In a penetrating anthropological study of the working poor in India, Jan Breman examines the lives of those who, pushed out of the agrarian labour market, depend on a wide variety of temporary jobs in the countryside and cities for a living. Beginning his local-level research in two villages in south Gujarat, the author discusses the mobilization of casual labour, hired and fired according to the need of the moment, and transferred for the duration of the job to destinations far away from the home area. His case-study reveals that the circulation of labour is indicative of an employment pattern which dominates both the rural and urban economy of large parts of South Asia. Elaborating on the social profile of the work migrants, the author argues that their identity is shaped by both class and caste relations. Action by state agencies has failed to improve their quality of life.

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*Working in India's informal economy*

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Jan Breman

*University of Amsterdam*



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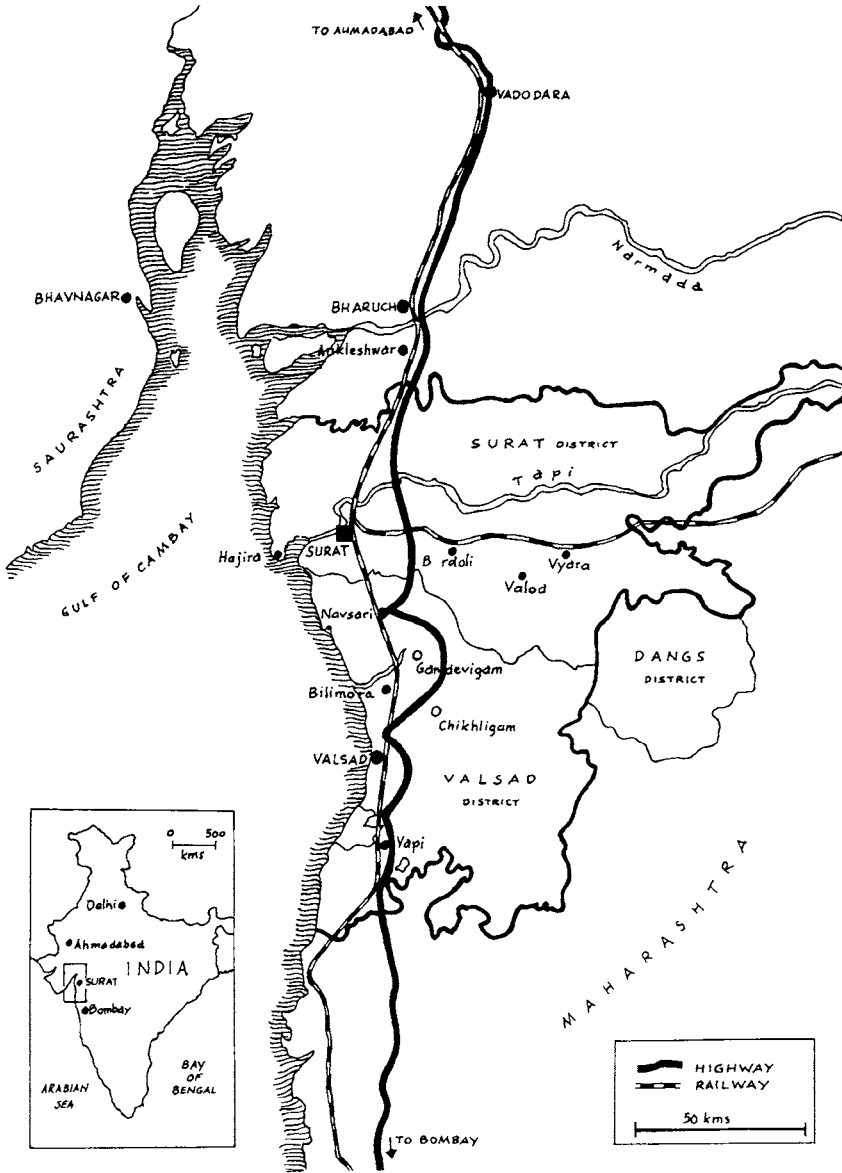
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Map of south Gujarat identifying rural and urban fieldwork sites in Surat and Valsad districts