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Mark Holmstrom

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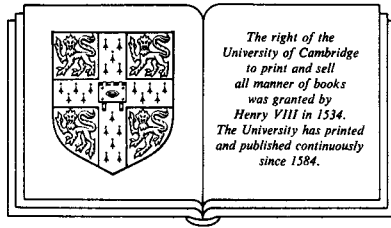
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INDUSTRY AND INEQUALITY

The social anthropology of Indian labour

MARK HOLMSTRÖM

University of East Anglia, Norwich



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FOR LAKSHMI

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On the spelling of Indian words

Except for a few common spellings (like Brahman, Tamil), Indian words are spelt here in a new way (as in *South Indian factory workers*, Holmström 1976:xi). The common transliteration uses diacritical marks (as in *ḍhūṅḍhnā*) which are hard to print or type, blur the outline of words, and are easily left out: the result is a poor guide to pronunciation. A simple, practical, but accurate transliteration – like the new Chinese Pinyin – would be useful for many purposes. Though the method is used only for a few words in this book, I describe it here as I hope it will catch on.

Every phoneme is expressed by a single letter or a digraph, as in English. This requires one extra sign, a prime sign ('). It can be written or typed as an apostrophe, and any well-designed substitute would do (in *South Indian factory workers* I used a raised point [˙]). It is written as a separate letter, not an accent.

This sign makes the preceding vowel nasal (mai' huu') or the preceding consonant(s) retroflex (mand'al, Krisn'a). Long vowels are doubled (but in languages like Hindi, e o are always long). Other digraphs include sh for the palatal sibilant (not the retroflex sibilant, often written sh or ś); n can stand for ng, ny according to context; c and ch are like English ch (but Tamil c is often like s). Unnecessary letters are left out (kiaa not kiyaa).

Hindi (Devanagari) alphabet:

a aa i ii u uu ri e ai a' ah
 k kh g gh n(ng-)¹ c ch j jh n(ny) t' t'h d' d'h n'
 t th d dh n p ph b bh m y r l v sh s' s h
 Dotted consonants: q kh' g' z r' r'h f

Tamil alphabet:

a aa i ii u uu e ee ai o oo au q
 k/g² n(ng-) c/j n(ny) t'/d' n' t/d n p/b m y r l v zh l' r' n
 Grantha letters: j s' s h ks'

¹ The longer forms in brackets are used only when the context requires them.

² The voiced forms after nasals, or between vowels (where they may become fricatives), or in borrowed words.