

PREFACE

This volume of collected chapters is broadly based on two workshops that we were able to organize around the theme of wages in pre-statistical India. The first workshop was held in New Delhi as part of the Indo-German research programme *M. S. Merian – R. Tagore International Centre of Advanced Studies ‘Metamorphoses of the Political’ (ICAS:MP)* and the second at Savitribai Phule Pune University (formerly the University of Pune). We would like to thank both institutions and their staff for their excellent support, as well as the participants who provided papers or contributed to the discussions. In particular, we must mention the help and support that we received from the Head of Administration, ICAS:MP, Laila Abu-Er-Rub.

The questions around which these workshops were initially conceptualized were developed over a period of few years and were formulated primarily by Professors Jan Lucassen and Professor Najaf Haider of the Centre for Historical Studies, JNU, New Delhi. Professor Radhika Seshan joined in later. In some ways, our starting point was the Great Divergence debate and the relative absence of India in this debate, as well as our belief that a discussion on these themes, based on sources that were either un- or underutilized, would help in locating India in the economic systems of the early modern world in much clearer ways. Our main concerns were, of course, the objective of collecting new data, but, in addition, we focused on methodological issues and the potential of so far unexplored collections, primarily those written in Indian languages. To this end, we brought together a team of both young and veteran scholars in the field. We feel it is necessary to state that our early expectations have been substantially fulfilled, and what is particularly exciting for us is the wealth of data that have

now been brought to light, which, we believe, will substantially add to our knowledge of wages and the labour market in India in the early modern age.

For several reasons, not all of the papers that were presented at the workshops could be included in this volume; however, the present selection reflects the main points of discussion. Due to health problems, Professor Haider was able to contribute to the organization of the conferences and the concept of the volume, but not to its publication.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the editors of the SAGE series **Politics and Society in India and the Global South** for including our volume in the series. Our special thanks to Abhijit Baroi, formerly with SAGE, for seeing us through all of the initial stages of working out our initial proposal for the volume and for helping us polish it. Amrita Dutta of SAGE took over when Abhijit left and has continued to help us. A very big thank you to Debjani Mazumder, Publisher, ICAS:MP, for all the handholding and for answering all of the questions with which we kept bombarding her!

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