



Informal Labor, Formal Politics, and Dignified Discontent in India (Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics)

Rina Agarwala

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Since the 1980s, the world's governments have decreased state welfare and thus increased the number of unprotected 'informal' or 'precarious' workers. As a result, more and more workers do not receive secure wages or benefits from either employers or the state. This book offers a fresh and provocative look into the alternative social movements informal workers in India are launching. It also offers a unique analysis of the conditions under which these movements succeed or fail. Drawing from 300 interviews with informal workers, government officials and union leaders, Rina Agarwala argues that Indian informal workers are using their power as voters to demand welfare benefits from the state, rather than demanding traditional work benefits from employers. In addition, they are organizing at the neighborhood level, rather than the shop floor, and appealing to 'citizenship', rather than labor rights.

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