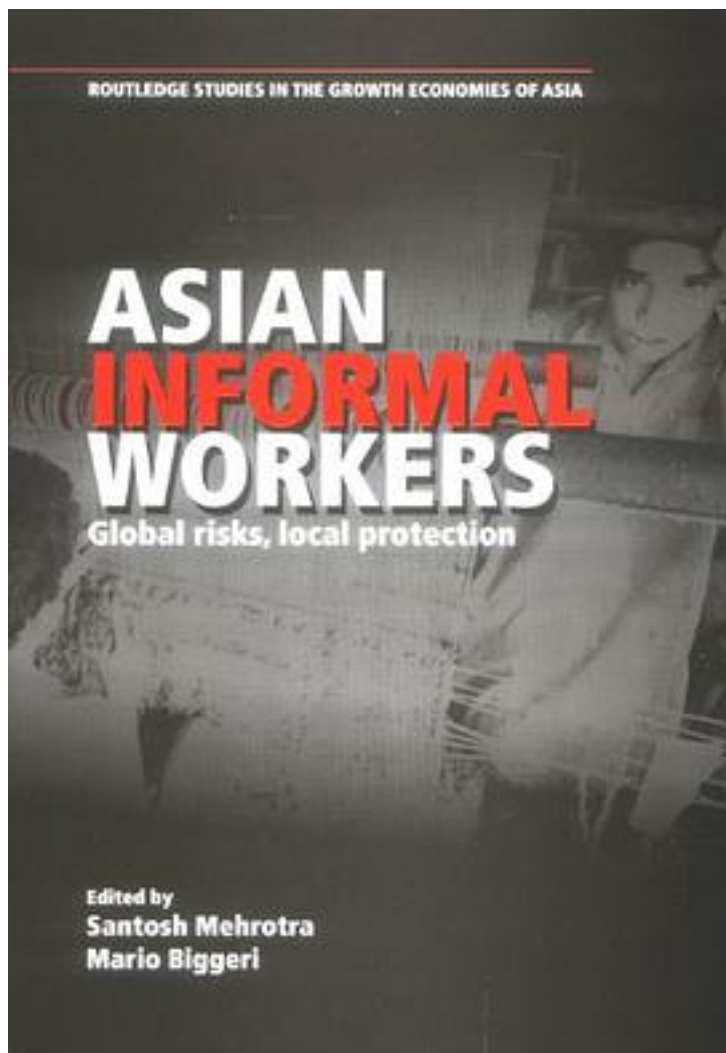


Asian Informal Workers



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This book is a wide-ranging survey of the nature and extent of home work in Asia. When industrialization increased pace in the region after decolonization, there was an expectation that the process would result in most of the labor force being employed in formal sector industrial jobs. The reality, after over a half-century of development, is that even in the fast-growing economies in Asia, formal employment has grown rather slowly and that most non-agricultural employment growth has occurred in the informal economy. At the same time, there has been a feminization of informal workers and growth in subcontracted homework. This book draws on surveys carried out in five Asian countries - two low-income (India and Pakistan) and three middle-income (Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines) - where sub-contracted production, usually by women and children working out of home, is now widespread. Home-based work is the source of income diversification for poor families, but is also the source of exploitation of vulnerable workers and child labor as firms attempt to contain costs. This book examines the social protection needs of these workers, and argues for public action to promote such work and protect such workers as a possible new labor-intensive growth strategy in developing countries.

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