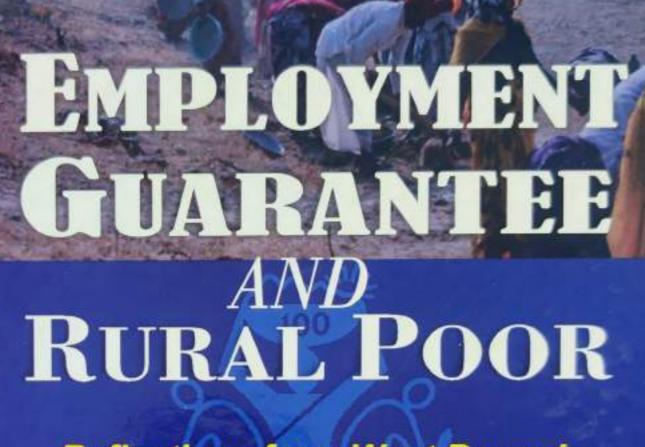
Year of Publication: 2021

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Reflections from West Bengal



SIDHARTHA SANKAR LAHA

# EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE AND RURAL POOR

Reflections from West Bengal

## SIDHARTHA SANKAR LAHA



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Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act or Scheme (MGNREGA or MGNREGS) -- is indubitably innovative, unique and its stipulation of at least 100 days of guaranteed works as per demand of rural households is expected to reduce poverty and to regenerate rural livelihood and also to employment generation.

Notwithstanding the 'rights based' strategy and poignant potentialities particularly in the context of agricultural impasse in rural India, it is unequivocal that MGNREGA is yet to make significant headway in guaranteeing entitlement of works and to realize the purported promises. The scheme is neither working optimally nor is going on expected lines; many disquieting dimensions and deficiencies are hobbling it.

In this context, it is crucial to identify what are the governance gaffes, particularly disconnect between the intention and accomplishment and how the local power structure and administrative process affect its implementation. Identification and evaluation of the 'black holes' is the starting point for addressing the aberrations/lacunas through which the effectiveness can be improved and ensured. After all, the taste of pudding lies in its eating.

The book discusses the outcomes of the scheme and linkage with employment, agricultural wages, livelihood and food security, gender issues, and migration in rural West Bengal. It also discusses challenges in implementation, hurdles and the relative successes of the scheme. Adopting inter-disciplinary perspectives in analyzing these issues, this unique book uses a judicious mix of methods—integrating quantitative and qualitative tools—and will be an invaluable resource for analysts, NGOs, policymakers and academics alike.

Dr. Sidhartha Sankar Laha has been serving as Associate Professor, Department of Lifelong Learning & Extension, University of North Bengal, West Bengal. He did M.A in Economics and Ph.D. on International Economics from the North Bengal University. He has published numerous articles in the reputed research journals and also contributed few edited books and has completed several national and state



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ISBN. 978-81-7510-265-1 Rs. 650/-



RELIANCE PUBLISHING HOUSE NEW DELHI 110008

# Employment Guarantee and Rural Poor- Reflections from West Bengal

### C Author

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First Published 2021 ISBN: 978-81-7510-265-1



### Published by:

### Reliance Publishing House

6/1 South Patel Nagar, New Delhi Ph.: 011-25708428; 011-35574440 Email: rphbooks@gmail.com

> Typesetting by: Sanya Computers Delhi - 110053

Printed at Anvi Composers, New Delhi