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# EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE

## AND RURAL POOR

*Reflections from West Bengal*



SIDHARTHA SANKAR LAHA

गारंटी अधिनियम

**EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE  
AND  
RURAL POOR**

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**SIDHARTHA SANKAR LAHA**



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# Contents

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<i>Preface</i>	(vii)
<i>List of Table</i>	(xiii)
<i>List of Figure</i>	(xvii)
<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Pages</i>
<b>1. Facades of the Frame</b>	<b>1-41</b>
The Precursor and Paradigm Shift	3
Operational Experience	6
Governance Gaffe Galore	9
Conceptual Frame	9
Objective and Methodology	26
Chapter Charting	34
<b>2. MGNREGA: Postulates and Review of Findings</b>	<b>42-50</b>
Theoretical Framework	42
Jevons Theory of Labour Supply	43
Static Labour Supply Model	44
Harris-Todaro model of rural urban migration	45
Empirical Literature: MGNREGA Related Studies	45
<b>3. The Legal Layout</b>	<b>51-66</b>
Basic Provisions and Features	52
Reflections	64
<b>4. Unfolding Employment in West Bengal: Quantitative Account</b>	<b>67-86</b>
MGNREGS and the Rural Marginal Classes	77
Empirical Analysis with Panel Data	82
<b>5. Churnings from the Ground</b>	<b>87-138</b>
Demographic Profile of Sample Beneficiaries	87
Gender Wise Classification of Sample Beneficiaries	88
Level of Education of Respondents	89
Schooling of Children Before and after MGNREGS	90
Beneficiaries according to Social Status	90

Occupational Status of Beneficiaries	91
Classification of Family Size	92
Classification of Common Diseases among Child	93
Classification of Common Diseases among Adults	93
Classification of Type of House, Toilet, Electricity and Drinking Water Facilities Before and After MGNREGP	95
Classification of Annual Income Before and After MGNRES Programme for Various Activities	97
Annual Expenditure of Respondents	100
Activities of Work before MGNREGS	101
Distribution of Work Activities under MGNREGS	103
Classification of Labour in MGNREGS	103
Performance of before and after MGNREGS	104
Average Working Days before and after MGNREGS of Respondents	105
Distribution of MGNREGS Programme Promote	108
Distribution of Level of Satisfaction	108
Changes in Economic Condition of Beneficiaries	109
Beneficiaries Perception of MGNREGS-Wage Employment Programme	111
Distribution of Problem Faced by the Beneficiaries	113
Test of Hypotheses and Statistical Analysis	113
Empirical Analysis with Primary Survey Data	133
Empirical Estimations	134
Land and Livestock Resources of Sample Households	135
<b>6. MGNREGA's 'Mission Drift': Nature and Dimension</b>	<b>139-165</b>
Community Assets vs. Private Assets	140
Expansive Ambit of MGNREGA	143
Advent & Entrenchment of Works on Individual Land (IBS)	146
IBS and Political Patronage	151
The Nitty-gritty of the Impetus	153
Problems Plaguing IBS Projects	155
For Reining the Rot	159
Summing Up	161
<b>7. Concluding Reflections</b>	<b>166-194</b>
<i>Further Readings</i>	<b>195-203</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>204-207</b>



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 level research projects. Dr. Laha has presented papers in national and international seminars and workshops. He is specialized in the area of rural development issues, research methodology and development economics and a member in the editorial board of UGC approved journal East-India Journal of Social Sciences.



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