

# Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevilka Mission (Gramin): Vb-G Ram G in India

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## Abstract

The present study was conducted with an intention to study the impact of Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevilka Mission (GRAMIN): VB-G RAM G on Farmers Welfare and rural people. The research was conducted in India. The results of the study showed that VB-G RAM G has increased the labour wage and affected the agricultural activity among small and marginal farmers of the study. But it has resulted in the creation of permanent assets in the study area which was a positive impact of VB-G RAM G.

**Keywords:** Impact of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, VB-G RAM G, Number of days of work allocated, Employment.

## INTRODUCTION

The Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevilka Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Bill, 2025 was introduced in Lok Sabha on December 16, 2025. It seeks to replace the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA).

The President of India has given assent to the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevilka Mission (Gramin) (VB G RAM G) Bill, 2025 marking a significant milestone in the transformation of rural employment policy. The Act enhances the statutory wage employment guarantee to 125 days per financial year for rural households and seeks to advance empowerment, inclusive growth, convergence of development initiatives and saturation-based delivery, thereby strengthening the foundation for a prosperous, resilient and self-reliant Rural Bharat.

Earlier, Parliament passed the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevilka Mission (Gramin) Bill, 2025, marking a decisive reform in India's rural employment and development framework. The Act replaces the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005 with a modern statutory framework that enhances livelihood security and is aligned with the national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Anchored in the principles of empowerment, growth, convergence and saturation, the Act seeks to transform rural employment from a standalone welfare intervention into an integrated instrument of development. It strengthens income security for rural households, modernizes governance and accountability, and links wage employment with the creation of durable and productive rural assets, thereby laying the foundation for a prosperous and resilient Rural Bharat.

**Increase in number of guaranteed days of employment:**

MGNREGA guarantees at least 100 days of employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer for unskilled manual work. The Bill increases the guarantee to 125 days. Under MGNREGA, if a person seeking work is not provided employment within 15 days, the state government must pay them an unemployment allowance. The Bill retains this provision.

**Fund sharing:**

Under MGNREGA, the central government provides the entire cost of wages for unskilled manual work, up to three-fourths of the material cost, and a share of administrative costs. State governments provide one-fourth of the material cost, administrative costs, unemployment allowance, and compensation in case of delay in wage payments. The Bill amends this to provide that the scheme will be implemented as a centrally sponsored scheme. State governments will notify a scheme consistent with the Bill, within six months from its commencement. The fund-sharing pattern between the central government and state governments will be 60:40 for all states other than the North-eastern and the Himalayan states (90:10). A state and the central government will share the cost of wages, material costs, and administrative costs in the above ratios. The state government will continue to pay unemployment allowance and compensation.

**State governments to bear expenditure in excess of normative allocation:**

The Bill provides that the central government will determine state-wise normative allocation for each financial year. The parameters for these allocations will be prescribed by the central government under Rules. The state government will bear any expenditure incurred in excess of this allocation.

**Pause on works during agricultural season:**

The Bill requires state governments to announce in advance a period of up to 60 days for every financial year during which works under the scheme will not be undertaken. This period will cover peak agricultural seasons, including sowing and harvesting.

**Planning framework:**

Under MGNREGA, gram panchayats are responsible for identifying projects in their area under the scheme. The Bill retains this and requires them to prepare a plan for works. These works will focus on four thematic domains: (i) water security, (ii) rural infrastructure, (iii) livelihood-related infrastructure, and (iv) mitigation of extreme weather events. These plans will be integrated with the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan and also aggregated at the national level.

**Implementation and monitoring:**

MGNREGA establishes Councils at the central and state levels to undertake implementation and monitoring. The Bill retains these provisions and also provides that their composition will be specified under Rules. It constitutes the National Level Steering Committee which will provide high-level oversight, and recommend normative allocations. It also constitutes a Steering Committee for each state. Key functions of the State Committee include: (i) overseeing convergence with other programmers, (ii)

aggregation of district plans into state plans, and (iii) coordinating with the National Committee.

**Use of technology:**

The Bill provides for using: (i) biometric authentication for transactions, (ii) geospatial technology for planning and monitoring, (iii) mobile application-based dashboards for real-time tracking, and (iv) weekly public disclosure systems.

**SALIENT FEATURES OF THE ACT****(i) Enhanced Statutory Employment Guarantee:**

The Act provides a statutory guarantee of not less than 125 days of wage employment per rural household in each financial year to households whose adult members volunteer to undertake unskilled manual work Section 5(1). This enhancement over the earlier 100 day entitlement significantly strengthens livelihood security, predictability of work, and income stability for rural households, while also enabling them to contribute more effectively and meaningfully to national development.

**(ii) Balanced Provision for Agriculture and Rural Labour:**

To facilitate adequate availability of agricultural labour during peak sowing and harvesting seasons, the Act empowers States to notify an aggregated pause period aggregating to sixty days in a financial year Section (6). The full 125 day employment guarantee remains intact, to be provided during the remaining period, ensuring a calibrated balance that supports both agricultural productivity and worker security.

**(iii) Timely Wage Payments:**

The Act mandates payment of wages on a weekly basis or, in any case, within fifteen days of completion of work (Section 5(3)). In cases of delay beyond the stipulated period, delay compensation shall be payable in accordance with the provisions laid down in Schedule II, reinforcing wage security and protecting workers from delays.

**(iv) Employment Linked with Productive Rural Infrastructure:**

Wage employment under the Act is explicitly aligned with the creation of durable public assets across four priority thematic domains Section 4(2) read with Schedule I:

- Water security and water-related works
- Core rural infrastructure
- Livelihood-related infrastructure
- Works to mitigate extreme weather events

All works are planned through a bottom-up process, and all assets created are aggregated into the Viksit Bharat National Rural Infrastructure Stack, ensuring convergence of public investments, avoidance of fragmentation, and outcome-based planning aimed at saturation of critical rural infrastructure, based on varying local needs.

**(v) Decentralised Planning with National Convergence:**

All works originate from Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans (VGPPs), prepared at the Gram Panchayat level through participatory processes and approved by the Gram Sabha (Sections 4(1)–4(3)). These plans are digitally and spatially integrated with national platforms, including PM Gati Shakti, enabling whole-of-government convergence while fully retaining decentralized decision-making.

This integrated planning framework will enable Ministries and Departments to plan and implement works more effectively, avoid duplication and wastage of public resources, and accelerate development through saturation-based outcomes.

**(vi) Reformed Financial Architecture:**

The Act is implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, to be notified and operationalized by the State Governments in accordance with the provisions of the Act. The cost-sharing pattern is 60:40 between the Centre and States, 90:10 for North Eastern and Himalayan States, and 100% central funding for Union Territories without legislatures.

Funding is provided through State-wise normative allocations based on objective parameters prescribed in the Rules Sections 4(5) and 22(4), ensuring predictability, fiscal discipline, and sound planning, while fully preserving statutory entitlements to employment and unemployment allowance.

**(vii) Strengthened Administrative Capacity:**

The administrative expenditure ceiling has been enhanced from 6% to 9%, enabling improved staffing, training, technical capacity and field-level support, and strengthening the ability of institutions to deliver outcomes effectively.

**VB-G RAM G – KEY FEATURES & FRAMEWORK****1. Statutory Employment Guarantee:**

Provides a guaranteed minimum of 125 days of unskilled wage employment per rural household in a financial year (up from 100 days under MGNREGA).

**2. Funding & Cost-Sharing:**

Shifts from a largely central-funded model to a Centrally Sponsored Scheme:

- 60% Central Government share and 40% State Government share (general states)
- 90:10 split for North-Eastern & Himalayan states
- 100% central funding for Union Territories without legislature.

### 3. Normative Allocation & Budgeting:

Instead of open-ended, demand-driven funding under MGNREGA, VB-G RAM G uses annual state-wise allocations set by the Centre. Any expenditure beyond allocated funds must be covered by the State Government.

### 4. Seasonal Flexibility:

States may pause scheme works for up to 60 days during peak agricultural seasons (sowing/harvest) to ensure farm labour availability.

### 5. Decentralised Planning with National Integration:

Work planning and identification are done through Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans (VGPPs) prepared by Gram Panchayats. These local plans are digitally integrated with the Viksit Bharat National Rural Infrastructure Stack, aligning with national infrastructure goals like PM Gati Shakti.

### 6. Technology & Transparency:

Emphasizes **technology-enabled transparency**:

- Biometric attendance systems
- GPS tracking of works
- Real-time digital dashboards
- Stronger social audits and grievance redressal mechanisms.

### 7. Wage Payments & Worker Safeguards:

Aims for timely and digital wage payments. Retains unemployment allowance if work is not provided within 15 days of demand, making this a statutory requirement for States.

### 8. Focus on Rural Infrastructure:

Scheme prioritizes creation of:

- Water security assets
- Core rural infrastructure
- Livelihood-related infrastructure
- Disaster-resilient works aligned with broader development objectives.

## ADVANTAGES OF THE VB-G RAM G IN INDIA

### 1. Increased Employment Days:

The Act guarantees 125 days of unskilled wage employment per rural household annually 25 days more than the previous 100-day norm, enhancing income and livelihood security.

### 2. Better Planning & Predictability:

Work under VB-G RAM G is planned through Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans; ensuring jobs are mapped in advance rather than waiting for demand-based work. Normative state-wise funding helps governments budget better and potentially reduce delays or shortfalls in implementation.

### 3. Improved Asset Creation:

Focuses on durable, development-oriented works such as water security, core rural infrastructure, livelihood supporting projects and climate-resilient structures that offer long-term community benefits (e.g., roads, water harvesting).

### 4. Faster and More Transparent Payments:

Wages are to be disbursed weekly or at least within 15 days, with stronger systems to prevent delays. Advanced digital mechanisms (e.g., biometric attendance, GPS/GIS planning, AI-assisted monitoring) aim to cut leakages, reduce ghost beneficiaries, and improve transparency in execution.

### 5. Supports Rural Labour & Agriculture:

The scheme allows a pause of up to 60 days during peak sowing/harvest seasons so that workers can join family agricultural activities without losing benefits, making rural labour and farming activities more complementary.

## 6. Social Protection & Worker Safeguards:

Unemployment allowance remains as a mandatory safeguard if work isn't provided within a stipulated time. Planned works improve local amenities that benefit workers and communities alike (e.g., roads or assets they helped build).

## 7. Potential for Greater Accountability and Efficiency:

The Act raises the administrative expenditure limit for staffing and support, allows for real-time public dashboards, weekly disclosures, and higher penalties for fraud, increasing accountability and efficiency.

## DISADVANTAGES AND CRITICISMS REGARDING THE VB-G RAM G

### 1. Dilution of the Legal Right to Work:

Unlike MGNREGA's open-ended, demand-driven statutory right to employment, VB-G RAM G shifts to a budget-allocated (supply-driven) model:

Work availability may be capped by annual allocations rather than guaranteed upon request. If funds are exhausted, workers may not receive the full days of work promised. This effectively weakens the enforceable right to work that was central to MGNREGA's legal and social protection framework.

### 2. Increased Financial Burden on States:

#### *Under VB-G RAM G:*

States must share a larger proportion (e.g., 60:40) of the funding burden for wages and materials. Poorer and fiscally stressed states may struggle to mobilize their share, potentially reducing the number of workdays provided or delaying wages. Critics argue this could lead to uneven implementation across states, depending on their budgets and capacities.

### 3. Potential Exclusion Due to Non-Universal Coverage:

#### *Unlike MGNREGA's universal rural coverage:*

VB-G RAM G empowers the Centre to notify specific rural areas where the scheme applies. Areas not notified may be excluded from guaranteed work, leading to unequal access. This has raised concerns about geographical and political bias in scheme implementation.

### 4. Weakening Decentralization & Local Control:

#### *Instead of Gram Sabhas and Panchayats planning work based on local needs under MGNREGA:*

VB-G RAM G centralises planning via national infrastructure stacks, GIS tools, and AI-linked platforms. This may reduce local autonomy in deciding what works are most needed in a village. Critics worry this may dilute the spirit of local self-governance embedded in previous legislation.

### 5. Risk of Digital Exclusion:

#### *The new scheme mandates:*

- Biometric attendance
- Aadhaar-based payments
- GPS/GIS tracking
- AI monitoring

While meant to improve transparency, these technologies may exclude older people, low-educated workers, migrants, and those in low-connectivity areas who lack digital access or comfort with the systems.

### 6. Seasonal "Pause" Could Restrict Income:

VB-G RAM G allows states to suspend scheme work for up to 60 days during peak agricultural seasons to preserve labour for farming. Critics argue this could temporarily cut off wage work for vulnerable households, particularly landless workers who rely on public wages during lean periods.

### 7. Political and Social Opposition:

The law has drawn strong political criticism and protests from various parties and civil society groups, who argue:

- It undermines rural employment guarantees.
- It is a rollback of progressive welfare rights.
- It removes Mahatma Gandhi's legacy of rural work assurance.

Leading voices have compared the change to a weakening of social safety nets and warned of adverse impacts on rural labour dignity and livelihoods.

### HOW VB-G RAM G DIFFERS FROM OLD MGNREGA

Feature	MGNREGA	VB-G RAM G
Work Guarantee Days	100 days	125 days
Funding Model	Open-ended, central liability	Normative allocations, 60:40 share
Demand-driven vs Supply-driven	Demand-based right to work	Allocation-based planning
Seasonal Work	All year round	Up to 60-day seasonal pause allowed
Planning Unit	Gram Sabha	Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans
Tech Integration	Basic digital MIS	Biometric, GPS & AI systems

### SCHEDULE II [See section 9(2)]

1. Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Card (I) Household Registration - The adult member of every household residing in any rural area and willing to undertake unskilled manual work, may submit the names, ages and address of the household to the Gram Panchayat within whose jurisdiction they reside, for the purpose of registration of the household and issuance of a Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Card.

(2) Special Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Card, where the job seeker is:

- ❖ A single woman; or
- ❖ A person with disability; or
- ❖ Persons above sixty years of age; or
- ❖ A released bonded labourer; or
- ❖ A person belonging to a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group; or
- ❖ A transgender person.

(3) The Special Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Card of a distinct colour, shall ensure special protection in the providing work, work evaluation, and worksite facilities, as applicable.

(4) It shall be the duty of the Gram Panchayat, after making such enquiry, as it deems fit, to issue a Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Card within fifteen days from the date of receipt of such application, containing therein a unique Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Card number with details of the registered adult members of the household, their photos, Bank or Post office account number, insurance policy number and the Aadhaar numbers, if any.

(5) The Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Card issued, shall be valid for three years, after which it may be renewed after due verification.

(6) No Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Card shall be cancelled except on any of the following grounds:

- ❖ Where it is found to be a duplicate;
- ❖ Where the entire household has permanently migrated to a place outside the jurisdiction of the Gram Panchayat and no longer resides in the village; or
- ❖ Where all adult members of the registered household are deceased.

(7)The State Government shall make arrangements for updating the following details in the Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Card regularly while mentioning the key guarantees under the Act are clearly listed as follows:

- ❖ Number of days for which work was demanded;
- ❖ Number of days of work allocated;
- ❖ Description of the work allocated along with the muster roll number;
- ❖ Measurement details;
- ❖ Unemployment allowance, if any, paid;
- ❖ Date-wise amount of wages paid;
- ❖ Delay compensation paid if any;
- ❖ Asset provided, if any.

### **VIKSIT BHARAT- G RAM G Act, 2025**

#### **(i) Fiscal Impact on States:**

The 60:40 funding split between the Centre and states creates a structural problem for economically weaker states, those with limited tax revenues but higher rural poverty and greater need for MGNREGA.

#### **(ii) Rights vs Budget Constraints:**

The normative allocation mechanism creates potential friction between MGNREGA's promise as a legal entitlement and budgetary realities. When allocations are capped in advance, it raises questions about the scheme being a demand-driven, rights-based program.

#### **(iii) Technology and Digital Barriers to Access:**

While biometric authentication and digital systems aim to reduce fraud, they create new barriers for vulnerable workers. Technical failures such as malfunctioning devices, poor fingerprint recognition among manual laborers, server downtimes, or inadequate connectivity in remote areas can prevent eligible workers from accessing employment.

#### **(iv) Agricultural Work Moratorium: Conditional Entitlements**

The provision allowing states to suspend MGNREGA work during 60-day peak agricultural seasons assumes the agricultural markets will absorb workers. However, this may potentially negatively impact landless laborers and marginal farmers who lack sufficient agricultural work opportunities.

#### **(v)Implementation Gap: Promise vs Reality**

While MGNREGA promises 100 days of employment annually, average person-days delivered historically range between 45-55 days per household. This gap reveals challenges in administrative capacity, fund flow, planning, and political will.

#### **(vi) Positive Aspects of the Bill**

The bill addresses structural weaknesses in MGNREGA. The focus on durable, climate-resilient assets addresses issues about poor asset quality. Integration with national infrastructure planning could enhance rural productivity through improved water management, connectivity, and storage facilities.

For farmers, the agricultural pause may ease labor shortages and reduce wage inflation during critical seasons. The emphasis on livelihood infrastructure like markets, warehouses, and drying yards could reduce post-harvest losses and improve farm incomes.

The penalty regime increased upto 10,000, and weekly wage payment cycles (instead of 15-day cycles) indicate focus on better governance. Special cards for vulnerable groups including single women, persons with disabilities, elderly, released bonded laborers, and transgender persons demonstrate targeting of marginalized communities.

### **MGNREGA vs VIKSIT BHARAT- G RAM G Act, 2025**

The new Act represents a major upgrade over MGNREGA, fixing structural weaknesses while enhancing employment, transparency, planning, and accountability.

## The Financial Architecture

The shift from a central sector scheme to a centrally sponsored framework reflects the inherently local nature of rural employment and asset creation. Under the new architecture, states share both cost and responsibility through a normative allocation framework, creating stronger incentives for effective implementation and preventing misuse. Planning is grounded in regional realities through Gram Panchayat Plans. At the same time, the Centre continues to set standards, while states execute with accountability, resulting in a cooperative partnership that improves efficiency and strengthens outcomes.

The total estimated annual requirement of funds on wage, material, and administrative components is Rs.1,51,282 crore, including the State share. Of this, the estimated Central share is Rs.95,692.31 crore. This transition does not impose an undue financial burden on states. The funding structure is calibrated to state capacity, with a standard cost-sharing ratio of 60:40 between the Centre and states, enhanced support of 90:10 for North Eastern and Himalayan states, and 100 per cent central funding for Union Territories without legislatures. States were already bearing a share of material and administrative costs under the earlier framework and the move to predictable normative allocations further supports sound budgeting. Provisions for additional assistance to states during disasters and stronger oversight mechanisms also help reduce long term losses arising from misappropriation, reinforcing fiscal sustainability alongside accountability.

## BENEFITS OF THE VIKSIT BHARAT- G RAM G ACT

The Act strengthens the rural economy by linking employment generation with productive asset creation, leading to higher household incomes and improved resilience. Priority is given to water-related works, supporting agriculture and groundwater recharge. Investment in core rural infrastructure, such as roads and connectivity, improves market access, while livelihood infrastructure, including storage, markets, and production assets, enables income diversification. Climate resilience is strengthened through works focused on water harvesting, flood drainage, and soil conservation. The guarantee of 125 days of employment raises household earnings, stimulates village-level consumption, and helps reduce distress-driven migration, supported by digital attendance, wage payments, and data-driven planning.

Farmers benefit from assured labour availability through state-notified pauses in public works during peak sowing and harvesting seasons, prevention of wage inflation, and improved irrigation, storage, and connectivity. Labourers gain from higher potential earnings, predictable work through Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans, secure digital wage payments, direct benefits from the assets they help create, and a mandatory unemployment allowance. Where work is not provided, a daily unemployment allowance becomes payable after 15 days, with liability resting on the States. The rates and conditions are to be prescribed through rules, ensuring flexibility while safeguarding workers' rights and promoting the timely provision of employment.

## IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING AUTHORITIES

- The Act establishes a clear institutional framework to ensure coordinated, accountable, and transparent implementation of the Mission across national, State, district, block, and village levels.
- Central and State Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Councils provide policy guidance, review implementation, and strengthen accountability.
- National and State Steering Committees drive strategic direction, convergence, and performance review.
- Panchayati Raj Institutions lead planning and execution, with Gram Panchayats implementing at least half of the works in terms of cost.
- District Programme Coordinators and Programme Officers manage planning, compliance, payments, and social audits.
- Gram Sabhas play a strengthened role in conducting social audits and ensuring transparency through access to all records.

## TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The Act equips the Central Government with clear enforcement powers to ensure compliance and protect public funds. It authorizes the Centre to investigate complaints relating to implementation, suspend fund releases where serious irregularities are detected, and direct corrective or remedial measures to address deficiencies. These provisions strengthen accountability across the system, maintain financial discipline, and enable timely intervention to prevent misuse.

The Act also establishes a comprehensive transparency framework covering every stage of implementation. It enables the use of artificial intelligence and biometric authentication to identify irregularities early, supported by Central and State

Steering Committees that provide continuous guidance and coordination. A focused approach through four clearly defined rural development verticals allows closer tracking of outcomes. Panchayats are assigned an enhanced role in supervision, complemented by GPS and mobile-based monitoring of works in real time. Real-time MIS dashboards and weekly public disclosures ensure public visibility, while social audits mandated at least once every six months reinforce community participation and trust.

- ❖ There shall be a project initiation meeting in which various provisions of the work shall be explained to the workers;
- ❖ A copy of the sanction work order shall be available for public inspection at the worksite;
- ❖ Measurement record of each work and details of the workers shall be available for public inspection;
- ❖ A Citizens' Information Board shall be put up at every worksite and updated regularly in the manner specified by the Central Government;
- ❖ The vigilance and Monitoring Committee set up according to the instructions of the Central Government may check all works and its evaluation report will be recorded in the Works Register in the format specified by the Central Government and submitted to the Gram Sabha during the Social Audit.

### Conclusion

The passage of the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025 represents a significant renewal of India's rural employment guarantee. By expanding statutory employment to 125 days, embedding decentralized and participatory planning, strengthening accountability, and institutionalizing convergence and saturation-based development, the Act repositions rural employment as a strategic instrument for empowerment, inclusive growth and the creation of a prosperous and resilient Rural Bharat, fully aligned with the vision of Viksit Bharat @ 2047.

The Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act 2025 replaced Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) 2005 on 21 December 2025 after receiving a nod from President Murmu. The new Act guarantees 125 days of work for rural workers as compared to the former Act that guaranteed 100 days of work. The Bill is being seen as a way to transform rural development by expanding the scale of development interventions and is expected to create additional employment opportunities for rural households. Parliamentary and policy discussions will help in carving the way ahead for revolutionizing rural employment.

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