



## **DAILY EDITORIAL ANALYSIS**

**TOPIC**

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**DEBATE ON THE VIKSIT BHARAT-  
GUARANTEE FOR ROZGAR AND AJEEVIKA  
MISSION (GRAMIN) BILL, 2025**

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## DEBATE ON THE VIKSIT BHARAT-GUARANTEE FOR ROZGAR AND AJEEVIKA MISSION (GRAMIN) BILL, 2025

### In Context

- The Ministry of Rural Development has introduced the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Bill, 2025 in the Lok Sabha as an overhaul of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005.
- The Bill represents a structural shift:
  - ◆ From a rights-based, demand-driven employment guarantee
  - ◆ To a budget-capped, supply-driven framework aligned with Viksit Bharat @2047
- This shift is justified by the government on the basis of declining rural poverty (from 25.7% in 2011–12 to 5% in 2023–24) and the need to move from distress relief to productivity-linked livelihoods.

### Key Provisions of the VB-G RAM G Bill, 2025

- **Employment Guarantee:** VB-GRAMG Increases guaranteed wage employment from 100 to 125 days per rural household per year; retains unemployment allowance if work is not provided within 15 days.
- **Funding Pattern:** VB-GRAMG Converts the scheme into a centrally sponsored scheme with a 60:40 Centre–State sharing ratio (90:10 for North-Eastern and Himalayan states) covering wages, material, and administrative costs; states continue to bear unemployment allowance and delay compensation.
- **Normative Allocation:** Centre will set state-wise funding limits annually; states must fund any expenditure beyond their allocated share.
- **Agricultural Season Pause:** States must notify up to 60 days annually during peak sowing and harvesting when scheme works will be suspended.
- **Planning Framework:** Gram panchayats prepare local plans focused on water security, rural infrastructure, livelihood assets, and climate resilience, integrated with the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan.
- **Implementation & Monitoring:** Retains central and state councils; establishes National and State Steering Committees for oversight, convergence, and planning coordination.
- **Use of Technology:** Mandates biometric authentication, geospatial monitoring, real-time dashboards, and weekly public disclosures to enhance transparency and accountability.

### Limitations and Concerns

- **Erosion of the Right to Work:** Shifts from a legally enforceable demand-based right to a supply-driven scheme.
  - ◆ Weakens the constitutional spirit underlying MGNREGA.
- **Loss of Universal Coverage:** Restricting the scheme to notified areas may exclude vulnerable households in non-notified regions.
- **Increased Fiscal Burden on States:** 60% cost share may strain poorer States with limited fiscal space.
  - ◆ Risks uneven implementation across States.
- **Capped Allocations Reduce Responsiveness:** Fixed annual allocations limit expansion during droughts, floods, economic shocks
- **Seasonal Suspension of Work:** Allowing a 60-day pause may reduce income support even when rural households face liquidity stress.

### Structural Issues in Rural Employment

- **Low-Quality Employment:** As per the PLFS 2022–23, nearly 45% rural workers self-employed in low-productivity agriculture.

- ◆ Disguised unemployment remains high.
- **MGNREGA Operational Stress:** Like CAG highlights delayed wage payments, fund shortages, rising pending liabilities &
- **Skill mismatches:** Rural skilling often misaligned with local market needs.
- **Climate Vulnerability:** As per the IPCC AR6, agriculture-dependent livelihoods are highly exposed to climate shocks.

### Way Ahead

- **Preserve and strengthen the rights framework:** Retain a clear, legally enforceable “right to demand work” and time-bound compensation, even within a budgeted framework, by mandating that state-wise ceilings be revisable during distress (droughts, pandemics, floods).
- **Make funding responsive and equitable:** Build a contingency/emergency window over and above normative allocations, activated by objective criteria (rainfall deviations, crop loss, recession indicators) to retain counter-cyclical responsiveness.
- **Protect universal and inclusive access:** Avoid excessive “notified area” restrictions; instead, use vulnerability mapping (SECC data, multidimensional poverty, climate risk) to prioritise but not exclude other regions.
- **Align works with productivity and climate resilience:** Deepen the shift from purely relief-oriented works to durable, locally relevant assets: watershed structures, micro-irrigation, common pasture restoration, value-chain infrastructure (storage, processing, rural connectivity).
- **Improve quality of employment and skills:** Use VB-G RAM G as a bridge to better jobs by embedding skilling and apprenticeship: link workers to PMKVY, RSETIs, Farmer Producer Organisations and rural enterprises based on local demand assessments. **Deepen Gram Sabha-led planning and social accountability:** Strengthen independent social audit units, ombudsman mechanisms, and community monitoring, with legal protection and resources, so that technology enhances rather than replaces citizen oversight.
- **Evidence-based monitoring and mid-course correction:** Mandate five-year independent evaluations on poverty reduction, asset quality, women's economic empowerment, climate benefits, and inter-state disparities, with reports tabled in Parliament.

Source :IE

### Daily Mains Practice Question

**[Q] How does the Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill differ from earlier rural employment programmes? Critically analyse its potential to bring about economic transformation in rural areas.**

