



DAILY EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

TOPIC

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

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In Context

- The Ministry of Rural Development has introduced the Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB–GRAM 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–GRAM 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–GRAM 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 Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill differ from earlier rural employment programmes? Critically analyse its potential to bring about economic transformation in rural areas.

