

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 940
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06/02/2026

**SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF VB-G RAM G
SCHEME**

940 Shri Vivek K. Tankha:

Will the Minister of Rural Development be pleased to state:

- (a) whether, prior to introducing and passing the Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission Gramin (VB-G RAM G) Act which replaces or subsumes the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Government conducted any comprehensive socio-economic impact assessment;
- (b) whether such assessment evaluated the consequences of removal of a statutory employment guarantee on rural income security, food security and livelihood resilience;
- (c) whether the said assessment, if any, was conducted by an independent institution, Government body or external expert agency; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof including the dates, scope, methodology and key findings?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(SHRI KAMLESH PASWAN)

(a) to (d): Last Impact assessment of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (Mahatma Gandhi NREGS) was carried out by NITI Aayog in the year 2019-20. The assessment done by NITI Aayog highlighted that, while Mahatma Gandhi NREGS has enhanced rural livelihood security, it faced significant operational and structural challenges. To overcome the challenges, such as lack of effective grievance redressal mechanisms and poor asset maintenance, the report recommended for strengthening of social audit, better identification of beneficiaries, inclusion of vulnerable groups and reducing regional disparities in development. Further, to modernize IT governance, the report recommended upgrading rural infrastructure transitioning to intuitive, mobile-based applications that support real-time, localized data entry. The Report also advocated development of robust GIS technology for data-driven planning.

In the past twenty years, Mahatma Gandhi NREGS has contributed in providing guaranteed wage-employment to rural households ensuring wage income. However, further strengthening had become necessary in view of the significant socio-economic transformation witnessed in the rural landscape driven by widespread coverage of the social security interventions and saturation-oriented implementation of major Government schemes. Similarly, rural connectivity, rural housing, electrification, financial inclusion and digital access have deepened, the workforce has diversified, and aspirations have shifted towards better incomes, growth-oriented infrastructure, sustainable livelihoods and greater climate resilience.

Over the years, a range of administrative and technological reforms had been introduced by the Ministry to enhance the implementation of the scheme, resulting in notable improvements in participation, transparency, and digital governance.

However, deeper structural issues persisted. Monitoring in several states revealed gaps, including work not being done on the ground, expenditure not matching physical progress, the use of machines in labour-intensive work, and frequent bypassing of digital attendance systems. Since the overall architecture of MGNREGA had reached its limits, it warranted reassessment in light of evolving rural realities.

Against this backdrop and to cater to the changing aspirations, the requirement for stronger convergence was felt to establish an integrated, Whole-of-Government rural development framework covering several complementary Government schemes. Additionally, it was felt essential that rural infrastructure creation must transition from fragmented provisioning to a coherent and future-oriented approach which also necessitated that resources are distributed in a fair manner to reduce disparities and promote inclusive growth across all rural areas of the country based on objective parameters. In view of the above, the government has enacted the Viksit Bharat- Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025, also referred to as VB - G RAM G Act, 2025.

The Act is a comprehensive statutory overhaul of MGNREGS, by enhancing the legal guarantee from 100 days to 125 days of wage employment, aligning rural employment with the long-term vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, while strengthening accountability, infrastructure outcomes and income security. This Act builds on past improvements while addressing the shortcomings of earlier Rural Employment programs through a modern, accountable, and infrastructure-focused framework.

Here it is also stated that The VB-G RAM G Act, 2025 further strengthens and expands the guarantee framework in the following ways:

1. The Act provides a statutory guarantee of at least 125 days of wage employment per rural household per financial year, increased from 100 days, thereby enhancing rural income and livelihood security.
2. It includes a stronger statutory unemployment allowance, payable if work is not provided within the stipulated time, with rates linked to the notified wage rate.
3. By increasing guaranteed days and ensuring time-bound wage payments and unemployment allowance, the Act strengthens household income stability, supporting food security and consumption smoothing for rural families.
4. Works are prioritised across four themes—water security, core rural infrastructure, livelihood infrastructure, and mitigation of extreme weather events—leading to creation of durable and productive rural assets.
5. The Act adopts a forward-looking framework by promoting durable, productivity-enhancing assets and, through Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans and convergence, links wage employment with asset creation, infrastructure gap saturation and long-term livelihood enhancement.
6. Livelihood-related infrastructure focuses on productive assets that directly generate income and employment, such as rural haats, storage structures, work sheds, and livestock or fisheries infrastructure, thereby strengthening agriculture, improving market access and promoting local enterprises.

In this way, the VB-G RAM G Act, 2025 expands the employment guarantee, strengthens legal entitlements and aligns rural employment with sustainable livelihood creation and climate-resilient development.
