

BACKGROUNDER

Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika

Mission(Gramin):VB–GRAMG(विकसितभारत–जी राम जी) Bill, 2025

1. Background: Rural Development and Employment Schemes

Post-independence rural development policies in India focused on addressing poverty, improving agricultural productivity, absorbing surplus and under-employed rural labour through various wage employment schemes, strengthening rural infrastructure, etc. Over the decades, the approaches have evolved, ranging from community development programs to employment generation schemes to uplift rural communities. The nature of rural employment generation schemes has undergone continuous change based on the evolving socio-economic scenario and technological progress.

2. Evolution of Wage Employment Programmes

India's rural employment schemes have evolved through several phases, starting with early programs like the Rural Manpower Programme (1960s) and Crash Scheme for Rural Employment (1971). In the 1980s, the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) were launched, later merged into Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) in 1993 which consolidated into the Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana in 1999, to streamline structured rural employment efforts. The Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) was introduced in 1993 to provide work during agricultural lean seasons. The Food for Work Programme (FWP), initiated in 1977-78 and later expanded as the National Food for Work Programme (NFWP) in 2004, provided food grains as wages for manual labour on public works, targeting aspirational districts to improve both food security and employment. Notably, the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Act 1977 provided right to work to adult members of every rural household who volunteered to do unskilled manual work, thus bringing in the concept of a statutory right.

While the earlier initiatives offered some relief to rural households, their scale and resources remained limited in relation to the broader challenges of unemployment and poverty in rural India. It was in this background that, in 2005, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was enacted to provide a statutory framework for employment generation in rural areas.

3. Towards a New Rural Development Framework

Over the past twenty years, Mahatma Gandhi NREGA has provided a guaranteed wage-employment to rural households ensuring wage income; however, further strengthening has 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.

To cater to the changing aspirations, stronger convergence is required to establish an integrated, Whole-of-Government rural development framework covering several complementary Government schemes. It is essential that rural infrastructure creation must transition from fragmented provisioning to a coherent and future-oriented approach and it is also essential 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.

As national development advances, rural development programs require periodical revision to remain aligned with emerging needs and further aspirations. In the vastly changed circumstances of today, a transformational approach to rural development is essential to achieve the objectives of Viksit Bharat @2047. The expanding scale of development interventions is expected to create additional employment opportunities for rural households. It is imperative to engage the rural workforce more effectively to support the vision of Viksit Bharat, while empowering them through enhanced livelihood guarantee. Therefore, the Government has resolved to enhance the wage-employment guarantee for rural households from one hundred days to one hundred and twenty-five days per financial year for anchoring rural asset creation through the enactment of an appropriate Act.

4. Overview of the Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin)

:VB – G RAM G (विकसित भारत– जी राम जी) Bill, 2025

The proposed Bill is titled the " **Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) : VB- G RAM G (विकसित भारत जी राम जी -) Bill, 2025** to establish a rural development framework aligned with the national vision of Viksit Bharat @2047, by providing a statutory guarantee of one hundred and twenty-five days of wage employment in every

financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to undertake unskilled manual work; to promote empowerment, growth, convergence and saturation for a prosperous and resilient rural Bharat.

5. Salient Features of the Proposed Bill

5.1 Alignment of Rural Development Framework with Viksit Bharat 2047

The Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission(Gramin):VB–G RAM G

(विकसित भारत–जी राम जी) Bill,2025 is crafted to align the rural development framework with the national vision of Viksit Bharat @ 2047, so that wage employment, asset creation and public investment together build a more prosperous, resilient and inclusive rural Bharat. Rural works are positioned as a central instrument to deliver better infrastructure, stronger livelihoods and greater climate resilience in villages, ensuring that Viksit Bharat is realised through Viksit Gaon.

5.2 Convergence and Saturation based Approach

To translate this vision into practice, the Bill adopts a convergence and saturation based approach that brings together complementary Government schemes within a single, coherent rural development architecture. Funds, departments and programmes are expected to work in harmony at the Gram Panchayat level, with planning aimed at covering all eligible households and systematically closing critical gaps, rather than supporting scattered or one off works.

5.3 Thematic, Asset Focused Public Works

On this foundation, the Bill uses a structured thematic prioritisation of public works so that each day of guaranteed employment creates productive and durable rural assets. All works identified through the Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans (VGPPs) are integrated into the Viksit Bharat–National Rural Infrastructure Stack(VB- NRIS),creating a unifiedand forward looking rural infrastructure framework fully aligned with the Viksit Bharat vision.

5.4 Four Priority Thematic Areas

- Water security: Water related works such as conservation structures, irrigation support, groundwater recharge, rejuvenation of water bodies, watershed development and afforestation will strengthen water security across rural regions.

- Core rural infrastructure: Essential civic, social and service-delivery assets—rural roads, public buildings, school infrastructure, sanitation systems, renewable energy facilities and housing works under Central Government schemes—will ensure better basic amenities and improved access to services.
- Livelihood related infrastructure: Productive assets for agriculture, livestock, fisheries, storage, markets, skill development and circular economy models will support sustainable livelihoods, value addition and diversified rural income opportunities.
- Special works for extreme weather events: Disaster preparedness and climate adaptation works—such as shelters, embankments, flood management structures, rehabilitation works and forest fire management—will help create climate resilient villages.

Through this thematic focus, the Bill ensures that public works simultaneously advance water security, strengthen core rural systems, expand livelihood opportunities and build resilience, thereby supporting empowerment, growth, convergence and saturation in line with the national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

5.5 Modern, Technology enabled Governance

The Bill establishes a modern, transparent and technology enabled governance architecture to ensure effective implementation, accountability and high integrity service delivery. In a rural India marked by deeper digital penetration, improved connectivity and expanded public infrastructure, governance systems will be strengthened through digital public infrastructure, real time monitoring and enhanced transparency mechanisms.

The framework provides for biometric authentication, mobile based monitoring, spatial technology enabled planning, real time dashboards, AI enabled analytics and citizen engagement platforms. These systems ensure accurate verification of workers, functionaries and transactions, improve oversight and support timely reporting and corrective action across all stages of implementation.

A strengthened Social Audit mechanism forms a core part of this architecture, enhancing community participation and reinforcing transparency and accountability at the village level. In addition, a National Level Steering Committee and State Level Steering Committees will review, monitor and evaluate implementation in their respective areas, ensuring coordinated oversight and a whole of government approach.

By embedding this modern, technology enabled governance ecosystem, the Bill enables predictable service delivery, reduces duplication, improves the quality of assets and supports empowerment, growth, convergence and saturation. This governance architecture ensures that rural Bharat is equipped with the systems necessary to advance towards the national vision of Viksit Bharat @ 2047.

5.6 Key Statutory Provisions

a) Enhanced livelihood guarantee

The principal objective is to align rural development with Viksit Bharat @ 2047 by strengthening the livelihood guarantee framework through 125 days of assured wage employment per financial year for rural households whose adult members volunteer for unskilled manual work.

b) Integration into VB- NRIS

All works will be aggregated into the Viksit Bharat National Rural Infrastructure Stack, with priority to water security through water-related works, core rural infrastructure, livelihood related infrastructure, and special works to mitigate extreme weather events.

c) VGPP based planning

Planning will be undertaken through Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans, prepared by Gram Panchayats and integrated with national spatial planning systems, including PM Gati Shakti, while factoring in varying developmental needs.

d) Securing peak agricultural seasons

States will be empowered to notify in advance, a period aggregating to 60 days in a financial year covering peak sowing and harvesting during which works under the Bill will not be undertaken, facilitating sufficient farm labour at critical times.

e) Centrally Sponsored Scheme

The scheme will be implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with shared responsibilities between the Centre and States.

f) Normative Allocation

To promote inclusive growth and equitable distribution of financial resources in a fair manner, the Central Government will make Normative Allocation to each State based on objective parameters prescribed in the Rules; expenditure beyond this will be the responsibility of the State. States will ensure transparent and need-based intra-state distribution of funds across districts and gram panchayats, taking into account the category of the panchayats and local developmental needs, thereby strengthening equity, transparency and accountability.

g) Special relaxations

During natural calamities or extraordinary circumstances, the Central Government may make temporary relaxations for timely response and relief.

h) **Transparency and accountability**

Biometric authentication, spatial technology enabled planning, mobile and dashboard based monitoring, weekly public disclosure systems and a strengthened Social Audit mechanism will ensure transparency and accountability.

i) **Institutional Oversight**

The Central Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Council and the State Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Councils shall be constituted for review, monitoring and effective implementation of the provisions of the legislation in their respective areas. Steering committees at Central and State Level shall be constituted to recommend on matters concerning normative allocations, convergence and other such matters.

j) **Wage rate specification**

Wage rates for unskilled manual work will be specified by the Central Government; until separate rates are notified, existing MGNREGA wage rates will apply.

k) **State schemes within six months**

Every State Government must notify its Scheme to operationalise the guarantee within six months of the Bill's commencement.

l) **Unemployment allowance**

If eligible applicants are not provided work within the stipulated period, State Governments will be obliged to pay unemployment allowance as per the provisions in the Act. Minimum legal guarantees for labour: The Bill lays down minimum features and conditions to protect labourers' legal guarantees and rights under the Scheme.
