VIKSIT BHARAT–G RAM G BILL, 2025 *(A STEP TOWARDS MAKING INDIA A DEVELOPED NATION)*

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ABSTRACT

The Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill, 2025 is an important step in changing India's rural employment system. This Bill aims to replace the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and supports the national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. The Bill increases the guaranteed employment from 100 days to 125 days per rural household and focuses on creating long-lasting and climate-friendly rural assets. It also introduces new rules like an agricultural pause during peak farming seasons, shared funding between the Centre and States, fixed budget limits, and the use of digital technology for better monitoring. While the Bill promises better planning, transparency, and rural development, it also raises concerns such as financial pressure on poorer states, reduced demand-based employment, and difficulties faced by workers due to digital systems. This paper explains the main features, benefits, and challenges of the Bill in simple terms.

KEYWORDS: Viksit Bharat 2047, Rural Employment, MGNREGA Reforms, Budget Allocation, Digital Governance

1. INTRODUCTION

The Government of India has proposed a new law called the Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill, 2025. This Bill plans to replace MGNREGA, which has been in place for nearly 20 years. The new law is designed to match the long-term goal of making India a developed country by 2047.

Unlike MGNREGA, which mainly focused on providing short-term employment, the new Bill aims to link rural employment with long-lasting infrastructure, climate protection, and

better use of public money. It shows a shift from a welfare-based approach to a development-oriented model.

2. Understanding MGNREGA

MGNREGA is a legal employment guarantee scheme that provides at least 100 days of paid unskilled work every year to rural households. Its main goals are to reduce poverty, provide income security, and prevent rural people from migrating to cities for work.

The scheme is demand-driven, meaning employment is provided when people ask for work. Local bodies like Panchayats play a key role in planning and implementation. MGNREGA has also helped in building rural assets such as ponds, roads, and water conservation structures. It promotes transparency through social audits and encourages participation of women and disadvantaged groups.

3. Major Changes Proposed in the Bill

(a) Increase in Guaranteed Employment: 100 to 125 Days

The new Bill increases guaranteed employment from 100 days to 125 days per year for each rural household. This means more work opportunities and income support for rural families. Earlier, extra days were allowed only in special situations like droughts.

(b) Agricultural Pause

The Bill introduces a 60-day break in scheme-related work during important farming seasons like sowing and harvesting. State governments can decide when this pause will apply based on local farming needs. The aim is to ensure enough labour is available for agriculture during peak seasons.

(c) Cost-Sharing Between Centre and States

Under MGNREGA, the Central Government paid the full cost of wages for unskilled labour. The new Bill changes this system. It will now work as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.

- North-Eastern and Himalayan States: 90% Centre and 10% State
- Other States: 60% Centre and 40% State
- Union Territories without legislatures: 100% Centre funding

Each State must prepare its own plan within six months of the law coming into force.

(d) Fixed Budget Allocation Instead of Demand-Based Funding

Earlier, MGNREGA funding increased if demand increased. Under the new Bill, the Central Government will fix a budget limit for each state in advance, called a normative allocation. If spending goes beyond this limit, the State Government must pay the extra cost.

This change may limit employment during times of crisis, such as droughts or economic downturns.

(e) Use of Technology and National Infrastructure Stack

The Bill introduces a National Rural Infrastructure Stack to record and manage all works under the scheme. Rural development plans will be linked with national infrastructure planning.

Technology tools include biometric attendance, GPS tracking of worksites, AI-based fraud checks, and weekly public sharing of data. These steps aim to improve transparency and reduce corruption.

4. Key Concerns

(a) Financial Burden on States

Poorer states with high rural poverty may struggle to meet the 40% funding requirement, affecting employment delivery.

(b) Reduced Legal Guarantee

Fixed budgets may weaken the demand-based and rights-based nature of rural employment guaranteed under MGNREGA.

(c) Digital Access Problems

Biometric systems and online platforms may exclude workers due to technical failures, poor internet connectivity, or fingerprint recognition issues.

(d) Impact of Agricultural Pause

The assumption that all workers will find farm jobs during the pause may not hold true for landless labourers and marginal farmers.

(e) Gap Between Promise and Delivery

Even under MGNREGA, households received only about 45–55 days of work on average, despite a 100-day guarantee. This raises concerns about implementation capacity under the new Bill.

5. Positive Features of the Bill

The Bill focuses on creating durable and climate-resilient assets, improving rural productivity. Better coordination with national infrastructure plans may improve irrigation, storage, and connectivity.

Weekly wage payments, higher penalties for violations (up to ₹10,000), and special cards for vulnerable groups like single women, persons with disabilities, elderly people, and transgender persons show a strong focus on governance and inclusion.

6. CONCLUSION

The Viksit Bharat–G RAM G Bill, 2025 marks a major change in India's rural employment policy. By increasing workdays and focusing on long-term development, the Bill aims to support the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. While it offers many benefits such as better planning and asset creation, concerns about funding, worker rights, and digital access remain. Careful implementation, continuous review, and strong political commitment will be essential to ensure that the Bill truly improves rural livelihoods and strengthens India's path towards becoming a developed nation.

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