MGNREGA Implementation in India: Insights and Trends, April-Sept 2025

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19th November 2025

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Method & Scope

This briefing note analyses employment trends under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act(MGNREGA) in the country for the period April–September of Financial Year(FY) 2025-26, with comparison to the same period in FY 2024-25. The analysis focuses on:

- Employment generation (persondays)
- Aadhaar e-KYC completion rates and exclusion risk
- Jobcards/Workers deletion and additions
- MGNREGA in West Bengal

Data for employment and worker deletion indicators are sourced from the MGNREGA Management Information System (nrega.nic.in), extracted on 10th October 2025. e-KYC completion rates are drawn from the same MIS, downloaded on 12th November 2025.

Our aim is to provide citizens and stakeholders with valuable insights into the program's current state, highlighting key trends and progress. We believe that your engagement with this report will help foster a deeper understanding of the dynamics of MGNREGA implementation across the country.

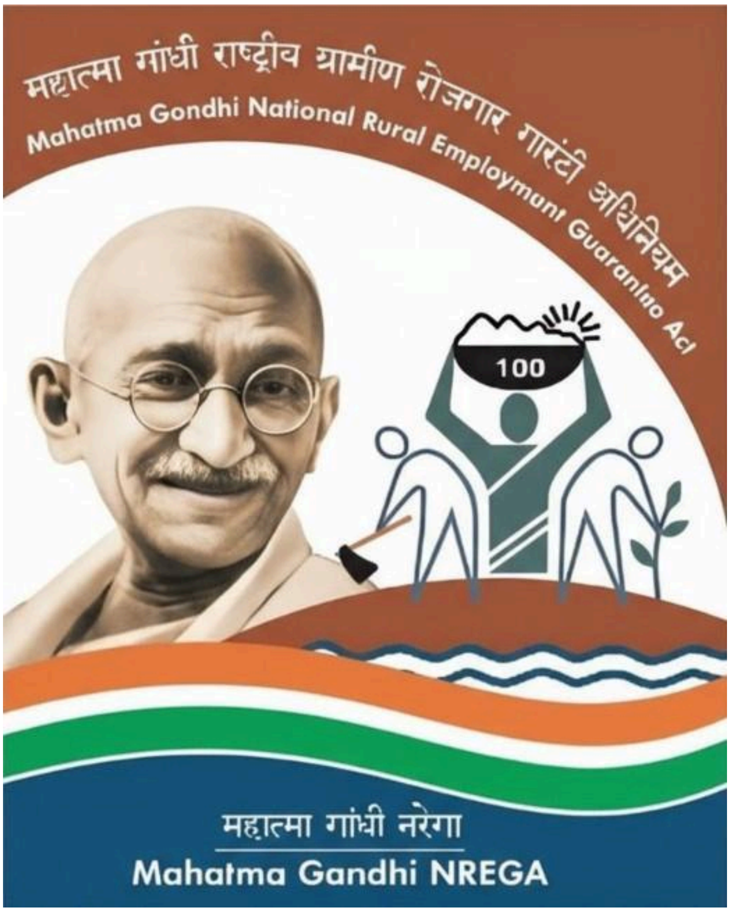
For this analysis, we considered 20 States/UTs. Fourteen States/UTs were excluded because they make only a minimal contribution to MGNREGA. For instance, the excluded States/UTs together accounted for only around 7% of the total person-days generated in FY 2025-26. Therefore, including such states/UTs would distort the overall trends due to their negligible share in key indicators. Refer to Annexures 1 and 2 for the list of the States/UTs included in and excluded from the analysis.

Our 20-states/UTs analysis includes West Bengal except for employment because MGNREGA work has been halted in the state since December 2021.

Why Does This Report Matters???

MGNREGA completed two decades of its journey in September this year. More than 26 crore workers are currently registered under this programme. Since inception, MGNREGA has been a critical economic stabiliser for crores of vulnerable households in the country. Declining availability of work under MGNREGA, combined with new Aadhaar e-KYC requirements, heightens the risk of deepening income insecurity for those most reliant on the programme particularly SC and ST workers.

About MGNREGA



The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) guarantees at least 100 days of wage employment each year to rural households willing to do unskilled manual work.

The programme is demand-driven, ensuring workers must be provided work within 15 days of demand, failing which they are entitled to an unemployment allowance.

It acts as a lifeline for vulnerable communities, especially SC/ST and landless households, by supporting income during agricultural lean seasons and reducing distress migration.

Key Highlights

Employment Generated - Sections 2.1 & 2.2

01. 11.7% and 25.6% drop in persondays generated when compared with FY 2024-25 and FY 2023-24.

02. Only eight states recorded an incline and the rest 11 states saw decline in persondays generated in FY 2025-26 when compared with FY 2024-25. West Bengal did not record any persondays in both the years.

03. Uttarakhand(54.3%) and Telangana(47.6%) saw the biggest drop while Jharkhand(56.4%) and Madhya Pradesh(30.5%) saw the highest rise in persondays generated in FY 2025-26.

eKYC challenges - Section 3

01. Aadhaar based eKYC through facial verification is added as a new feature in National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS). This eKYC becomes mandatory from November 2025.

02. 68.8%(17.9 crore workers) and 46.9%(5.3 crore workers) of all workers and active workers in the country have not completed eKYC as on 12th november 2025.

03. Madhya Pradesh(93.9%), Gujarat(88.8%) and Haryana(88.6%) have the highest and also overwhelming share of 'all workers' while Madhya Pradesh(90.5%) again, Bihar(76.8%) and Jharkhand(68%) have the highest share of 'active workers' for eKYC pending.

04. Field investigations show that many workers are unable to complete eKYC due to technical glitches, weak network connectivity, and workers' migration to other places in search of work.

Net Worker Additions - Section 4

01. While 11.2 lakh workers were deleted in FY 2025-26, 90 lakh workers were added to the MGNREGA rolls. Therefore, net worker additions stand at 78.8 lakh.

MGNREGA in West Bengal - Section 5

01. The Calcutta High Court ordered the resumption of MGNREGA from 1 August 2025, and the Supreme Court subsequently upheld this order.
02. Although this is a positive development, special provisions for workers in the state to gradually adapt to ABPS, NMMS and eKYC is crucial.

1. Key Statistics

Metrics	FY 2025-26
Total Number of Districts	605
Total Number of Mandals(Blocks)	6461
Total Number of Panchayats	2,50,617
Jobcards[1] Issued (crores) as on 10th October 2025	14.6
Total Number of Active Jobcards[2] (crores) as on 10th October 2025	7.9
Total Number of Active Workers[3] (crores) as on 10th October 2025	11.3
Persondays Generated[4] in (crores) (April to September)	132.5

Table 1: Key MGNREGA Statistics for 2025-26

In the following sections, we delve a little deeper into employment provisions of MGNREGA and its implementation across the country, to get insights and make policy recommendations accordingly.

[1] An authorised document issued by the Govt at Households level. Crucial for MGNREGA participation.
[2] A Jobcard with a record of at least once worker engaging in MGNREGA employment for a minimum of one day within the past three financial years.
[3] A worker who has been engaged in MGNREGA employment for at least one day within the past three financial years.
[4] Number of working days completed under MGNREGA by Jobcard holders.

2. Employment Provided

The spirit of MGNREGA lies in not just availing a Jobcard but participating in the work generation. This section explores comparative analysis of persondays generated for FY 2025-26 and FY 2024-25.

2.1. Persondays Generated

11.7% drop in persondays generated in comparison to FY 2024-25

FY 2025-26 generated only 132.5 crore persondays in the country which is a significant drop from the FY 2024-25 and a substantial drop from the FY 2023-24 i.e. last to last year. In other words, persondays generated this year have dropped by 11.7% and 25.6% when compared against FY 2024-25 and FY 2023-24 . This highlights the worrying trend of gradual decline in MGNREGA's employment generation each year.

It is important to note that employment generation was relatively better during FY 2023-24 despite 2.37 crore worker deletions the same year. In contrast, this year saw a substantial drop, in comparison to FY 2023-24, in employment in spite of positive net workers addition to the workforce. Refer to Figure 1 for more details for persondays generated.

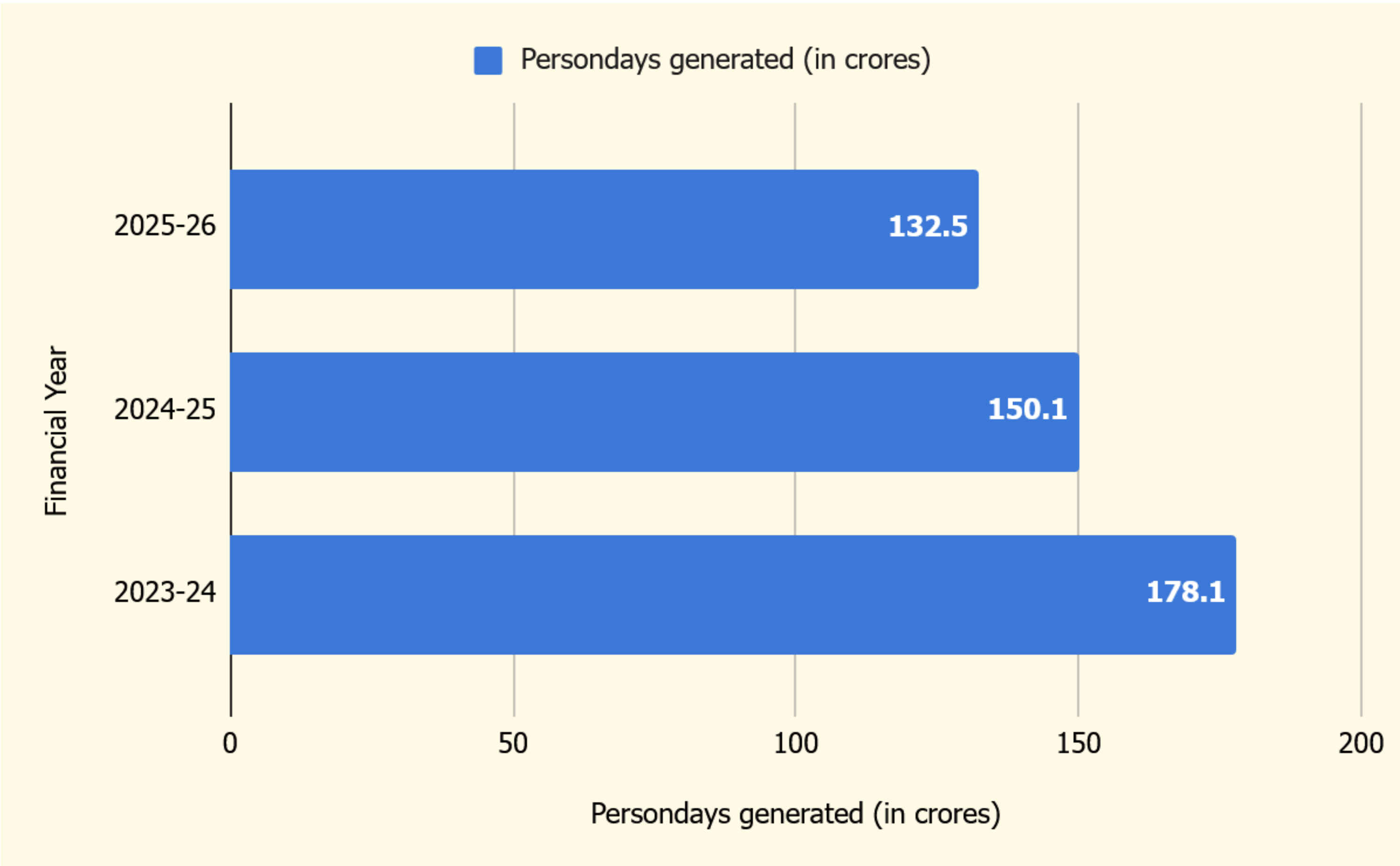


Figure 1: Trend in persondays generated for April to September for FY's 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26

2.2 State Wise Persondays Generated

Persondays declined in 11 states and increased in only 8 states

In comparison to FY 2024-25, this year recorded decline in persondays generated in 11 states while only 8 states recorded improvement this year. Figure 2 illustrates trends by state/UT.

As shown in figure 2, the biggest drops were observed in Uttarakhand (54.3%) and Telangana (47.6%) while Jharkhand (56.4%) and Madhya Pradesh (30.5%) experienced the highest rise in persondays in FY 2025-26. The above figure doesn't include West Bengal due to stoppage of work in the state since December 2021. Refer to Annexure 3 for more details on state/UT wise persondays generated.

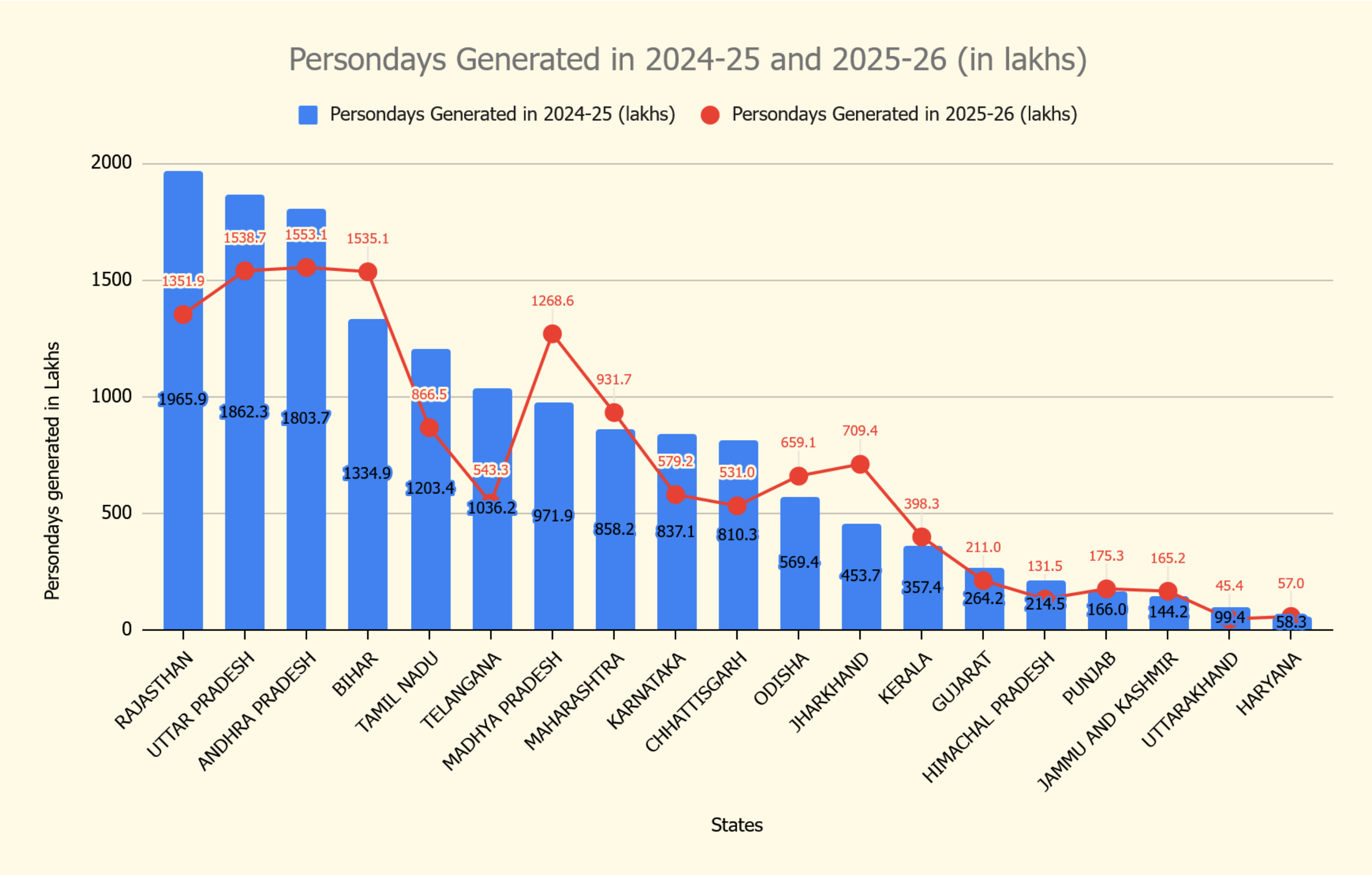


Figure 2: State-wise persondays for April-September for 2024-25 and 2025-26

3. EKYC IN MGNREGA

The National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS) was introduced in 2021 to capture workers' attendance through a mobile application. Since then, the NMMS has been upgraded four times, adding a new feature each time. Recently, eKYC i.e. electronic Know Your Customer using Aadhaar based facial verification was made mandatory. First, workers should complete their eKYC and provide a photograph i.e. reference photograph. Now each time NMMS captures a photo, it will match a worker's photograph with a reference photograph taken during eKYC. If it matches then the worker will be marked 'present' or else 'absent'.

A pilot for this feature was conducted in different states in September 2025. Frontline functionaries were instructed to complete workers' eKYC through a mobile application with the deadline originally set for the end of October 2025. Therefore, the eKYC becomes mandatory from November 2025. Workers who fail to complete this process are at risk of being denied access to work and wages.

This push for e-KYC is part of a wider digital reform strategy by the MoRD, which positions systems like the NMMS attendance app, ABPS and now e-KYC as tools to improve efficiency and exclude "weed out duplicate or fake workers." So far digital interventions such as NMMS app and ABPS are compliances that affect workers wages, after availing work. But eKYC has become a pre-condition to access work itself post which NMMS and ABPS comes into picture.

Preliminary observations from our field investigations show that several workers are unable to complete eKYC due to technical glitches such as device-level errors, application failures, and weak network connectivity. However, migration appears to be a more fundamental barrier, since many workers are currently employed in distant towns or states and are unable to return home in time to complete this requirement. In addition, we found limited availability of trained personnel, inadequate smartphone penetration, and poor internet access in rural and remote areas have slowed down the rollout.

3.1 National level eKYC Status

Significant 68.8% and 46.9% of all workers and active workers are yet to complete their eKYC

	No of workers (in crores)	eKYC done (in crores)	eKYC not done (in %)
All workers	26.0	8.1	68.8
Active workers	11.3	6.0	46.9

Table 2: eKYC status of all workers and active workers as on 12th November 2025

Table 2 illustrates that overwhelming 68.8%(17.9 crore workers) and 46.9%(5.3 crore workers) of all workers and active workers have not completed their eKYC. There are variations at state/UT level.

The percentage of eKYC done is calculated against only Aadhaar seeded workers in the MIS. Whereas we considered all workers(irrespective of Aadhaar seeded or not) to calculate eKYC done percentages. Therefore percentages in the table may vary when compared with the MIS.

3.2 State wise eKYC Status

8 states have more than 75% of all workers with no eKYC done

Figure 3 is an illustration for the share of all workers and active workers with eKYC pending in each state. Madhya Pradesh(93.9%), Gujarat(88.8%) and Haryana(88.6%) have the highest share of 'all workers' while Madhya Pradesh(90.5%) again, Bihar(76.8%) and Jharkhand(68%) have the highest share of 'active workers'.

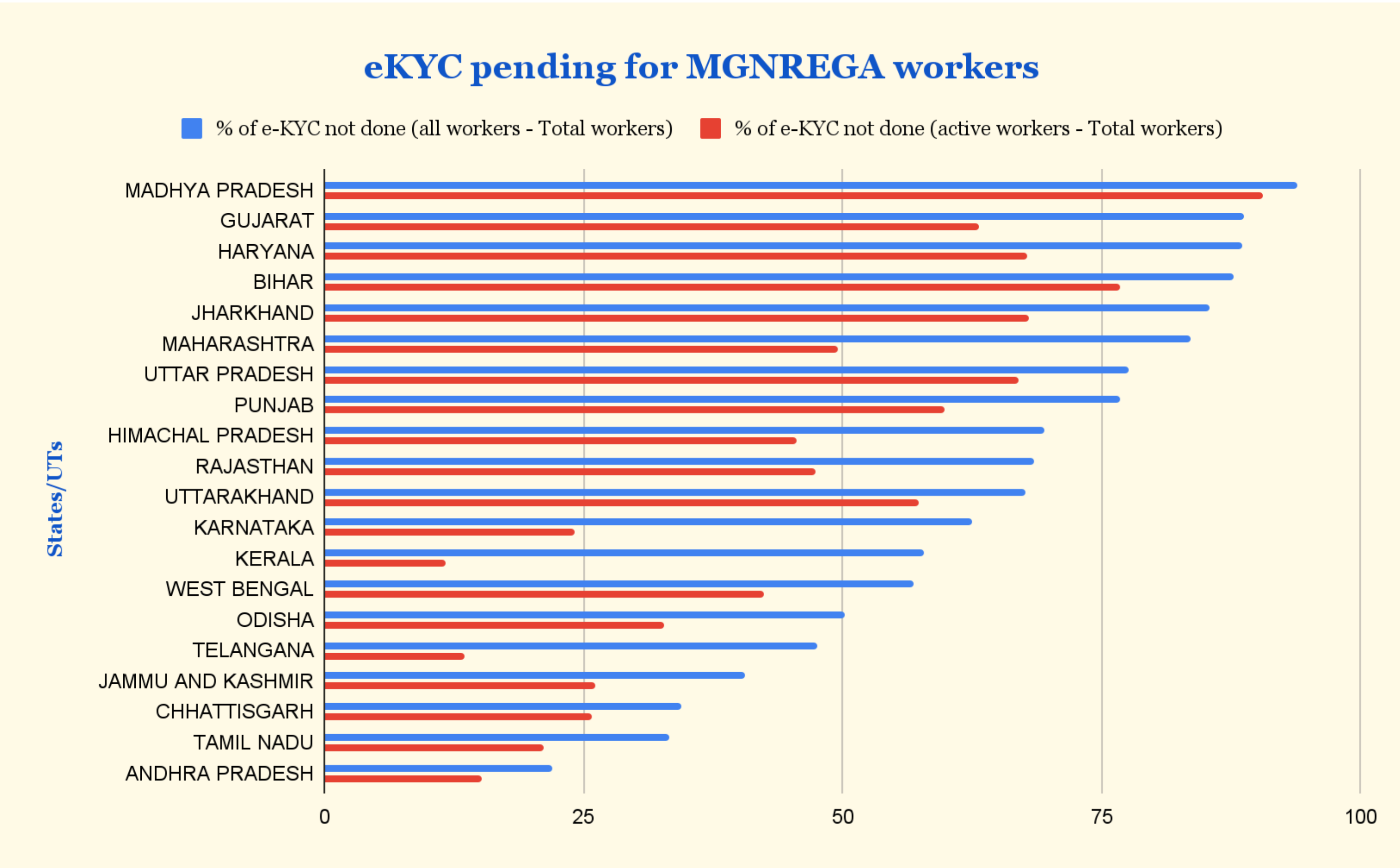


Figure 3: State wise eKYC pending for all workers and active workers as on 12th November 2025

Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh are performing better in both all workers and active workers categories. Eight states have more than 75% of all workers with pending eKYC. Refer to Figure 3 for more details. State/UT wise details are attached in the Annexure 4.

4. Worker Additions

Net addition of 78.8 lakh workers in this financial year

The Ministry of Rural Development(MoRD) stated repeatedly in the past that workers' addition and deletion is a regular process. However, FY 2022-23 and 2023-24 witnessed unprecedented worker deletions of around 7.8 crore in the country while only 1.92 crore workers added to the workforce highlighting the scale of disproportionality.

However, this trend was reversed in FY 2024-25 when 91 lakh workers were deleted and 2.22 crore workers added to the workforce. This positive development continues this year as well. Table 4 illustrates that FY 2025-26 recorded 90 lakh workers added while only 11.2 lakh workers were deleted. Refer to Annexure 5 for state/UT wise details.

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Sno	Description	Number (In Lakhs)
1	No of Registered workers	2611.7
2	No. of workers deleted in current year (A)	11.2
3	No. of workers added in the current year (B)	90
4	Net Added workers (B-A)	78.8

Table 3: Status of worker deletions during April to September of FY 2025-26

5. MGNREGA in West Bengal

MGNREGA in West Bengal has been halted since December 2021, when the MoRD stopped the funds, citing large-scale corruption in the state by invoking Section 27 of MGNREGA. As a result, no funds have been allocated for providing employment or clearing pending wages for workers. However, the state government claims to have settled the outstanding wages before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

In a case filed by the Paschim Banga Khet Majoor Samity(PBKMS), the Calcutta High Court ordered the resumption of the programme from 1st August 2025. Raising an objection, the Union Government appealed against the order in the Supreme Court. which again favoured workers and upheld Calcutta's High Court order. However, both the state government and the Union government are yet to begin the programme in the state.

5.1 Reviving MGNREGA - Challenges

Post the halt of MGNREGA in West Bengal, the scheme has undergone transition at multiple levels. Aadhaar Based Payment System(ABPS) which requires workers to have a Jobcard with Aadhaar seeded, authenticated and mapped to National Payments Corporation of India(NPCI). As on 10th October, 16.7% of all workers and 12.4% of active workers are still ineligible for ABPS. Situating supporting systems for workers to meet compliances and parallely allowing payments under account based system is crucial to restart MGNREGA in the state.

FY 2022-23 saw more than 83 lakh worker deletions in West Bengal which constitutes 15% of all deletions in the country that year. Even though reinstatements are released by the MoRD, only one log in per block, district and state will make it difficult to reinstate wrongfully deleted workers. The MoRD must provide more log-ins and extend special provisions and time for West Bengal MGNREGA wrongfully deleted workers to get reinstated.

Also the National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS) was not just introduced but updated multiple times so far for which the frontline officials or the state machinery is not equipped. Expecting the state to get adapted to the system overnight will pose new challenges to workers as well as officials. Hence a paper-based attendance and temporary exemption is very necessary while providing training to frontline officials and field supervisors to get adapted to the system. Else it might lead to loss of work and wages for workers.

Therefore work might begin in the state but it will bring serious challenges to the workers in West Bengal due to systemic changes in the last 3 years. Workers and officials in West Bengal have to face these changes overnight. Hence, special provisions to each new system introduced is crucial for West Bengal to kick start MGNREGA in the state.

6. Conclusion

The analysis shows workers absorption in terms of net worker additions which shows a positive stride especially in the context of mass worker deletions that occurred in FY 2022-23 and 2023-24. However MGNREGA's spirit lies in accessing employment guarantee of 100 days and not only availing Jobcards or deleted workers reinstated into the scheme.

Persondays dropped notably when compared with FY 2024-25 and more significantly when compared with FY 2023-24 raising concerns for the longevity of the programme. The persondays generated also varies across states with Uttarakhand and Telangana experiencing biggest drop while Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh improved.

MoRD's continuous technological interventions also highlighted persistent challenges workers face in meeting compliances. Even before all the workers become eligible for Aadhaar Based Payment System(ABPS), mandatory Aadhaar based eKYC under NMMS is raising additional technical and operational challenges to complete this compliance for workers. When digital interventions are introduced, they promise efficiency and reduce leakages. But digital interventions must also improve workers' access to their legal entitlements while also improving transparency.

The MoRD should stop making Aadhaar based eKYC mandatory and not give unreasonable targets that burden front line officials. The ministry should consult state governments to address challenges faced in generating employment, especially in those states which recorded the highest drop. Also while digital interventions can be targeted to improve efficiency of the programme, they should not over-ride worker's right to work under MGNREGA. The ministry should consult civil society organisations, worker unions and other stakeholders before rolling out any nationwide systems.

Finally, the report also deals with challenges to revive MGNREGA in West Bengal. The state and the Union Governments must strive to find alternative ways so that workers get adapted to systemic changes that were brought in the last three financial years or so.

About LibTech India

We are a team of engineers, social workers and social scientists who are interested in improving public service delivery in India. We have been working as a team in multiple states of the country for the last 10 years, though individually some of us have been involved for more than a decade.

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Annexure 1

List of States/UTs included in the report's analysis

Sr. No	State/UT
1	ANDHRA PRADESH
2	BIHAR
3	CHHATTISGARH
4	GUJARAT
5	HARYANA
6	HIMACHAL PRADESH
7	JAMMU AND KASHMIR
8	JHARKHAND
9	KARNATAKA
10	KERALA
11	MADHYA PRADESH
12	MAHARASHTRA
13	ODISHA
14	PUNJAB
15	RAJASTHAN
16	TAMIL NADU
17	TELANGANA
18	UTTAR PRADESH
19	UTTARAKHAND
20	WEST BENGAL

Annexure 2

List of States/UTs excluded from the report's analysis

Sr. No	State/UT
1	ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR
2	ARUNACHAL PRADESH
3	ASSAM
4	DN HAVELI AND DD
5	GOA
6	LADAKH
7	LAKSHADWEEP
8	MANIPUR
9	MEGHALAYA
10	MIZORAM
11	NAGALAND
12	PUDUCHERRY
13	SIKKIM
14	TRIPURA

Annexure 3

State wise persondays generated in FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26

Sr. No	States	Persondays Generated in FY 2024-25 (in lakhs)	Persondays Generated in FY 2025-26 (in lakhs)	Drop (in %)
1	UTTARAKHAND	99.4	45.4	54.3
2	TELANGANA	1036.2	543.3	47.6
3	HIMACHAL PRADESH	214.5	131.5	38.7
4	CHHATTISGARH	810.3	531	34.5
5	RAJASTHAN	1965.9	1351.9	31.2
6	KARNATAKA	837.1	579.2	30.8
7	TAMIL NADU	1203.4	866.5	28
8	GUJARAT	264.2	211	20.1
9	UTTAR PRADESH	1862.3	1538.7	17.4
10	ANDHRA PRADESH	1803.7	1553.1	13.9
11	HARYANA	58.3	57	2.3
12	WEST BENGAL	0	0	0
13	PUNJAB	166	175.3	-5.6
14	MAHARASHTRA	858.2	931.7	-8.6
15	KERALA	357.4	398.3	-11.4
16	JAMMU AND KASHMIR	837.1	579.2	-14.5
17	BIHAR	1334.9	1535.1	-15
18	ODISHA	569.4	659.1	-15.7
19	MADHYA PRADESH	971.9	1268.6	-30.5
20	JHARKHAND	453.7	709.4	-56.4

Annexure 4

State wise eKYC pending - all workers & active workers

Sr. No.	State/UT	All workers	All workers eKYC not done (in %)	Active workers	Active workers eKYC not done (in %)
1	MADHYA PRADESH	1.9	93.9	1	90.5
2	GUJARAT	1	88.8	0.3	63.1
3	HARYANA	0.3	88.6	0.1	67.9
4	BIHAR	2.7	87.7	1	76.8
5	JHARKHAND	1.1	85.4	0.4	68
6	MAHARASHTRA	3.3	83.6	0.9	49.6
7	UTTAR PRADESH	2.3	77.6	1.2	67
8	PUNJAB	0.3	76.8	0.2	59.9
9	HIMACHAL PRADESH	0.3	69.5	0.1	45.5
10	RAJASTHAN	2.3	68.4	1.2	47.3
11	UTTARAKHAND	0.2	67.7	0.1	57.4
12	KARNATAKA	1.8	62.5	0.8	24.1
13	KERALA	0.6	57.9	0.2	11.7
14	WEST BENGAL	2.6	56.8	0.2	42.4
15	ODISHA	1.1	50.2	0.7	32.8
16	TELANGANA	1	47.6	0.5	13.4
17	JAMMU AND KASHMIR	0.2	40.7	0.1	26.1
18	CHHATTISGARH	0.8	34.4	0.6	25.9
19	TAMIL NADU	1.1	33.3	0.9	21.2
20	ANDHRA PRADESH	1.1	22	0.9	15.1
	Total	**26**	**68.8**	**11.3**	**46.9**

Annexure 5

State wise net additions data for FY 2025-26

Sr. No.	States	No of Registered workers	No. of workers added in current year (A)	No. of workers deleted in the current year (B)	Net Added workers (B-A)
1	ANDHRA PRADESH	12468918	315745	216049	99696
2	BIHAR	27121414	1519339	82001	1437338
3	CHHATTISGARH	8300572	432035	181329	250706
4	GUJARAT	9875382	137239	16512	120727
5	HARYANA	2633549	191322	9524	181798
6	HIMACHAL PRADESH	2869611	28830	9031	19799
7	JAMMU AND KASHMIR	2414450	55806	18339	37467
8	JHARKHAND	10558572	263131	36131	227000
9	KARNATAKA	18215737	270030	107304	162726
10	KERALA	5840601	122784	11479	111305
11	MADHYA PRADESH	18530756	548738	32035	516703
12	MAHARASHTRA	33098782	3386134	128809	3257325
13	ODISHA	10935260	337740	39731	298009
14	PUNJAB	3038441	97125	13420	83705
15	RAJASTHAN	23373159	303798	61240	242558
16	TAMIL NADU	11049350	72811	22636	50175
17	TELANGANA	10424104	46091	84746	-38655
18	UTTAR PRADESH	23202375	854216	34396	819820
19	UTTARAKHAND	1586675	16696	17734	-1038
20	WEST BENGAL	25633628	3972	18	3954
	Total	**261171336**	**9003582**	**1122464**	**7881118**