

MGNREGA Worker Deletions: Consolidated Inputs for Reporting (Oct 10 – Nov 14)

1. Exceptionally large deletions in a single month

- Between **10 October and 14 November**, MIS records show around **27 lakh worker deletions** across India (worker additions during this period 10.5 lakhs)
- Such a large volume of deletions concentrated in one month is highly unusual.

2. The spike overlaps with the period when e-KYC became mandatory

- e-KYC became compulsory from **1 November 2025**.
- The surge in deletions appears in the same immediate period.

3. A complete reversal from the earlier financial-year trend

- For the first six months of FY **2025–26** (April–September), the national trend showed **net additions** — more workers were added than deleted (15.2 lakh workers deleted, 98.8 lakh workers added, Net additions 83.6 lakhs).
- By the end of **September**, net additions stood at **around 83.6 lakh** workers.
- But by **14 November**, after the deletion spike, net additions fell sharply to **66.5 lakh**.
- This means the system effectively **lost around 17 lakh net workers in one month**, a dramatic reversal of the previous trend.
- Worker Additions took place in one month is 10.54 lakh
- In this single month, **deletions far exceeded additions**, and by a very large margin.

4. Significant reduction in active workers

- Along with total deletions, there is a fall of about **6 lakh active workers**.

- *Active workers* are those who actually obtained employment under MGNREGA at least for a day in the last 3 years.
- This indicates that even workers who are currently participating in the programme are getting affected.

5. Similar spike occurred earlier when Aadhaar-based payments became mandatory

- When the **Aadhaar-Based Payment System (ABPS)** was enforced earlier, job card deletions rose steeply.
- Between **2021–22 and 2022–23**, MIS data shows a **247% increase in deletions**.
- The scale and speed of the current spike echoes that earlier pattern.
- For the last few years, officials have repeatedly stated that *ghost, duplicate and fake* job cards had been removed during mandating ABPS.
- The present surge — **27 lakh deletions in one month** — raises a basic question: **If the database was already cleaned, why are such large numbers being deleted again?**

7. Top eKYC states are also leading in deletions; Andhra Pradesh stands out

The data do not show a uniform pattern across all states, but a clear and worrying trend emerges when we focus on the states with the **highest eKYC completion**.

The **top three states in eKYC completion** are:

- **Andhra Pradesh – 78.4% eKYC, 15,92,903 deletions**
- **Tamil Nadu – 67.6% eKYC, 30,529 deletions**
- **Chhattisgarh – 66.6% eKYC, 1,04,310 deletions**

All three of these high-eKYC states have **recorded net deletions in the last one month**, despite having **net additions during the first six months** of the year. This sharp reversal in trend precisely at the time of rapid eKYC completion is notable.

Within this group, **Andhra Pradesh stands out**: with **15.9 lakh deletions**, it towers above the others and emerges as the epicentre of the current deletion surge. This overlap between **very**

high eKYC completion and **very high deletions** raises serious questions about how eKYC is being implemented and whether it is directly or indirectly driving large-scale worker removals.

8. Earlier progress on reinstatements now appears undermined

- In **January 2025**, MoRD issued the first-ever **comprehensive national guidelines** on reinstating wrongly deleted workers.
- In **July 2025**, the **PRC (Performance Review Committee)** meeting reviewed reinstatement progress, and several states had started restoring eligible workers.
- The current surge of deletions is so large that it risks **nullifying the reinstatement progress** made over the past year.

9. Need for an Immediate Moratorium on Deletions

Given the scale and speed of current deletions, it is critical for MoRD to impose an immediate moratorium on job card deletions until proper safeguards are put in place.

Why a Moratorium Is Essential

The current deletion process lacks basic accountability mechanisms.

- Households can be deleted on grounds such as *death, migration, duplication, or non-existence* — without any documentary proof being demanded.
- For instance, when a worker is marked as *dead*, no death certificate or verification is required.
- Similar zero-verification deletions occur for all other grounds as well.

This system enables large numbers of deletions to happen unchecked, leaving eligible households suddenly deprived of work and wage security.

Lack of Serious Oversight

Neither MoRD nor many state governments have acted with the level of urgency required to prevent wrongful deletions.

- Verification processes remain weak.
- No strong checks or audit trails exist.

- Deletions can be pushed through indiscriminately, with no one held responsible.

Immediate Step Needed

Until the structural problems in the deletion workflow are fixed — including verification protocols, accountability mechanisms, and grievance pathways — a complete moratorium on deletions is necessary to prevent further wrongful removal of eligible workers.