



## Deletion of MGNREGA Job Cards

**For Prelims:** [MGNREGA](#), [MGNREGA Scheme](#), [Gram Panchayat](#), [Municipal Corporation](#), [Management Information System](#), [Aadhaar-Based Payment System](#), [Legal Right to Work](#), [Unemployment](#), [Gram Panchayat](#), [Unemployment Allowance](#).

**For Mains:** Poverty, Government Policies & Interventions, Issues Relating to Development, MGNREGA and related Issues.

[Source: TH](#)

### Why in News?

The recent surge in the **deletion of workers from job cards** under the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA)** has raised serious concerns about the right to work and transparency in implementation.

- In **2022-23** alone, **over 5.53 crore workers** were removed, marking a **247% increase from 2021-22**.

### What are the Key Provisions For Deletion of MGNREGA Job Cards?

- **Grounds for Deletion:** As per **Schedule II, Paragraph 23** of the MGNREGA Act, 2005, a job card can only be **deleted under specific**, well-defined conditions:
  - **Permanent Migration:** If a household **permanently relocates** from the concerned [Gram Panchayat](#).
  - **Duplicate Job Cards:** If a job card is found to be a **duplicate**.
  - **Forged Documents:** If a job card was issued based on **forged documents**.
  - **Reclassification of Area:** If a Gram Panchayat is reclassified as a [Municipal Corporation](#), **all associated job cards** are deleted.
  - **Other Valid Reasons:** The MGNREGA [Management Information System \(MIS\)](#) lists reasons like "**Duplicate Applicant**," "**Fake Applicant**," and "**Not Willing to Work**."
- **Role of ABPS:** The surge in **MGNREGA job card deletions** during **2022-23 coincided** with the implementation of mandatory [Aadhaar-based payment systems \(ABPS\)](#) which required workers to link their Aadhaar numbers to their job cards.
  - Workers with **non-linked or improperly linked** Aadhaar led to job card deletions.
- **Due Process for Deletion:** Workers proposed for deletion **must be heard** with two independent persons present, **reasons for deletion independently verified**, actions **documented**, and reports **shared** with the **Gram Sabha or Ward Sabha** for transparency.

**Note:** ABPS is a payment system that uses **Aadhaar numbers** to electronically send **government subsidies and benefits** to the **Aadhaar-linked bank accounts** of beneficiaries.

## What are the Implications of Deletion of MGNREGA Job Cards?

- **Violation of the Right to Work:** Deleting workers' names from job cards on grounds of "not willing to work", denies the worker his [legal right to work](#).
  - Many workers labeled as "Not willing to work" **actually worked or requested work** in the same financial year of their deletion.
- **Inconsistent Procedure:** The official reason of "**Village becomes urban,**" used for deleting job cards of **only some workers** contradicts the Act's stipulation that **all job cards** in an **urbanized area** must be deleted.
  - Deletions often **bypass Gram Sabha** approval, violating the Act, and many workers face **wrongful deletions without their knowledge**.
- **Absence of Verification:** Many workers were victims of **wrongful deletions** when deletion was done **without any verification or analysis** to assess the validity of reasons for deletion.
  - While deletions are **recorded in the MIS**, the Ministry of Rural Development has **not conducted any verification and analysis** of deletion reasons, including the 'Not willing to work' reason.
- **Impact on Vulnerable Populations:** Deleting workers for reasons such as "**not willing to work**", especially in light of **high rural unemployment rates**, directly undermines their livelihood opportunities.
- **Data-Driven Concerns:** The data indicates that the surge in deletions **aligns** with the increased focus on **ABPS**, suggesting that deletions may have been driven by **compliance incentives** rather than genuine reasons.

## What is MGNREGA Scheme?

- **About: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005** passed in September 2005 to provide a **legal guarantee for wage employment** under the **MGNREGA Scheme**.
- **Objective:** To enhance livelihood security in rural areas by offering **100 days of wage employment per financial year** to **adult members** of **rural households willing to do unskilled manual labor**.
- **Eligibility:**
  - **Target Group:** All rural households in need of employment and willing to do **manual, unskilled work**.
  - **Registration:** Applicants submit their requests to the [Gram Panchayat](#), which registers households and issues job cards after verification.
  - **Priority:** At least **one-third** of the wage seekers should be **women**.
  - **Employment Conditions:** Employment should last at **least 14 consecutive** days, with no more than six workdays per week.
- **Employment Provision:**
  - **Employment Timeline:** The **Gram Panchayat or Block Programme Officer** must provide work within **15 days of application**, ideally **within 5 kilometers** of the applicant's village.
    - Work beyond this requires an **extra 10% wage for transportation** and living costs.
  - **Unemployment Allowance:** If employment is **not provided within 15 days**, an [unemployment allowance](#) is given which is **one-fourth of the wage rate** for the **first 30 days** and at least half for the rest.
- **Permissible Works:**
  - **Water and Land Development:** Conservation and harvesting.
  - **Afforestation and Drought Proofing:** Tree plantation.
  - **Irrigation and Farm Infrastructure:** Canals, ponds, and irrigation.
  - **Rural Connectivity:** Roads and culverts.
  - **Sanitation and Hygiene:** Latrines and waste management.
  - **Rural Infrastructure:** Community centers and storage.
  - **Employment-Linked Projects:** Composting, livestock shelters, fisheries.
- **Restrictions:** The use of contractors and **labor-displacing machines** is **prohibited**.
- **MGNREGA and SDGs:**



## Way Forward

- **Verification Processes:** Ensuring **deletions follow the MGNREGA Act, 2005 and Master Circular protocols** is essential to minimize arbitrary deletions and protect workers' rights.
- **Audit and Oversight:** Set up **independent bodies or third-party agencies** to periodically audit deletion records and reasons for job card removals to ensure consistency and transparency.
- **Grievance Redressal:** Create or strengthen systems to provide workers with a **clear and efficient process** for filing complaints and **seeking redress** for wrongful deletions.
- **Empowering Gram Sabhas:** Ensuring that all deletions are reviewed and approved by the **Gram Sabha** as mandated by the MGNREGA Act, 2005.
- **Upgrade MIS:** Enhance the MIS to accurately **track and record job card deletions**, with real-time notifications and strong reporting features for better oversight.
  - Use data analytics to detect trends and **irregularities in job card deletions for timely intervention** and corrective action.

### **Drishti Mains Question:**

Q. What measures can be taken to strengthen the verification process under MGNREGA to prevent arbitrary exclusions?

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

**Q. With reference to the Indian economy after the 1991 economic liberalization, consider the following statements: (2020)**

1. Worker productivity (Rs. per worker at 2004-05 prices) increased in urban areas while it decreased in rural areas.
2. The percentage share of rural areas in the workforce steadily increased.
3. In rural areas, the growth in the non-farm economy increased.
4. The growth rate in rural employment decreased.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 and 4 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 4 only

**Ans: (b)**

**Q. Among the following who are eligible to benefit from the “Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act”? (2011)**

- (a) Adult members of only the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe households
- (b) Adult members of below poverty line (BPL) households
- (c) Adult members of households of all backward communities
- (d) Adult members of any household

**Ans: (d)**

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### Mains

**Q.** “The local self-government system in India has not proved to be an effective instrument of governance”. Critically examine the statement and give your views to improve the situation. **(2017)**

**Q.** Do government’s schemes for up-lifting vulnerable and backward communities by protecting required social resources for them, lead to their exclusion in establishing businesses in urban economies? **(2014)**