



Social Audits in MGNREGS

For Prelims: [Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme \(MGNREGS\)](#), [Social Audits](#), [Amrit Sarovar](#), [Jaldoot App](#)

For Mains: Implementation issues with the MGNREGA, Government Policies & Interventions, Issues Relating to Development

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Recent data from the Management Information System (MIS) on [Social Audit](#), maintained by the **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)**, sheds light on the progress and challenges of the social audit in the [Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme \(MGNREGS\)](#).

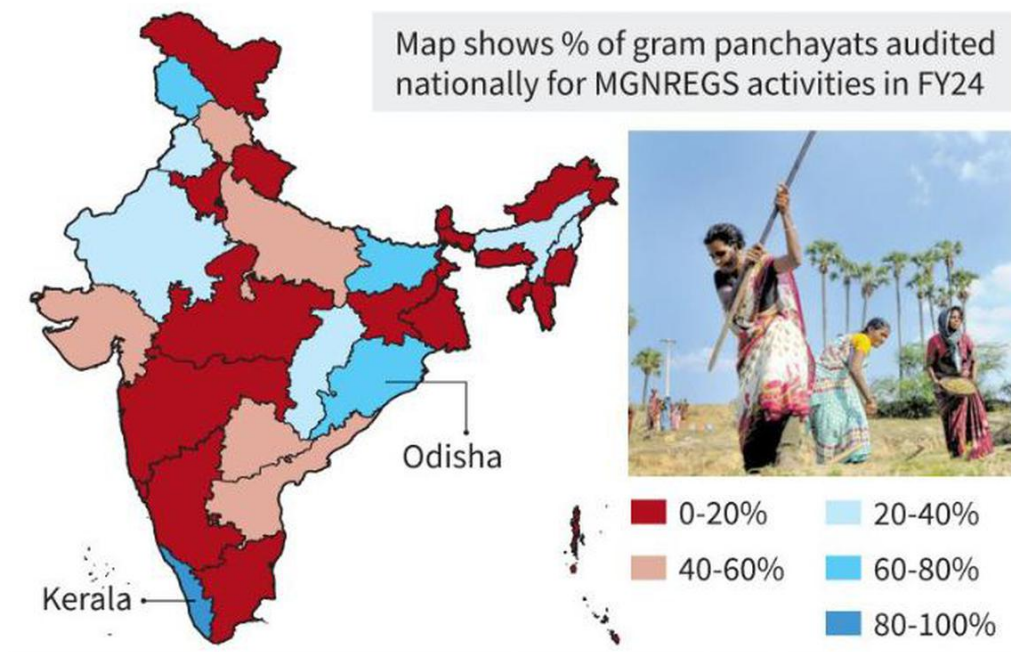
What is the Progress of Social Audits in MGNREGS?

- According to the data from the MIS on Social Audit, Out of the 34 States and Union Territories, only **6 have surpassed the 50% mark in completing social audits** of works done under MGNREGS in gram panchayats.
- Kerala emerges as the frontrunner, achieving **100% coverage of gram panchayats** in social audits, showcasing a comprehensive and inclusive approach.
 - Apart from Kerala, five other states have surpassed the 50% mark in social audit coverage, namely **Bihar (64.4%), Gujarat (58.8%), Jammu and Kashmir (64.1%), Odisha (60.42%), and Uttar Pradesh (54.97%)**.
- Only three States have covered 40% or more villages Telangana (40.5%), Himachal Pradesh (45.32%) and Andhra Pradesh (49.7%).
- Other than Telangana, among the poll-bound States, the numbers are really low — Madhya Pradesh (1.73%), Mizoram (17.5%) Chhattisgarh (25.06%), and Rajasthan (34.74%).

//

Audited panchayats

Kerala is the only State that has completed social audits of all activities done under MGNREGS in each of its Gram Sabhas



What is a Social Audit?

▪ About:

- Social audit is a process of **reviewing official records** and determining whether state reported expenditures reflect the actual money spent on the ground.
- Social audit is the inbuilt **anti-corruption mechanism in the MGNREGA Act, 2005**.
 - It involves quality checks of infrastructure created under the MGNREGA, financial misappropriation in wages, and checking for any procedural deviations.

▪ Objectives:

- Aimed at empowering local communities, social audits enable citizens to scrutinize and assess the efficiency and effectiveness of government initiatives.

▪ Legal Framework:

- In the context of MGNREGS, **Section 17 of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)** mandates the gram sabha to monitor the execution of works, providing a legal basis for social audits.
- The **Audit of Scheme Rules, 2011**, also known as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Audit of Schemes Rules, 2011, were developed by the Ministry of Rural Development in collaboration with the **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India**.
 - These rules outline the procedures for social audits and the duties of various entities, including the **Social Audit Unit (SAU)**, state government, and field workers of MGNREGA, to be followed nationwide.
- Social audit units operate **independently of the implementing authorities**, ensuring an unbiased evaluation of the programs.
- To ensure the autonomy of Social Audit Units, they are entitled to funds equivalent to **0.5% of the MGNREGA** expenditure incurred by the state in the previous year.
- In cases where states fail to conduct regular social audits, the Centre has the authority to withhold funds allocated under MGNREGS.

▪ Challenges in Implementation:

- Limited **awareness** of the legal framework for social audits, especially among **local communities**, can impede their active involvement in the process.

- Limited **financial resources for Social Audit** Units can compromise their ability to carry out thorough and effective audits, restricting the scope of their activities.
- The intrusion of **political influence** can hinder the impartiality of social audits, impacting the authenticity and objectivity of the evaluation process.
- Lack of **cooperation and coordination** of the implementing authorities and the social audit units.
- Lack of **follow-up and action on the findings and recommendations** of the social audit reports.
- Lack of **protection and support for the social auditors** and the [whistle-blowers](#) who face threats and harassment from the vested interests.

What is MGNREGS?

▪ About:

- The MGNREGS is one of the largest work guarantee programmes in the world launched in **2005 by the [Ministry of Rural Development](#)**.
 - The MGNREGA is the legal framework that enables the implementation of the scheme and gives the **right to work to the rural poor**.
- Under MGNREGS a total of 11.37 Crore households availed employment and a total of 289.24 crore person-days employment has been generated (till 15th December 2022).

▪ Objectives:

- The scheme aims to provide **at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment** in a financial year to rural households whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.
- Strengthening the **livelihood resource** base of the poor.
- Proactively ensuring social inclusion.
- Strengthening [Panchayati Raj Institutions \(PRIs\)](#).

▪ Achievements of MGNREGA:

- **GIS-Based Planning of Gram Panchayats (GPs):**
 - The Ministry has initiated an integrated holistic planning of the Gram Panchayats based on **watershed development principles** (ridge to valley approach) using the [Geographical information system \(GIS\)](#).
 - As of December 2022, plans for 2,62,654 GPs have been designed in a saturation mode for three years of planning.
- **National Electronic Fund Management System (NeFMS)/ DBT:**
 - Under the MGNREGA, 99% of wage seekers are receiving their **wages directly into their Bank/Post Office accounts**.
 - It is a big step towards transparency and timely release of wages.
- **SECURE:**
 - SECURE is an online application designed and developed specially for the **estimate preparation and approval for MGNREGA works**.
- **Skill Development:**
 - The project "UNNATI" intends to upgrade the skill-base of the MGNREGA workers, and thereby improve their livelihoods, so that they can move from the current partial employment to full employment.
 - As of December 2022, 27,383 candidates have been trained.

▪ New Initiatives for the implementation of the programme:

- [Amrit Sarovar](#).
- [Jaldoot App](#).
- [Ombudsperson](#).

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

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)

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/social-audits-in-mgnregs>

