



# Record Women's Participation in MNREGS in UP

## Why in News?

Women's participation in the [Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme \(MNREGS\)](#) in Uttar Pradesh reached a **record high of 42.31%**, signalling a **shift in rural economic dynamics** and gender roles, despite challenges in sustaining employment.

## Key Points

- **About:** Women's participation in MNREGS in Uttar Pradesh reached a historic 42.31% in the **2025-26 fiscal year**, slightly surpassing the previous high of **42.26% in 2023-24**, after a dip to 41.87% in 2024-25.
- **National Average:** Despite the record increase, women's participation in MNREGS in Uttar Pradesh **remains below the national average of 53%**. Experts attribute this disparity to:
  - **Systemic Constraints:** Heavy manual work, lack of crèche facilities, and wage gaps.
  - **Seasonal Employment Fluctuations:** Delays in wage payments and job instability have discouraged sustained participation.
- **Factors Leading to Rise:**
  - **Economic Necessity:** Rising household expenses, inflation, and **limited job opportunities** have driven more women to seek employment under MNREGS.
  - **Shift in Rural Attitudes:** There is a growing acceptance of women working in wage labour, which was once traditionally reserved for men.
  - **Government Support:** The UP government has been actively promoting women's inclusion in [self-help groups \(SHGs\)](#) and rural livelihood missions, boosting women's confidence to participate in MNREGS.
  - **Post-Pandemic Migration:** With more men migrating to urban areas for work post-[Covid-19](#), women have increasingly filled the employment gap in rural areas.

## Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

- **About:** The MGNREGA is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** for social security aimed at providing guaranteed rural employment in India.
  - It was enacted in 2005 under the Ministry of Rural Development as nodal ministry.
- **Purpose:** To provide at least **100 days of guaranteed wage employment** to registered adult rural households willing to undertake unskilled manual work.
- **Coverage:** The scheme extends across the entire country, excluding districts with 100% urban populations.
- **Demand-Driven Framework:** Employment is provided on demand; if not granted within 15 days, workers are entitled to an **unemployment allowance**, which is one-fourth of the minimum wage for the first 30 days and half of the minimum wage thereafter.
- **Decentralized Planning:** The scheme emphasizes grassroots planning, with at least 50% of work executed by **Gram Panchayats** based on Gram Sabha recommendations.
- **Fund Sharing:** The Central Government **covers 100% of unskilled labor costs** and 75% of material costs, while State Governments contribute 25% of material costs, ensuring cooperative federalism in implementation.

- **Wage Payment Mechanism:** Wages are linked to **state-specific Minimum Wage rates** and paid directly to workers' bank or Aadhaar-linked accounts for transparency.
  - Compensation for delayed payments is provided at 0.05% of unpaid wages per day, starting from the 16th day after the muster roll closure.

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