



Khet Bachao Abhiyan- An initiative for sustainability

R. Helim

Ph. D. Scholar (Agronomy), College of Post Graduate Studies in Agricultural Sciences,
Central Agricultural University (I), Umiam, Meghalaya

**Corresponding author - rithelim@gmail.com*

Abstract

The Khet Bachao Abhiyan, launched in June 2026 by the Government of India, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), signifies a critical paradigm shift from yield-centric agriculture to sustainable, climate-resilient farming. This initiative addresses the profound agrarian crisis stemming from the Green Revolution, characterized by depleted soil organic carbon, yield plateaus, economic strain on smallholder farmers, and increased greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂ and N₂O) linked to synthetic nitrogen application. The campaign's methodology involved a month-long (June 1–30, 2026), grassroots-level outreach strategy executed by Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) and state agriculture departments. Interventions focused on site-specific nutrient management via Soil Health Cards, the promotion of a balanced N: P: K ratio (4:2:1) to increase Fertilizer Use Efficiency, and scheme convergence (e.g., PM-PRANAM). Furthermore, the program emphasized the integration of natural farming practices to restore soil microbiome dynamics and reduce dependence on chemical inputs like urea and DAP. Preliminary outcomes indicate massive nationwide farmer participation, leading to a behavioral shift towards agroecology,

alongside a broader policy realignment aimed at reducing the national subsidy burden. Future directives focus on scaling bio-fertilizer production, validating Indigenous Technical Knowledge (ITK), and advancing low-input cropping systems. Ultimately, the sustained success of the campaign relies on the seamless provision of affordable biological alternatives, proving to farmers that soil-centric agriculture concurrently enhances environmental health and long-term farm profitability.

Keywords: *Khet Bachao Abhiyan, Soil Health, Climate Resilience, Soil Organic Carbon*

Khet Bachao Abhiyan (Save the Farm Campaign) is a nationwide agricultural initiative launched in June 2026 by the Government of India, led by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the Ministry of Agriculture. It represents a major policy shift from simply asking "how much can we produce" to focusing on long-term soil health, farmer profitability, and climate resilience.

The Why? (Origin and Rationale)

The campaign was born out of a growing agrarian crisis tied directly to land degradation. Decades of intensive, chemically driven farming

following the Green Revolution led to severe unintended consequences:

Depleted Soil Organic Carbon: In many Indian agricultural belts, soil organic carbon (SOC) levels have dropped well below the critical 0.5% threshold.

Yield Plateaus: Despite applying more chemical fertilizers, farmers are seeing diminishing returns in crop yields.

Economic Strain: The rising cost of agricultural inputs (like urea and DAP) has trapped many smallholder farmers in cycles of debt and minimized the System Production Efficiency.

Fossil fuel Dependency and adverse impact on soil microbes.

Climate Vulnerability: Degraded soils hold less water, making crops significantly more vulnerable to erratic monsoons, heat waves and droughts. Profound adverse effect from manufacturing emissions during N synthesis

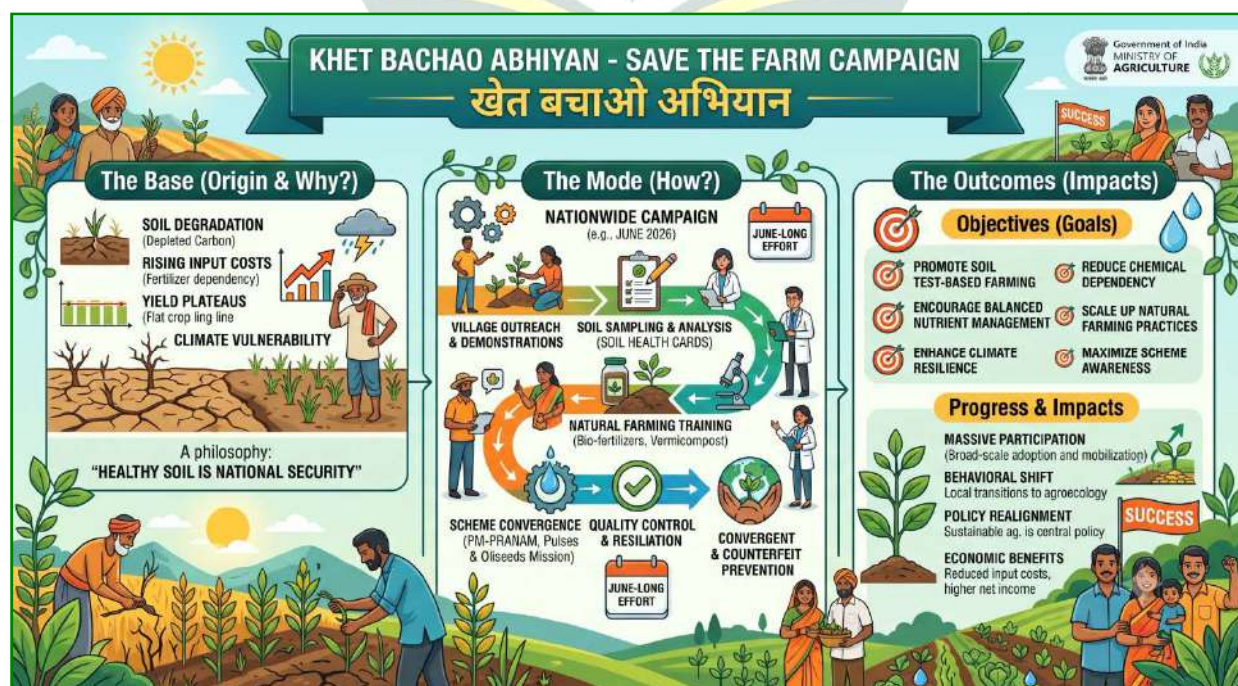
generate massive amount of CO₂ and also excess nitrogen applied produces N₂O leading to global warming.

The base philosophy of the movement is that healthy soil is a matter of national food security and preserving it requires a blend of traditional ecological knowledge and modern scientific testing.

The How? (Execution and Strategy)

Designed as a multi-dimensional, month-long outreach effort (June 1–30, 2026), the campaign operates as a grassroots movement driven by Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), state agriculture departments, and scientific institutes. Instead of top-down directives, agricultural scientists and field officers travel directly to villages to engage farmers through practical demonstrations. The core strategic pillars include:

- **Soil Test-Based Nutrient Management:** Shifting farmers away from the blind, blanket application of chemical fertilizers and toward



informed decisions using Soil Health Cards for Site Specific Nutrient management.

- **Balanced Inputs:** Reducing over-dependence on Di- ammonium Phosphate (DAP) and urea, while promoting balanced N:P:K (4:2:1) alongside nano-fertilizers and bio-fertilizers to increase Fertilizer Use Efficiency.
- **Natural Farming Integration:** Encouraging green manuring, vermicompost, and crop rotation to naturally restore soil vitality without inflating input costs. Aiding in restoring soil health and microbiome dynamics.
- **Quality Control:** Educating farmers on how to identify and report counterfeit seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides. Awareness on mitigating climate and environmental hazards eg. nitrate leaching into ground water.
- **Maximize Welfare Scheme Awareness:** To ensure farmers are aware of and utilizing supportive government schemes, including PM-PRANAM (which incentivizes reducing chemical fertilizers), the Pulses & Oilseeds Missions, and the Kisan Credit Card.

The Outcome (Impact and Challenges)

The immediate outcome of the Khet Bachao Abhiyan has been massive participation engaged with the program nationwide.

Positive Impacts:

- **Behavioral Shift:** The campaign has successfully sparked localized transitions toward agro ecological practices, particularly in states like Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh, where farmers are actively adopting biological inputs.

- **Policy Realignment:** It firmly establishes sustainable agriculture and soil health as central pillars of rural economic policy, rather than just environmental afterthoughts.

Reducing National Subsidy burden.

What's Next?

- i. Large scale production of bio fertilizers and bio pesticides.
- ii. Validation and popularization of Indigenous Technical Knowledge for pest and disease control.
- iii. Popularization of low input requirement crops like millets.
- iv. Emphasizing double/ multiple cropping with better crop residue management.
- v. Skill development on low cost bio- input production and utilization at village level.
- vi. Popularization of crop rotation and pulses inclusion in the cropping system.
- vii. Awareness and popularization of bio-fencing and trap crops.
- viii. Advocating Integrated Farming System.
- ix. Encouraging vertical farming with Hydroponics, Aeroponics or Mushroom cultivation.
- x. Mass awareness of government schemes.

Conclusion

Ultimately, while the Khet Bachao Abhiyan sets the right long-term vision for Indian agriculture, its true success depends on whether the government can seamlessly provide affordable

biological alternatives while managing the immediate physical needs of the farmers.

The overarching objective is to prove to farmers that sustainable, soil-friendly agriculture isn't

just good for the environment- it reduces their input costs and makes their farms more profitable in the long run.

