



PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU
(Research Unit)
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Government of India



World Soil Day (December 05)

Over 22 crore Soil Health Cards distributed so far

(Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare)

December 05, 2022

“To save the soil, we have focused on five main things. First- How to make the soil chemical free. Second- How to save the organisms that live in the soil, which are called Soil Organic Matter in technical language. Third- How to maintain soil moisture, how to increase the availability of water till it. Fourth- How to remove the damage that is happening to the soil due to less groundwater. And fifth, how to stop the continuous erosion of soil due to the reduction of forests.”

- [Prime Minister Narendra Modi](#)

WORLD SOIL DAY

World Soil Day (WSD) is celebrated annually on December 05 to highlight the importance of healthy soil and promote sustainable management of soil resources. The theme for this year's World Soil Day is '[Soils: Where Food Begins](#)'¹. WSD is a unique platform that celebrates soils and engages citizens around the world to improve soil health.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has been taking the lead in the promotion of sustainable soil management through its Global Soil Partnership. Members and multiple stakeholders work together as a coalition of the willing for soils.



¹ <https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/soils-where-food-begins>

NEED FOR HEALTHY SOIL

Soils are essential for life on Earth but are threatened by multiple forms of degradation. Nutrient imbalance has been identified as one of the top ten threats to soil health worldwide, with negative environmental, social and economic effects. When crops are harvested, nutrients are removed from the soil. Furthermore, the underuse, misuse, or overuse of fertilizers increases greenhouse gas emissions, degrades soil and water resources and induces potential harm to animals and humans. Currently, two-thirds of the world's population is at risk of nutrient deficiency.² **Balancing the many ecosystem services provided by soil with the need for enhanced food production is the central challenge of sustainable soil management.**

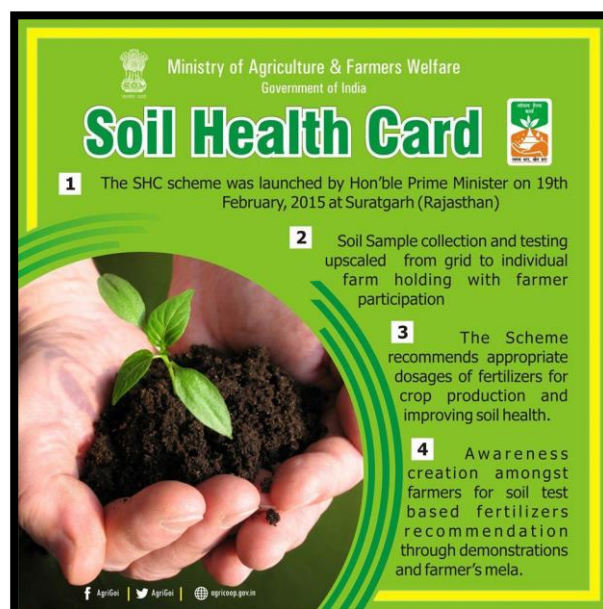
INDIA'S EFFORTS TOWARDS IMPROVING SOIL QUALITY

India has the second-largest [arable land resource in the world](#)³. With 20 agri-climatic regions, all the 15 major climates in the world exist in India. The country also has 46 of the 60 soil types in the world.

SOIL HEALTH CARD

Understanding the importance of fertile soils for the farmers of India, [Prime Minister Narendra Modi](#)⁴ launched the [Soil Health Card \(SHC\) scheme](#)⁵ on February 19, 2015 from Suratgarh, Rajasthan.

On the occasion, the Prime Minister gave the slogan: "*Swasth Dharaa, Khet Haraa.*" - Healthy Earth, Green Farm. Referring to the song "Vande Mataram," he said that in order to achieve a land that is truly "Sujalam, Suphalam," it is necessary to nurture the soil. Prime Minister added that the **Soil Health Card scheme** is a step towards fulfilling this dream.



[The scheme](#) has been introduced to assist State Governments to issue [soil health cards](#) to all farmers in the country. The Soil Health Card is a printed report that provides information to farmers on the **nutrient status** of their soil and **recommendation on the appropriate dosage of nutrients to be applied for improving soil health and its fertility.**

Benefits of the Soil Health Card Scheme⁶

- ❖ Under the scheme, soil is tested and a report is provided to farmers to help them decide which crops to cultivate and which ones to skip.

² [Agenda_WSD2022.pdf \(fao.org\)](#)

³ <https://www.ibef.org/industry/agriculture-presentation>

⁴ <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=115589>

⁵ <https://soilhealth.dac.gov.in/>

⁶ [Soil Health Card| National Portal of India](#)

- ❖ The authorities monitor the soil on a regular basis and provide a report to farmers once in three years so that they always have updated data about their soil.
- ❖ The Government also employs experts to help the farmers in carrying out the corrective measures as per the SHC.

Key Achievements

- ❖ **Soil Health Cards distributed⁷**: 22 crore Soil Health Cards distributed to farmers across the country (as on November, 2022).
- ❖ **Under the Model Village Programme (2019- 20)**, 19.64 lakh land holding-based soil health cards have been distributed to farmers across the country as on August 05, 2022.
- ❖ **Setting up / strengthening of soil testing laboratories**: Apart from SHC, Government is also implementing **Soil Health Management (SHM) scheme** to augment soil samples testing capacity in the country through setting up / strengthening of soil testing laboratories. **11,818 soil testing labs** (499 static, 113 mobile, 8811 minilabs and 2395 village level labs) have been sanctioned to the states so far.
- ❖ **Organization of demonstrations, trainings and farmer melas**: Since 2015, around **6.45 lakh demonstrations, 93781 farmer's trainings and 7425 farmers' melas and 79 workshops** have been organized/conducted through the State Governments under the Scheme at Panchayat and village level.



Soil Health Cards
Transforming Farms With
A Blend Of Science & Technology

**Nationwide Program To Improve Soil Health
Completes 7 Successful Years**

- Soil Health Card contains information on soil type, nutrients, water & fertilizers
- Deeper knowledge of soil helps in yielding crops and increased productivity
- Awareness creation amongst farmers for soil test based fertilizers recommendations



मेरा देश बदल रहा है
आगे बढ़ रहा है

**PROSPEROUS FARMERS
FOR A PROSPEROUS INDIA**

Transforming India
#TransformingIndia

THEN
UNCERTAIN CROP YIELD

NOW
OPTIMUM CROP YIELD BY USING
SOIL HEALTH CARD

⁷ [AU2256.pdf \(pqars.nic.in\)](https://pqars.nic.in/AU2256.pdf)

NATURAL FARMING TO MAKE SOIL CHEMICAL-FREE

To promote natural farming, the Central Government has approved the [National Mission on Natural Farming](#)⁸ as a separate scheme with an expenditure of Rs. 1,584 crores. In 2021, an additional area of 4.78 lakh hectares has been brought under natural farming in 17 States. Under the **Namami Gange programme**, the project of natural farming is going on along the banks of the Ganges.

RAIN WATER CONSERVATION FOR ENHANCED SOIL MOISTURE

The Government of India is connecting the people of the country with water conservation through campaigns like **Catch the Rain**. In March 2022, a campaign to conserve 13 big rivers has also started in the country. This campaign is a step forward towards increasing soil moisture and also enhancing the availability to water to till the soil.

With an objective to conserve water for future, government of India launched the **Mission Amrit Sarovar** on [April 24, 2022](#). It aims to develop and rejuvenate 75 water bodies in each district of the country. So far, [over 25,000 Amrit Sarovars](#) have been completed, reflecting the collective commitment towards rainwater conservation.



ATAL BHUJAL YOJANA TO IMPROVE GROUNDWATER AVAILABILITY

Atal Bhujal Yojana (ATAL JAL) is being implemented since [April 01, 2020](#)⁹, in 8,565 Gram Panchayats of 80 districts in seven States, namely, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh with an aim to improve community led sustainable ground water management, mainly through convergence among various ongoing Central and State schemes. It also aims at bringing about behavioural change at the community level through awareness programs and capacity building for fostering sustainable ground water management. This scheme is a major step in controlling soil degradation which occurs due to declining ground water level.

AFFORESTATION TO PREVENT SOIL EROSION

In the last 10 years, around 3 million hectares of forest cover has been added in India, enhancing the combined forest cover to almost one-fourth of the country's total area. India is also on track

⁸ <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1880936>

⁹ <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1814501>

to achieve its national commitment of Land degradation neutrality. Efforts are also under way towards restoring 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030, as highlighted by the Prime Minister at the UN 'High-Level Dialogue on Desertification, Land degradation and Drought' in 2021.¹⁰

References:

- <https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/soils-where-food-begins>
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Video References:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3WB6D0sdcAg>

AG/HP/RC/MZ/SPN/SK

¹⁰ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1727045>