



Swachh Bharat Mission and Swachhata Pakhwada 2026: The Role of Krishi Vigyan Kendras

Kapil Deb Nath*, Pranabesh Barman, Pradip Rajbongshi, Pallavi Deka and Himadri Rabha
 Krishi Vigyan Kendra, AAU, Udalguri, Lalpool, Assam, 784514
 Email: kapil.debnath@aau.ac.in

Received: 01 October 2026
 Revised: 02 October 2026
 Accepted: 04 October 2026
 Published online: 05 October 2026

Article ID: SR01172

Citation: Nath, K. D., Barman, P., Rajbongshi, P., Deka, P., & Rabha, H. (2026). Swachh Bharat Mission and Swachhata Pakhwada 2026: The Role of Krishi Vigyan Kendras. *Scientia Review*, 2(10), 51-53

Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi commonly quoted as saying, "Sanitation is more important than independence." Over a century later, the same philosophy was embedded as national policy when the Government of India rolled out the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) on 2nd October 2014, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. What started as a cleaning program has become a mass movement, a Jan Andolan, that has reached homes, schools, workplaces, farms and markets all over the country.

The goal is to keep it running with continuous campaigns around major milestones. The most prominent campaign inside governmental agencies are Swachhata Pakhwada, a two-week period dedicated to hygiene. Pakhwada is a chance to link sanitation with agriculture for agricultural research and extension framework. District-based agricultural science centers, Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) are crucial to this project as they directly engage farmers, agricultural women, rural youth and students.

Swachh Bharat Initiative: From Sanitation Facilities to ODF Plus

The Swachh Bharat Mission has two components, SBM-Grameen (SBM-G) for rural sanitation and solid waste management Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation and SBM-Urban (SBM-U) for urban regions. Gandhi's spectacles are perhaps the most well-known symbol of public policy in India.

Phase I (2014-2019) has one big, ambitious aim to end open defecation. By 2019, over 100 million residential latrines were built in rural areas and all villages were declared as Open Defecation Free (ODF).

Phase II of SBM-G, approved in February 2020, had a budget of about Rs 1,40,881 crore, and changed the focus from toilet construction to sustaining hygiene standards. The aim is to make sure that every community is ODF Plus, meaning it is sustaining its ODF status while handling solid and liquid waste effectively. Hamlets rise three tiers:

- Ambitious – takes care of solid or liquid waste.
- Rising – manages solid and liquid waste.

- The model manages both waste streams, maintains public areas clean and displays ODF Plus communications.

SBM-Urban 2.0 (2021-2026) works in tandem toward "Garbage Free" Urban areas. Restrooms are currently evaluated using the FACES criteria: Functional, Accessible, Clean, Eco-friendly, and Safe.

As per the Swachhata Hi Seva 2026 report, the progress as of September 2026 is as follows.

Indicator (rural India)	Status, Sept 2026
ODF Plus villages	5.69 lakh
ODF Plus Model villages	5.25 lakh
Villages with solid waste management	5.38 lakh
Villages with liquid waste management	5.65 lakh
Individual household toilets built	12.22 crore
GOBARdhan biogas plants operational	1,314 in 582 districts

Launched in 2017, the annual Swachhata Hi Seva (SHS) project continues to generate high public interest. SHS 2026 was launched on 17th September 2026 with the subject "Swachhata Mein Sahbhag; Swachh Bharat, Viksit Bharat" highlighting the significance of Jan Bhagidari (people's participation). It also helps in

comprehending the newly notified Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026 which stress on source segregation and recovery of resources.

Swachhata Pakhwada 2026

Swachhata Pakhwada was started in 2016 so that cleanliness is not a one-off thing. Every ministry and agency has a timetable for a given fortnight in an annual calendar controlled by the agency of Drinking Water and Sanitation. The two-week period highlights the necessity of strict hygiene in its workplaces, educational institutions and the communities it serves.

There will be a number of Pakhwadas by 2026. Theirs was celebrated by the Ministry of Electronics and IT and its departments from February 1 to February 15, 2026. Department of Fertilizers observed Swachhata Pakhwada-2026 from 01.09.2026 to 15.09.2026 stressing on physical and digital hygiene, weeding out of old papers, disposal of trash and electronic waste and redressal of pending complaints.

The agricultural research and education system observes the Pakhwada traditionally from 16th to 31st December. ICAR institutes and KVKs observed Swachhata Pakhwada-2025 during the period with Kisan Diwas on December 23 as a highlight. As per the settled practice, ICAR institutes and KVKs will participate in Swachhata Pakhwada 2026 from December 16 to December 31, 2026. It builds on the momentum of Swachhata Hi Seva 2026 and its focus on community participation.

Here is a typical day routine in an agricultural institute or KVK:

Day(s)	Activity
Day 1	Swachhata pledge by all staff; banners and publicity
Days 2-3	Cleaning of offices, labs, farms, record rooms; weeding out old files and scrap
Days 4-5	Cleaning drives in adopted villages, markets, bus stops and public places
Days 6-7	Swachhata awareness in schools: essay, drawing and quiz competitions
Day 8 (23 Dec)	Kisan Diwas: farmer-scientist interaction on clean and safe farming
Days 9-10	Farm waste to wealth: composting and vermicomposting demonstrations
Days 11-13	Plantation drives, anti-plastic campaign, water-body cleaning
Days 14-15	Awareness on crop residue management, safe pesticide container disposal
Last day	Valedictory function, awards, reporting on the Swachhata portal

Why Cleanliness Matters for Agriculture

Sanitation and agriculture are closely linked in rural India. The countryside produces large lots of agricultural waste, animal manure, food waste and sewerage. But if left unchecked it becomes a problem: burning stubble pollutes the air, dung

heaps attract insects, stagnant water spreads disease. Land and water are polluted by plastic sheeting and abandoned pesticide receptacles.

Properly handled, the very same garbage is a valuable resource. Excrement and residue are transformed into compost, vermicompost and biogas. Culinary gardens may be irrigated with recycled water. The significance of agricultural science is visible in the idea of waste to wealth, which is reflected in the SHS 2026 initiative Swachhata Se Samriddhi and GOBARdhan program. It is precisely the domain in which Krishi Vigyan Kendras operate.

Interventions Carried Out by Krishi Vigyan Kendras

Krishi Vigyan Kendras are agricultural science institutions funded by ICAR. There are more than 730 centers in the districts of the country. Each has a body of experts in agronomy, horticulture, soil science, animal science, plant protection, agricultural engineering and domestic science. They make Pakhwada an agricultural campaign instead than just an office cleaning drive, using their ongoing activities in farmer training, demonstration and interaction with adopted communities. Their interventions are grouped into eight broad domains.

1. Cleanliness of the KVK campus and office

KVKs come from the inside. Personnel accept the Swachhata pledge and disinfect offices, labs, training facilities, dorms, storage areas and educational farms. For demonstration purposes, units such as dairy, poultry, fishing, vermicomposting units are cleaned and disinfected. Obsolete records are destroyed and decommissioned machinery, garbage and electronic rubbish are disposed of following proper procedures, in compliance with record retention policies. Many KVKs are striving for digital tidiness, archiving outdated electronic files and sprucing up databases.

2. Converting farm waste into wealth

This is the signature contribution of the KVKs. Researchers show vermicomposting, NADEP pit composting and rapid composting using microbial decomposer cultures. Agriculturalists are able to turn crop remains, weeds, animal dung and kitchen garbage into nutritious fertilizer within a few weeks. KVKs deliver earthworms, decomposer packs and economical vermibeds. Training rural youth and women from Self-Help Groups in vermicomposting enterprise management linking sanitation with financial benefits.

3. Management of crop residues and termination of stubble burning

KVKs working on activities to counter burning of paddy & wheat residue. They show on-site residue management using equipment such as Happy Seeder and mulchers, residue integration with decomposer sprays and use of straw for mushroom cultivation, animal bedding and feed. Meetings of farmer-scientists and field days have shown that leaving leftovers on the field increases the organic carbon in the soil and saves fertilizer.

4. Animal manure, biogas and sanitary livestock enclosures

Animal science professionals provide advice on good shed management, proper drainage and sanitary milk production procedures. KVKs promote family-sized biogas plants and link farmers to the GOBARDhan initiative. This allows dung to be converted to cooking gas, and the slurry to be converted into organic fertilizer. It demonstrates cost-effective improvements: slurry-based compost and azolla culture.

5. Safe use of pesticides and disposal of pesticide containers

Plant protection experts provide information sessions on the sensible application of pesticides, the correct use of protective clothing and the safe storage of pesticides. Agriculturalists are told to thrice rinse and perforate empty containers, rather than reuse them or dump them in waterways. Integrated pest management, biopesticides and pheromone traps are recommended to lower the chemical burden on soil and water.

6. Household sanitation, kitchen gardens and aquatic resources

Home science experts work with women in agriculture on home cleanliness, potable water, hygiene habits and menstrual health. KVKs encourage the creation of nutrition kitchen gardens with the help of kitchen gray water for irrigation and help the households to create soak pits and compost pits. Maintenance of village ponds, drainage system and aquatic bodies is done in association with the Gram Panchayats. Rainwater harvesting and agricultural reservoirs are components of sustainable water management.

7. Villages free of plastic and full with greenery

KVKs are leading the fight against single-use plastics, distributing cloth and jute bags, and collecting plastic waste from markets and farm locations. Plantation activities are carried out in campuses, school premises and common village areas with fruits, fodder and shade plants.

They're spreading the word about proper disposal of plastic mulch and seed packets.

8. Community Engagement and Awareness

The KVKs spread their message in rural areas through rallies, wall paintings, drama, cleaning pledges and signature campaigns. Educational institutions organize competitions of essays, drawings, slogans and quizzes. As part of the standard agricultural training and information flows, sanitation courses are delivered through farmer WhatsApp groups, community radio and social media. Kisan Diwas, observed on December 23, is dedicated to honoring farmers who keep their farms and villages clean. Activities are photographed and logged on the Swachhata site to ensure that progress is tracked.

Impact, Challenges and the Way Forward

The KVK system has proved to be beneficial as hygiene is linked with the variables that are of prime importance to farmers: lower expenses and higher revenue. A farmer who is selling vermicompost or growing mushrooms on straw or cooking with biogas has an incentive to continue with the activity once the two weeks are over.

Obstacles remain. There are still lot of efforts going on during the Pakhwada period, the machinery for residue management is too expensive for small scale farmers and the linkages to markets for compost are not adequate. The way forward is to consider Swachhata as a continuous KVK requirement throughout the year. This includes integrating waste to wealth components in all training sessions, supporting compost and biogas initiatives, working with Gram Panchayats for ODF Plus Model designation and evaluating outcomes such as reduction in residue burning and compost generated.

Conclusion

The Swachh Bharat Mission is moving from toilet construction to habit formation, from Open Defecation Free (ODF) to ODF Plus. Swachhata Pakhwada 2026 is yet another step in this direction, which embodies the spirit of "Swachhata Mein Sahbhag". Krishi Vigyan Kendras have demonstrated that a clean neighborhood goes with a prosperous agriculture. With agricultural waste turning into compost, manure turning into electricity and every farmer turning into a Swachhagrahi, the vision of a Clean India and a Developed India comes closer.