



## ECONOMICS

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## The Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh (BPKK) Program Needs Citizen Participation

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Initiatives by the Union and State governments, private sector, not-for-profit sector, and individual citizens are poised to usher in wide ranging transformation of India's agricultural sector in the next decade. The focus of agriculture policies has shifted from mitigating hunger to mitigating malnutrition, while enhancing profitability and incomes of those engaged in agriculture and related activities; and to making India a major agriculture power globally.

Overarching premises behind these initiatives are expanding economic freedom of the farmers and others involved in the agriculture sector; introducing new technologies in all aspects of agriculture activities, including technology of the Third Industrial Revolution, based on Internet of Things <sup>1</sup> and harnessing traditional knowledge of India about crop diversity and nutrition; and accelerating hitherto neglected public investments in necessary infrastructure to make India a major agriculture power globally.

As one of the elements of the wide-ranging initiatives, the Indian government launched the Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh (BPKK) project in November 2019. The BPKK project objectives and methods deserve wider dissemination and understanding than it has received. This is the motivation for this column.

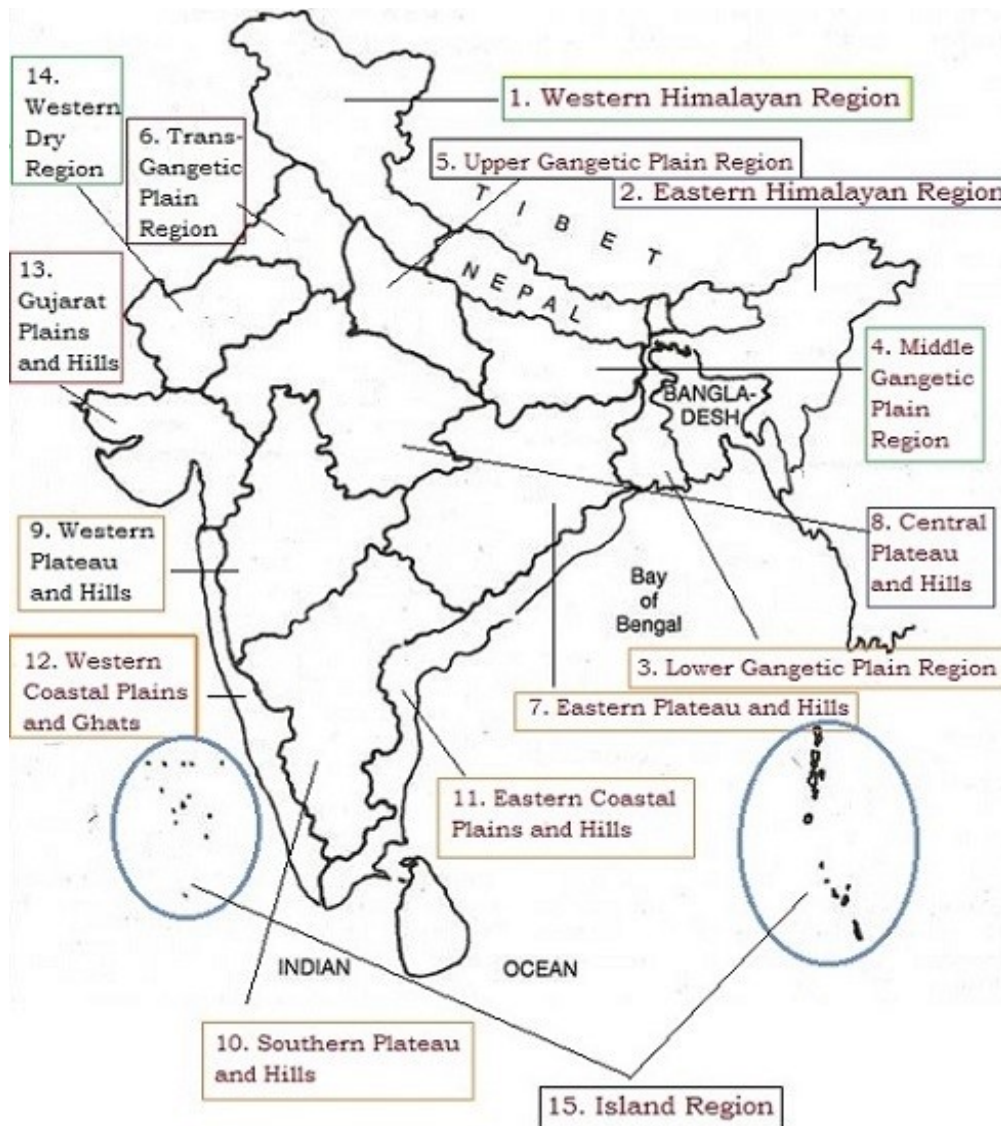
### **The BPKK project Components**

This project has two components – Development of a Food Atlas and Documentation of promising practices for Jan-Andolan for POSHAN Abhiyaan.

The Agro-Food Atlas is to act as a repository of diverse crops across 127 Agro-climatic zones of the country having three parts- crops currently being grown, agro-ecological conditions (soil, organic carbon content, ground water availability etc) and guidance on how a greater diversity of crops could be encouraged in a particular district or block to promote dietary diversity and nutrition.

In consultation with Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the project team is to select around 12 high focus states which are representative of the geographical, social, economic, cultural and structural diversities of India. In each of the states or group of states the team will identify a local partner organization which has relevant work experience in Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) and nutrition for developing the food atlas.

The country has been broadly divided into fifteen agricultural regions based on agro- climatic features, particularly soil type, climate including temperature and rainfall and its variation and water resources. The map of these regions is given below <sup>3</sup>.



The project includes diverse data sources like National Sample Survey, Agri-Census, Soil Health Cards, ISRO's Advanced Wide Field Sensor (AWiFS) and National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA's) Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectro-Radio meter. The project also documents social, behavioural and cultural practices that promote and reinforce healthy dietary behaviour.

Identification of promising practices with the help of a multi-disciplinary group of experts and developments of a tool kit to disseminate best strategies for Social and Behavioural Change Communication, specific to population groups in those regions is also a part of BPKK.

### Monitoring, Evaluation (M & E) and Technical Support

The task of implementation of the BPKK is to be carried out through the Technical Support Unit (TSU) established at NITI Aayog which, in addition to the M&E, will also provide research, policy and technical support to the Project.

The BPKK project is to be complemented by the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojna (PMMVY) to address malnutrition prevalent in the country<sup>4</sup>.

The PMMVY provides partial compensation for the wage loss in terms of cash incentives so that the woman can take adequate rest before and after delivery of the first living child. The cash incentive provided is expected to lead to improved health seeking behaviour amongst the

Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers (PW&LM).

**Sharing Recipes:** As a part of the Project, the government has invited sharing of recipes of the family's favourite traditional dishes on <sup>5</sup>.

This will help educate the people of the rich dietary tradition and variety of nutritious dishes available, and preserve local customs. Citizen participation, including by women's groups, is essential for rich and diversified content.

Nutritionists and other scientists also need to conduct research on these recipes to make the general public more aware of the nutrition content of these recipes. This in turn could help in addressing malnutrition

### Concluding Remarks

There have several ambitious initiatives by the India government in recent years in the social sector. However, the data reporting, collection, accessibility, and encouragement of the use of data analytics and other large data tools to undertake policy relevant empirical research has been less than robust.

BPKK and PMMVY do deserve wider dissemination to help address malnutrition in the country are relatively recent. The data related aspects noted above should be in-built in their schemes if their full potential is to be realized.

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX3M8Ka9vUA&feature=youtu.be>  
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2. <https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1595250>  
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3. <https://www.drishtiiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-analysis/bharatiya-poshan-krisi-kosh0>  
(<https://www.drishtiiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-analysis/bharatiya-poshan-krisi-kosh0>) (Accessed on 6 September 2020)
4. [https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/PMMVY%20Scheme%20Implemetation%20Guidelines%20\\_0.pdf](https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/PMMVY%20Scheme%20Implemetation%20Guidelines%20_0.pdf)  
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5. [innovate.mygov.in/poshanrecipe](http://innovate.mygov.in/poshanrecipe) (<http://innovate.mygov.in/poshanrecipe>)

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