

# *Shree Anna Abhiyan – Odisha Millet Mission: Reviving Nutritional Traditions*

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## **Keywords**

Climate resilient agriculture, Millet, Odisha, Tribal farmer, Sustainable development goal.

## *How to cite this article:*

Dash, S., Biswal, S. and Behera, J. 2025. Shree Anna Abhiyan – Odisha Millet Mission: Reviving Nutritional Traditions. *Vigyan Varta* 6 (5): 144-146.

## **ABSTRACT**

The Shree Anna Abhiyan – Odisha Millet Mission is an innovative program introduced by the Odisha Government aimed at revitalizing millet farming and enhancing nutritional security, sustainable agriculture, and rural livelihoods. Launched in 2017 and further developed under the national Shree Anna initiative in conjunction with the International Year of Millets 2023, the mission prioritizes the reintroduction of traditional millets into agricultural practices and eating habits, especially in tribal and rainfed areas. Employing a collaborative approach that involves farmers, women's self-help groups, NGOs, and research institutions, the mission promotes organic farming, value addition, market access, and the incorporation of millets into public nutrition initiatives such as the Mid-Day Meal and ICDS programs. By tackling both ecological and nutritional obstacles, the Odisha Millet Mission has become a model for inclusive and climate-resilient agricultural advancement, receiving national acclaim for its innovative and community-focused strategy.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In recent times, there has been a heightened global emphasis on climate-resilient agriculture and the cultivation of nutrition-rich crops, which has renewed interest in

millets. India, known for its extensive history of growing millets, has been at the forefront of efforts to bring these traditional grains back into mainstream diets. A notable initiative in

this effort is the Shree Anna Abhiyan – Odisha Millet Mission (OMM), an innovative program initiated by the Government of Odisha aimed at encouraging millet cultivation and consumption throughout the state.

### Background and Inception

Launched in 2017, the Odisha Millet Mission is a project under the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment, Government of Odisha. It started as a focused approach to tackle challenges related to nutrition, food security, climate resilience, and the economic improvement of tribal farmers in rainfed regions (Govt. of Odisha, 2023). The initiative gained renewed energy in 2023, following the Government of India's declaration of 2023 as the International Year of Millets, promoting the campaign under the title "Shree Anna Abhiyan."

### Objectives of the Mission

The Odisha Millet Mission has a multi-dimensional goal:

- **Revive traditional millet-based food systems**
- **Increase millet production** through sustainable and organic farming methods
- **Ensure fair market prices** and create value chains for millet-based products
- **Improve household-level nutrition**, particularly among tribal and rural communities
- **Promote climate-resilient agriculture** in drought-prone and rainfed areas (Rajasri, 2024).

### Implementation and Scope

The mission started in **30 blocks across 7 districts** and has now expanded to over **177 blocks in 30 districts**, involving 1484 villages

and 244736 farmers covering a wide range of tribal and backward regions (Rajasri, 2024). It is a collaborative effort involving:

- **Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)**
- **Women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs)**
- **NGOs and Civil Society Organizations**
- **Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs)**
- **Academic and research institutions**

Farmers are provided support through seed kits, training in sustainable agricultural practices, community-level processing units, and market linkages.

### Key Millets Promoted

Millet name (English)	Hindi	Odia	Scientific Name
Pearl millet	Bajra	Bajra	Pennisetum glaucum
Sorghum	Jowar	Juara	Sorghum bicolor
Kodo millet	Koden, kodra	Kodua	Paspalum scrobiculatum
Finger millet	Ragi, Nachani, Mundua	Mandia	Eleusine coracona
Foxtail millet	Kangni, Kakum	Kanghu, Kangam, Kora	Setaria italica
Banyard millet	Jhangora, Sanwa	Khira	Echinochloa sp.

These grains are not only drought-tolerant but also rich in essential nutrients like calcium, iron, and dietary fiber, making them an ideal solution to address both environmental and nutritional challenges.

### Innovative Approaches

#### 1. Inclusion in ICDS and MDM Schemes

Millets are being reintroduced into the Mid-Day Meals (MDM) and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), ensuring that children and expectant mothers reap the benefits of their nutritional value (Govt. of Odisha, 2023).

## 2. Agro-Ecological Methods

Farmers are educated in natural and low-input agricultural practices, which lessens reliance on synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

## 3. Marketing and Value Addition

The mission aids in the processing and marketing of millet-based products such as ready-to-cook mixtures, biscuits, laddus, and more. Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and local entrepreneurs are involved in the value chain, enhancing rural livelihoods.

## 4. Community Participation

The mission prioritizes a grassroots approach, promoting community-driven planning and execution to ensure cultural acceptance and long-term sustainability (Rajasri.,2024).

### Impact and Recognition

- Over **1.5 lakh farmers** directly benefited as of 2024 (Govt. of Odisha,2024).
- Increase in **millet acreage and yields** across districts like Koraput, Kandhamal, and Rayagada.
- Improved **household consumption** of millets in tribal regions.
- National and international recognition for its **holistic and inclusive model**.

The **Odisha Millet Mission** has been hailed as a model for other states and countries, aligning perfectly with the goals of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**,

particularly those related to zero hunger, sustainable agriculture, and climate action.

## CONCLUSION

The **Shree Anna Abhiyan – Odisha Millet Mission** is more than just an agricultural initiative; it is a cultural and nutritional revival. It exemplifies how traditional knowledge, when combined with modern policy and grassroots implementation, can address some of the most pressing issues of our times. As millets find their way back into kitchens and markets, Odisha stands as a ray of hope and innovation in India's journey toward a more sustainable and nutritious future.

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