

# Millet crops on their way out, say experts

Staff Reporter

**BHUBANESWAR:** Farmers from Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand here alleged that millets crops were disappearing from food menu of people and agricultural field due to lack of encouragement from governments.

Experts, civil society members and farmers said since the governments were giving excess importance to rice in public distribution system, millet crops were on their way out from field.

"Millets, which have high nutritional values, used to be the staple food for farmers

especially tribal people. As poor farmers traditionally till uplands, cultivation of millets suits them," said Prasant Mohanty of NIRMAN, a city-based voluntary organisation.

Mr. Mohanty said with gradual decrease in demand for millets, the crop was also vanishing from the land.

## Change in pattern

At the Eastern India Convention of Millet crop held here recently, panels discussed the changing land use patterns in eastern India and analysed ways to reverse the trend to widen

millet-landscape.

Farmers and activists demanded that the governments must include millets in the public distribution system and in all the public food programmes like mid-day meal scheme.

One of the most important demands that was made after detail deliberation was that all those farmers who are practicing millet farming, should be given bonuses for their contribution to biodiversity, water conservation, maintaining food nutritional standards and complying to climate change responses.

*Page-3*  
*Hindu*  
*Dec-18/21/11*