



## The Millet Revolution: Economic Impact of the Odisha Millets Mission (OMM)

\* Abhishek Priyadarshi

OUAT, Bhubaneswar-751003, Odisha, India

\*Corresponding Author's email: [abhishekpinu02@gmail.com](mailto:abhishekpinu02@gmail.com)

In a world increasingly threatened by climate instability and nutritional deficits, a quiet revolution is taking place in the tribal heartlands and coastal plains of Odisha. What began in 2017 as a pilot project in 30 blocks has evolved into the **Odisha Millets Mission (OMM)**—a globally recognized model that has fundamentally altered the economic landscape for smallholder farmers and rural women.<sup>1</sup> By reviving "Shree Anna" (the mother of all grains), Odisha is not just reclaiming its agricultural heritage; it is building a resilient, multi-billion dollar economy centered on sustainability and social equity.

### Transforming Farm-Gate Economics

Before the mission, millet was often a "forgotten crop," grown primarily for subsistence. Today, it is a high-value commodity. The OMM has achieved this through a comprehensive support system that ensures profitability at every stage of the crop cycle.

- Yield & Productivity:** Through the "System of Millets Intensification" (SMI) and improved agronomic practices, ragi (finger millet) yields increased from **5.79 quintals/hectare** in 2018 to over **12.72 quintals/hectare** by 2021.
- Income Growth:** The gross value of produce per farmer household has more than tripled. Data shows an increase from **₹3,957 to ₹12,486** per household in early phase blocks, with some progressive farmers reporting profits of **₹10,000 per hectare** on previously fallow land.
- Price Security:** The State's commitment to procurement at **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** (approximately ₹4,500/quintal for Ragi in 2024-25) has eliminated the exploitation of farmers by middle-men.

### Empowering the "Millet Shakti": The Role of Women

Perhaps the most significant economic achievement of the OMM is its integration with **Mission Shakti**, Odisha's massive network of Women Self-Help Groups (WSHGs).

- Micro-Entrepreneurship:** Over 1,500 WSHGs are currently engaged in processing, value addition, and marketing. These women operate "Millet Shakti" cafes and tiffin centers, turning raw grains into cookies, pasta, and traditional snacks.
- Drudgery Reduction:** By providing 52+ pulverizers and threshing units to community groups, the mission has reduced the physical labor traditionally associated with millet processing, allowing women to focus on high-value entrepreneurial activities.
- Financial Independence:** SHG-run units have become hubs for local employment, providing rural women with a steady monthly income and greater decision-making power within their households.

### Creating a Sustainable Market Ecosystem

The OMM has successfully moved beyond "production-only" logic to create a circular economy where demand is fueled by government policy.

## Key Market Drivers

Initiative	Economic Impact
PDS Inclusion	Ragi is distributed through the Public Distribution System to over 50 lakh beneficiaries, creating a massive, guaranteed internal market.
Institutional Demand	Inclusion in ICDS (Anganwadi) and Mid-Day Meal schemes ensures constant demand while improving the health of the future workforce.
Branding & Exports	Through Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), Odisha millets are now reaching urban retail shelves and even international markets, fetching premium prices.

## A Global Blueprint for Climate Resilience

The OMM's economic impact is inseparable from its environmental benefits. Millets require 70% less water than rice and can withstand temperatures up to 64°C. In a state prone to cyclones and droughts, millets act as "natural insurance" for a farmer's investment. Recognized by the United Nations (FAO) and NITI Aayog, the Odisha model is being studied by other Indian states and African nations. It proves that a "bottom-up" approach—prioritizing tribal wisdom and local consumption—can lead to robust macroeconomic growth.

## Conclusion

The Odisha Millets Mission has proven that agriculture can be both a tool for poverty alleviation and a shield against climate change. By turning a neglected crop into a "power grain," Odisha has created a sustainable economic engine that empowers the most vulnerable members of society. As the state targets even wider expansion through 2027, the "Millet Revolution" stands as a testament to what is possible when policy is backed by community spirit.