



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GUWAHATI
SHORT ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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SHORT ABSTRACT

Following the food price rise in the 1990s and the subsequent food crisis, the political project of "food sovereignty" gained prominence through La Via Campesina, a farmers' movement advocating for the human right to food. The food crisis of the 2000s further energized farmers' movements against neoliberal policies, focusing on reviving local food systems. While food sovereignty has not taken deep root in India, certain 'lost crops' like millet are being reintroduced as resilient representatives of local food systems. Commercial enterprises are marketing millet-based products under the term "food sovereignty," positioning themselves as supporters of small farmers. Millets, a staple in rain-fed regions of India, have various uses but saw a decline in cultivation from the 1960s with the shift to high-yielding rice and wheat varieties. Recent years have seen a revival of millet cultivation with attention from governments, civil society, and commercial enterprises. Legislation like the National Food Security Act of 2013 has recognized millets as nutri-cereals. Women play a significant role in millet farming, crucial for its revival. Millet cultivation in tribal regions like Nagaland and Odisha has persisted, with organizations like Northeast Network (NEN) and the Odisha Millet Mission (OMM) leading revival efforts. This thesis examines millet revival in Nagaland and Odisha, comparing a state-supported model in Odisha with a community-driven approach in Nagaland. The study reveals both approaches resist corporate agriculture by acknowledging women's contributions, promoting local crops, and emphasizing community ownership. However, Odisha's top-down model benefits from bureaucratic support, while Nagaland's participatory approach suffers from a lack of state support and changing agrarian practices. The thesis concludes that state intervention is essential to protect farmers' livelihoods and promote food sovereignty, aligning with sustainable and inclusive agricultural practices.

