

# 'Govt needs to protect millet production areas'

**Our Bureau**

Hyderabad

The Governments should take measures to protect the millet production areas to promote biodiversity while supporting farmers engaged in growing dryland crops.

Kanneganti Ravi of Rythu Swarajya Vedika has pointed out that the millet area is dwindling in the traditional millet areas like Zaheerabad (Telangana) as the State Government was allotting the land for industrial zones.

## **MONOCROPPING ISSUES**

"When paddy farmers get a bonus of ₹500 a quintal, they shun other crops. This is resulting in monocropping and dwindling area for climate change resilient millet crops," he said.

He was talking on 'Climate change, millets, and ecosystem services' at a seminar on 'Stocktaking on advocacy for

millets' organised by the Millet Network of India here on Monday. The usage of chemical pesticides and consumption of water has gone up significantly. There is no scope for biodiversity," he said.

He also expressed concern about the increasing focus on diverting agricultural produce (such as maize) for industrial purposes.

## **LOW YIELD**

"The farmers growing crops other than paddy and cotton are not getting institutional credit. Farmers are discouraged to grow millets as yields of these crops are far lower than other crops," he said.

Vishala Vuyyala, Founder-CEO of Millet Bank, said that there was a huge need to promote mini entrepreneurs by equipping themselves with the skills required to start millet food production.

"If consumption of millets goes up, prices will increase," she said.