# COVID CURSED KANDHAMAL HALDI

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## INTRODUCTION

Kandhamal haldi (*Curcuma longa* L.) belongs to the ginger family of herbs. It is a perennial plant that needs considerable amount of rainfall to grow. Its name "kandhamal" comes from the Kandhamal district of Odisha where this specific herb is grown as the main cash crop. The tribals are economically backward hence they follow primitive practices without the use of chemical fertilizers. Therefore, it is organic out of consequence. The plant has a pseudo stem of height 90-100cm with few semi erect leaves. It bears white flowers and has light green (dorsal side) leaves with wavy margin. The cultivation begins in the summer months of April-May, It fruits during the month of September-October and the harvest is during December to February. It has a tart flavour with a slight bitterness in taste it is known for its medicinal and beautifying properties all over the globe and is an integral part of Ayurveda since time immemorial. It can be used to treat various diseases like anaemia, diabetes, and many other significantly, no doubts it has received major recognitions.

## GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

Kandhamal haldi is native to the kandhamal district (84-48° E longitude and 19-34° N to 20-54° latitude) of Odisha. With total area of 8,021 km2 at the altitude of 300 to 1100 m. It receives annual rainfall of 1,597 mm. and Minimum temperature (December) 1 °C (34 °F); maximum temperature (May) 35 °C (95 °F). It received GI tag by intellectual property rights in 2019.

## BENEFITS OF KANDHAMAL TURMERIC:

**1) Natural anti- inflammatory compound:** Curcumin has strong anti inflammatory properties corresponding to certain medical drugs. It has been known to block NF-kB; it's a molecule that turns on genes that cause inflammation.

**2) Bioactive compound containing medicinal properties:** Turmeric has high anti carcinogenic and medicinal properties hence it is used for preparing many ointments, medicine, beauty creams, medicinal soap etc.

**3) Increases antioxidant capacity of the body:** Curcumin boosts the antioxidative enzymes in the body. These enzymes reduce the aging process and many diseases

**4) Reduces the risk of brain diseases:** Curcumin boosts level of neurotrophic factor, this is known to reduce depression, improves memory, Alzheimer's disease, epilepsy etc.

**5) Reduces the risk of heart diseases:** Most of the deaths in the world are caused due to heart diseases. Turmeric enhances the flow in the blood vessels thus reducing clotting in vessels and hence lowering the risk toward the heart diseases.


## GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (GI)

**A geographical indication (GI) is defined as a name or sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin.**


In India, the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act of 1999 administers the registration of geographical indications. They are used for agricultural products, foodstuffs, handicrafts, and industrial products. Kandhamal Haldi is a variety of turmeric grown in the Kandhamal district of Odisha. It has earned the Geographical indication (GI) tag from Intellectual Property India. It got recognition on the State's Foundation Day (i.e.1st April 2019).It has been placed under Class-30 type.

Applicant: Kandhamal Apex Spices Association for Marketing (KASAM) is a registered society which is involved in processing and marketing of spices and other products.

GI tag is considered to help the producers to differentiate their products from competing products in the market. It also enables them to build a reputation around their products which often fetch a premium price.

## COVID-19 BRUNT

The cultivation for turmeric is done on 13,000 hectares in Kandhamal.

### • Kandhamal Turmeric Production 2019 vs. 2020

In 2019, 1.23 lakh metric tonne wet turmeric and 25,000 metric tonne dry turmeric were produced. And in 2020, overall 26,000 metric tonne of turmeric was produced. Though the farmers had a bumper yield but 2020 had a different plan for them. Around March when farmers were getting ready to sell their produce, the nation went into lockdown in the wake of the pandemic .They had no backup plan so they had to face the complications .

### • Deceitful traders

Traders took an advantage of the COVID-19 restrictions and quoted per kg turmeric price at below ₹40 whereas Kandhamal Apex Spices association for Marketing (KASAM), the government-backed cooperative agency, offered ₹60 per kg.Eventually farmers started selling at the rate of ₹30-35 as distress sale.

### •Restriction in vehicular movement

The fear of catching the infection prevented outside traders from visiting Kandhamal this year. Due to

pandemic, most of the state borders were shut and vehicles could not be used for transportation of products.

### • Obstacle in organic Certification

The tests which were required for certification of Kandhamal Haldi being organic product were not carried out due to lockdown. This lead to disruption in procurement of the product and hence farmer's faced major loss.

## DISCONTINUATION OF FOREIGN TRADE

Kandhamal Haldi is popular in foreign countries and 95 per cent of KASAM's procurement is exported to US, Europe, Australia, Japan and Korea. But the lockdown has hindered KASAM from exporting the product to other countries leading to monetary losses. Several problems of the farmers also include lack of market linkage and compensation, shortage of manpower, exploitation by the middlemen and occurrence of natural disasters. Despite turmeric of previous year remaining unsold, farmers have already advanced into another turmeric cultivation season.

## CONCLUSION

Being wholly organic, Kandhamal Haldi offers a commendable flavor and aroma but failed to fetch a premium market price for the farmers. With the allotment of GI tag came the hope of profit which soon went in vain because of Covid19. Though the farmers had bumper yield of 26000 MT of turmeric this year, KASAM could only procure 20% of it in the pandemic. To resolve the enigma development of infrastructure and storage structures is essential. Active participation of government can make the farmers aware about farm technology and entrepreneurship. Introduction of such policies that inform about the proper price and improved varieties.