

GI Tags and Its Contribution in Indian Agriculture

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Introduction

Geographical indications (GI) refer to a type of intellectual property (IP) protection which identifies goods with a geographical region. The GI tagging is attributed in such a manner that quality, reputation and other salient features of the commodity are linked to the location of origin. The GI tag for a product can be used only by legitimate users and the residents of the territory of origin. GI tags may be obtained for agricultural products, handicrafts, textiles, manufactured goods, foodstuffs etc. The given GI tag may be in the form of a geographical name or a figurative representation or a combination of these two. The tag assigned to a product should convey its geographical origin. GI plays an important role in promoting the conservation of biodiversity among the rural population.

Graphical indications

GI is defined in Article 22.1 of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement as "indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a member, or a region or locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographical origin". In general, a GI is recognized in the "country of origin" in which the area referred by the GI tag is located. The registered proprietors or authorized users of GI might include associations of persons or statutory authorities. The authorized users can prevent anybody from using the GI tag on products, which are not originating from the designated location. Thus, GI helps to ensure comprehensive and effective protection to GI tagged goods. In India, the Geographical Indications (GI) of Goods (Regulation and Protection) Act was passed in the 1999 to facilitate registration and protection of intellectual property in relation to goods. The Act defined GI under Section 1(e) as, "Geographical Indication in relation to goods, means an indication which identifies such goods as agricultural goods, natural goods or manufactured goods as originating or manufactured in the territory of a country or a region or locality in

that territory, where a given quality reputation or other characteristic of such good is essentially attributed to its geographical origin and in case where such goods are manufactured goods, one of the activities of either the production or of processing or preparation of the goods concerned takes place in such territory, region or locality as the case may be.

Agriculture items with GI tags

All GI tagged items are divided into 12 categories—

1. Agriculture
2. Handicrafts
3. Manufactured
4. Foodstuff
5. Textile
6. Handmade Carpets
7. Natural Goods
8. Clothing
9. Natural
10. Spice
11. Forest Produce
12. Footwear

As of 2022, India had 417 registered GI products and 150 of these products lie in the agriculture sector.

State-wise list of GI Tags in India

The GI tags allotted to the handicraft, agricultural, food or manufactured products are listed down below state-wise:

Indian State	GI Tags
Andhra Pradesh	Budithi Bell & Brass Metal Craft, Andhra Pradesh Leather, Puppetry, Durgi Stone Carvings, Etikoppaka Toys
Arunachal Pradesh	Idumishmi Textiles, Arunachal Orange
Assam	Assam KarbiAnglong Ginger, Joha Rice of Assam, Tezpur Litchi, BokaChaul, Muga Silk Assam.

Bihar	Madhubani Painting, Bhagalpur Silk, Sikki Grass Products of Bihar (Logo), BhagalpuriZardalu, Katarni Rice, MaghaiPaan, Shahi Litchi of Bihar
Chhattisgarh	BastarDhokra, Bastar Wooden Craft, Bastar Iron Craft.
Goa	KholaChilli, Feni
Gujarat	SankhedaFurniyure, Tangaliya Shawl, SuratZri Craft PatanPotala, JamnagariBandhani, Rajkot Patola, PethapurPrinting Blocks, GirKeshar.
Himachal Pradesh	KulluShawal, Kangra Tea, Himachal Kala Zeera
Jammu & Kashmir	Kashmir Pashmina, Saffron
Karnatka	Mysore Silk
Nagaland	Naga Mircha, Naga Tree Tomato
Uttar Pradesh	Allahabad SurkhaGuuava, LucknowChiken Craft, mlihabadiDashehari Mango, Banaras Brocades and Sarees, Hand MandeCaepet of Bhadohi, Agra Petha, Kalanamak Rice, Mirzapur Handmade Dari, Amroha Dholak etc.
West Benga	Darjeeling Tea

Geographical indication in agriculture Seed or planting material is basic to all agricultural production. Seed costs minimum in total cost of crop production but has maximum impact. Having reaped the benefit through the seeds of green revolution varieties, farmers were quick to realize the importance of good seeds of new and better varieties of crops. For such superior seeds, farmers were even more willing to pay a higher price. Seed companies and technology developers saw this as an opportunity to convert plant varieties and important plant genes as profit – making products. Global strategy, pesticides and seed companies merged to consolidate capital and technology to dominate the market. In various countries the need to conserve biodiversity, farm level variation, giving credit to farmers for their traditional crop varieties, folk varieties, farmers varieties, access to benefit sharing, extending consumer assurance by way of geographic indications, appellation of origin, traditional knowledge etc were attempted to be protected. Global commodity trade is now

dominated by several such new issues, which in India are now understood and applied. Other aspect of GI in agriculture is related the plant-based products or by-products. Plant-based products could be raw material for production or its processing or the preparation. After the GI became effective on 15th September 2003, Darjeeling Tea 12 became the first G tagged product in 2004 in India. After that landmark¹⁷, many GI-labelled agricultural products have been added (Table 1) in India.

Benefit of GI tags

The Geographical Indication registration confers the following benefits:

- Legal protection to the products.
- Prevents unauthorized use of GI tag products by others.
- It helps consumers to get quality products of desired traits and is assured of authenticity.
- Promotes the economic prosperity of producers of GI tag goods by enhancing their demand in national and international markets.

Role of the GI in rural development

Some of the observed rural development impacts of GI are:

- The supply chain is structured around a common product reputation.
- Increased and stabilised prices for the GI product.
- Distributed through all the levels of the supply chain adds value.
- Natural resources can be preserved on which the product is based.
- Preservation of traditions and traditional expertise.
- Tourism can be boosted.

Conclusion:

GI is an important tool for protecting the IP rights associated with agricultural products and foodstuffs originating in specific geographical regions. In recent times, there are considerable efforts made by various institutions and agencies in India for ensuring legal protection for Indian GI. Further, adequate promotional strategies are needed to popularize GI tagged.