

Preserving Identity: The Importance of GI Tags in Fruit Crops

Gunja Thakur and Ajay Singh

Ph.D. Scholar

*Corresponding Author: gunju1696@gmail.com

In the vibrant world of agriculture and horticulture, the identity and authenticity of products are paramount. This rings especially true in the realm of fruit crops, where geographical indications (GI) tags play a pivotal role in safeguarding heritage, quality, and economic value.

What is a GI Tag?

A geographical indication (GI) tag is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities, reputation, or characteristics that are essentially attributable to that origin. This tag is granted to protect the interests of producers from a particular region, ensuring consumers receive genuine products with unique attributes.

Geographical indications are typically used for agricultural products, foodstuffs, wine and spirit drinks, handicrafts and industrial products.

Preserving Heritage and Tradition

For fruit crops, GI tags are more than just labels; they represent a rich tapestry of heritage and tradition. Take, for instance, the Alphonso mango from Ratnagiri in India. Renowned for its distinct flavour and aroma, the Alphonso mango holds a GI tag that ensures only mangoes grown in specific regions and adhering to stringent quality standards can bear its prestigious name. This protection not only safeguards the livelihoods of local farmers but also preserves traditional farming practices that have been honed over generations.

Assurance of Quality and Purity

GI tags are a mark of quality assurance. When consumers see a fruit crop with a GI tag, they can be confident that it meets specific standards of taste, texture, and even nutritional content associated with its geographical origin. This assurance is crucial in an era where food safety and authenticity are growing concerns among consumers globally.

Boosting Economic Value

The economic impact of GI tags on fruit crops cannot be overstated. By differentiating products based on their origin and unique characteristics, GI tags create value-added opportunities for producers. They enable farmers to command premium prices for their produce, thereby improving income levels and fostering sustainable agricultural practices.

Additionally, GI tags contribute to rural development by promoting tourism and cultural exchanges centered around these unique agricultural products.

Global Recognition and Market Access

Internationally recognized GI tags open doors to global markets. Consumers abroad seek out products with GI tags for their authenticity and superior quality. This demand not only enhances export opportunities but also elevates the international reputation of fruit crops and their producing regions.

Challenges and Future Prospects

While GI tags offer numerous benefits, challenges such as administrative hurdles, counterfeiting, and maintaining standards persist. However, advancements in technology and increased awareness among stakeholders are paving the way for more robust GI protection systems.

Criteria of GI tag

- A product should possess certain unique qualities.
- Products are made on traditional methods.
- It must possess certain reputation in that region/locality.
- It should represent its geographical origin.
- It is mainly used to identify the agricultural, handicraft, manufacturing goods from the particular territory which has built up a good in the market due to the special characteristics like temperature, humidity, soil etc. linked with the territory.

Conclusion

Geographical Indications is a rising field of Intellectual property. India is provided with diverse agro climatic conditions, which have encouraged the growing of a large number of fruit crops. Most of the fruit crops growing in India had special characters which are distinct from the fruits growing in other countries. These special characters facilitate the registration of fruit crops under GI but the number of registered crops under GI was very low in number than the crops actually eligible for registration. So, there is an urgent need to aware about the community/farmers about the importance of GI. Thus, GI tags help in protecting and preserving the fruit crops/ varieties having a distinctive character.

Looking ahead, the future of fruit crops with GI tags appears promising. As consumers continue to prioritize authenticity and sustainability, GI tags will play an increasingly vital role in preserving agricultural diversity and supporting rural economies worldwide.

In conclusion, GI tags are not merely bureaucratic labels; they are guardians of heritage, assurances of quality, and catalysts for economic growth in the realm of fruit crops. Embracing and expanding their use ensures that future generations can continue to savor the unique flavors and benefits that only GI-tagged fruit crops can offer.

Table 1: Some examples in Fruit Crops- Mango

Variety	Area/State	year	Specific features
Lakshman Bhog	Lakshman Bhog /West Bengal	2008	It is highly productive and regular bearer. Total soluble solids of 17.3 – 19.5% and pulp content of 80 - 88%, sugar/acidity ratio is 98 with good keeping quality.
Khirsapati (Himsagar)	Hoogly district/West Bengal	2008	Fruit colour is yellow to orange and fibreless. The fruit is medium-sized and weight between 250-350gm, out of which the pulp content is around 77%. It has a good keeping quality
Gir Kesar Mango	Junagadh region/Gujarat	2011	The name of variety as kesar was given on the basis of saffron colour fruit pulp. Fruit is long, weight approximate 250-300gm. The pulp weight is 69% of the fruit. The juice is semi solid, very sweet with good flavoured.
Banganapalli Mango	Banganpalli/ Andhra Pradesh	2017	It also known as 'Beneshan'. The fruits are oval in shape. It can retain their quality under cold storage even up to three months.
Alphonso Mango	Konkan in Maharashtra	2018	Fruits have uniqueness with having high creamy, tender texture and delicate Non-fibrous and juicy pulp. Fruit having total soluble solids of 17.2-19.5°Brix, acidity 0.20-0.35%, pulp 70-87%, pulp to stone ratio is 5:1 and pulp to peel ratio is 8:1.

Table 2: Some examples in Fruit Crops- Banana

Variety	State/Area	year	Specific features
Nanjanagudu Rasabale	Mysuru and Chamarajnagar/ Karnataka	2005	Black clay alluvial saline soil has given a unique taste and aroma, smaller fruits. Fruits can be used for the treatment of neurological diseases.
Virupakshi Hill banana	Dindigul district Tamil Nadu	2008	Small bunches 8 -12 kg, 7 - 8 hands of 10 -12 fruits each, 80 - 90 fruits per bunch. Fruits strongly attached to pedicel even on ripening. Crop duration is 15-18 months. Hill bananas are perennial in nature known for their special flavour and long shelf life.

Table 3: Some examples in Fruit Crops- Orange

Variety	State/Area	year	Specific features
Coorg mandarin	Coorg/ Karnataka	2004	They have good content of Vitamin C, Vitamin A, Calcium, Iron and Copper and can lower the risk of developing liver cancer and is good for the skin and immune system. which prevents viral, fungal and bacterial infections.
Nagpur orange	Nagpur Belt/ Maharashtra	2013	The peel of Mandarin is a good source of essential pectin and oil. It is also used as a basic material for the production of candies, cattle feed and alcohol.
