

# Geographical Indications (GI) and Agricultural Development in India: Trends, Policies, and Implications

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**Abstract:** The protection and promotion of Geographical Indications (GIs) have become increasingly important for countries seeking to safeguard unique products linked to traditional knowledge and specific geographical origins. In India, GIs play a crucial role in the agricultural sector, contributing to rural development, economic growth, and the preservation of biodiversity. This review examines the historical evolution, institutional framework, and current scenario of GI protection in India, with special emphasis on agricultural products. The paper also provides updated statistical data, visual illustrations, and discussions on the implications of GI for India's agricultural economy.

**Keywords:** Geographical Indications (GI), Rural Economy, Biodiversity Conservation, Agricultural Economy.

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## I. INTRODUCTION & REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concept of GI originated in Europe, particularly France, where the 'Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée' (AOC) system was introduced in the early 20th century. This system allowed certain wines and food products to be marketed based on their geographical origin and traditional methods of production (O'Connor & Company, 2020). India adopted a similar legal framework with the GI Act of 1999, aligning with global standards under the WTO's TRIPS Agreement. A Geographical Indication (GI) is a distinctive sign used to identify goods that originate from a specific geographical location, possessing qualities or a reputation attributable to that origin (World Intellectual Property Organization [WIPO], 2024). GIs provide an interface between local knowledge, tradition, and intellectual property protection, acting as tools for market differentiation and rural development. In India, GIs are recognized under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, which came into force in September 2003. Since then, India has made significant progress, with more than 600 products registered as GIs by 2024 (Table-1). The TRIPS Agreement under the WTO mandates all member countries to provide legal protection to GIs. India's GI Act (1999) defines a GI as a sign identifying agricultural, natural, or manufactured goods as originating in a territory where a given quality, reputation, or characteristic is essentially

attributable to its geographical origin. The benefits of GI registration include legal protection against unauthorized use, preservation of traditional knowledge, and enhancement of farmers' income (Kangabam, 2013; AIACA, 2011).

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Secondary data was collected from relevant articles published before September 2025 to study the trends, different policies and implications of GI with special reference to India's Agricultural sector. Different keyword combinations were used ("geographical Indications / (GIs), or rural economy or biodiversity conservation, agricultural economy") to retrieve and collect relevant information and data from the established online resources like Google web (<https://www.google.com>), Web of Science (<https://www.webofknowledge.com>), Google Scholar, and academia (<https://www.academia.edu>), PMC, PubMed Central (<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>). A total of 17 articles were analysed for preparing the manuscript.

## III. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The growing number of GIs in India reflects the country's recognition of its rich cultural and agricultural diversity. Karnataka, Kerala, and Maharashtra lead the registrations, accounting for over 40% of total GIs (Chaudhary, Yadav, & Kumar, 2017). Despite this progress,

many states still have limited awareness and slow facilitation processes. Policies must focus on capacity building, producer education, and branding to ensure that GI protection

translates into tangible rural income benefits this is evident from the increase in number of GI registrations in recent years (Fig 1).

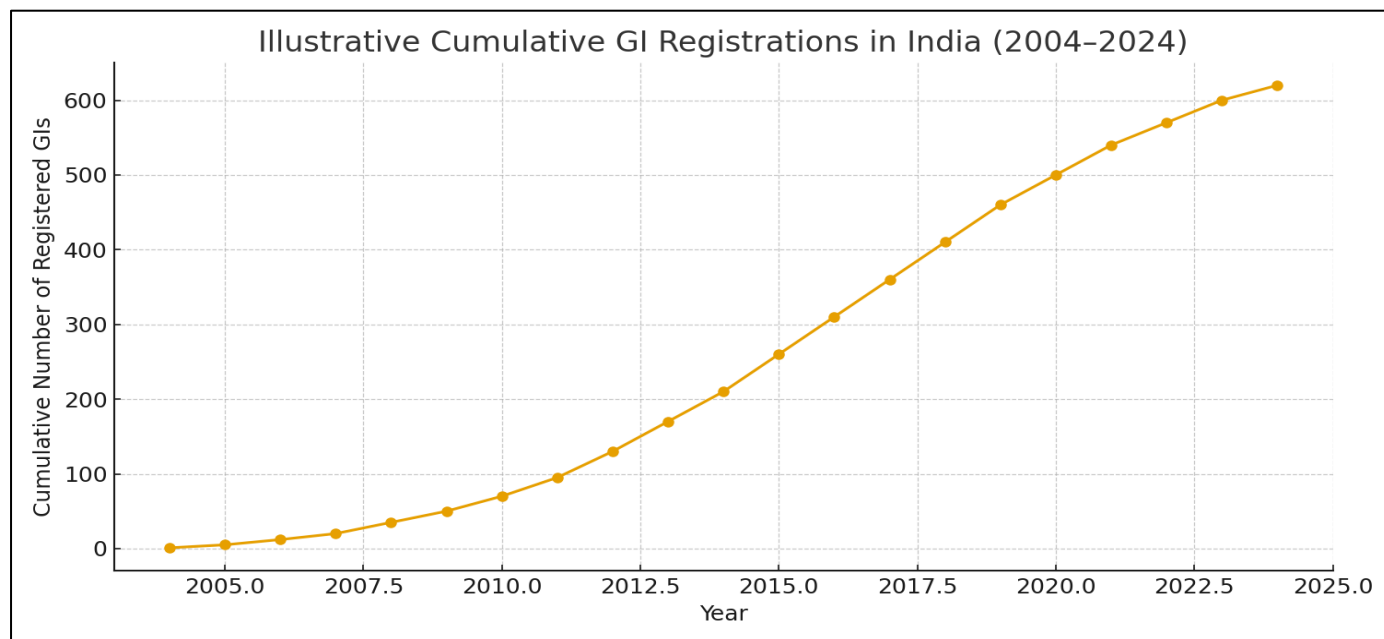


Fig 1 Cumulative Growth of GI Registrations in India (2004–2024)

Source: Constructed from GI Registry and WIPO Data (2004–2024).

This report presents a state-wise summary of Geographical Indication (GI)-tagged agricultural and food products in India as of 2024. The data is compiled from official sources such as the Geographical Indications Registry (DPIIT), APEDA, ICAR, and WIPO. As of mid-2024, India has over 470 registered Geographical Indications, of which approximately 150 are agricultural and food products (Table-1). These GIs contribute to rural branding, farmer income, and preservation of traditional knowledge. The implementation of Geographical Indications in India faces several challenges, including administrative delays, limited stakeholder awareness, and regional disparities. To overcome these, the study recommends simplifying the registration framework, enforcing stronger post-registration legal protections, and promoting targeted awareness campaigns. Improved branding and market access will increase the visibility and economic potential of GI products. Furthermore, extending GI recognition to a broader range of agricultural and forest-based goods can support biodiversity conservation and the preservation of traditional knowledge. Strategic policy measures can thereby strengthen rural economies, expand global trade opportunities, and promote sustainable and culturally inclusive growth (Manjusha R.S., 2025). In recent years, India has introduced a series of policy reforms and institutional initiatives to strengthen the Geographical Indication (GI) ecosystem. The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Rules, 2002 were amended in 2020, removing the mandatory requirement for an authorised user to file a joint application with the registered proprietor. This modification simplified procedures for individual producers and farmer cooperatives, leading to a broader and more inclusive participation in the GI registration process (Down To Earth, 2021). The

amendment empowered local communities and micro-enterprises to directly seek GI recognition without legal or procedural dependence on the principal proprietor, marking a significant decentralisation of the GI governance structure.

Further, the establishment of Facilitation Centres across India—such as the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII)–NABARD Centre for GI Promotion in Gujarat—has strengthened institutional support for producers and artisans. These centres provide end-to-end assistance including product identification, documentation, branding, and post-registration marketing support (The Times of India, 2023). The EDII–NABARD collaboration, in particular, has become a model for state-level GI facilitation, linking rural producers with intellectual property experts and market access agencies. The impact of these policy and institutional measures has been reflected in a remarkable increase in the number of GI applications filed. According to the GI Registry Annual Report (Controller General of Patents, Designs & Trademarks, 2023), the number of applications in 2022–23 rose by approximately 180% compared to the previous fiscal year. This surge illustrates growing awareness among stakeholders and the success of outreach programs undertaken by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), as well as the collaborative efforts of state-level agencies, research institutions, and producer associations. Collectively, these developments signal a new phase of institutional maturity in India's GI regime, characterised by improved accessibility, decentralised facilitation, and expanding producer participation. Such measures are crucial in ensuring that GI protection translates into tangible socio-economic outcomes for rural and artisanal communities.

Table 1 State-wise GI-Tagged Agricultural and Food Products in India (2024)

| State / UT     | Notable GI Products (Agricultural / Food)                                                        | Comments / Recent Additions                          |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Andhra Pradesh | Araku Valley Arabica Coffee; Guntur Sannam Chilli; others                                        | Several GI agricultural products listed under APEDA. |
| Assam          | Assam Karbi Anglong Ginger; Joha Rice; Tezpur Litchi                                             | Multiple GI agri entries under APEDA.                |
| Goa            | Agassaim Brinjal                                                                                 | GI tag granted in 2023.                              |
| Karnataka      | Coorg Orange; Mysore Betel Leaf; Nanjangud Banana; Coorg Green Cardamom; Coffee varieties        | Strong GI presence with many agricultural products.  |
| Kerala         | Palakkadan Matta Rice; Alleppey Green Cardamom; Pokkali Rice; Vazhakulam Pineapple; Kaipad Rice  | Several rice and spice varieties are GI-certified.   |
| Maharashtra    | Dagdi Jowar; Kasti Coriander; Waigaon Turmeric; Bhiwapur Chilli; Sangli Raisins; Navapur Tur Dal | Dagdi Jowar and Kasti Coriander received GI in 2024. |
| Tamil Nadu     | Authoor Vetrilal (Betel Leaf)                                                                    | Received GI tag in 2023.                             |
| Tripura        | Tripura Queen Pineapple                                                                          | Prominent GI agricultural product of the state.      |
| West Bengal    | Darjeeling Tea; Gobindobhog Rice; Tulaipanji Rice; Himsagar Mango; Rasogolla                     | Major GI holder in agriculture and food sector.      |

Data Source: DPIIT (GI Registry), APEDA, ICAR, WIPO (2024).

India's Geographical Indication (GI) system is crucial for empowering rural communities, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting the country's diverse traditions. Despite progress in registering GIs, particularly in handicrafts and agricultural products, annual figures remain low compared to global standards, highlighting the need for stronger protection measures (S.S. Rana & Co, 2025). Regional performance varies, with southern states leading due to higher awareness and supportive policies, while other areas lag (The Times of India, 2009). Key challenges include slow registration processes, legal complexities, weak enforcement, and limited marketing, especially for agricultural goods, often compounded by insufficient producer awareness. Strengthening the GI framework requires simplifying registration procedures, raising awareness in underrepresented regions, and promoting the benefits of GIs. Expanding recognition to a wider range of agricultural and forest products can preserve biodiversity and traditional knowledge while opening global market opportunities. National initiatives such as "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" and "Vocal for Local" can further boost the visibility and demand for GI products, supporting sustainable development and rural economic growth (The Economic Times, 2020).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Geographical Indications have emerged as an essential component of India's intellectual property regime. They offer opportunities for sustainable rural development, protect traditional practices, and add value to agricultural commodities. Future policy must aim at harmonizing GI laws with international standards, simplifying registration processes, and encouraging producer cooperatives for better global visibility.

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