



CURRENT SCENARIO OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS (GIs) IN UTTARAKHAND STATE, INDIA

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-----ABSTRACT-----

The Geographical Indication (GI) is a legal framework for the protection of indigenous localized goods/products, worldwide. For the protection and regulation of GIs, the government of India enacted Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act in 1999 which came in force in 2003. The present study aims to understand the current scenario of GI products in Uttarakhand state. For this purpose, the data of GI registered goods have downloaded from the official website of the Department for Promotion of Industries and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, GoI, and the relevant related literature and photo plates have also used. Uttarakhand Tejpat was the first Uttarakhand product that was awarded by GI tag in 2016. Till now, 8 products of the State have been registered as GIs by the GI Registry of India. These registered commodities belong to two different categories, i.e., agriculture (03) and handicraft goods (05). The present study provides a detailed description of GI tag goods of the entire State that will help the entrepreneur in identifying and naming goods for GIs. The study suggests that the government of Uttarakhand should lead the entrepreneurs of the State to get GI tag of indigenous and unique goods.

KEYWORDS: *Geographical Indications, GI tag, Products, Uttarakhand.* -----

INTRODUCTION

Nature has awarded some special importance or uniqueness to every region of the world in terms of Art, Culture and Craft of human beings living over there, i.e., all the regions of the globe have their own uniqueness and identity attributed by the prevailing local geographical conditions of that particular region. The specialty and uniqueness in the goods/product of a particular region comes from its natural environment which makes it different from goods of other regions in terms of quality and other characteristics. A region also gets famous based on a particular product of that region (Ahmed and Camble, 2021). Geographical Indication (GI) is a recognition given to particular products/goods related to a specific geographical region, i.e., GI is the identification and certification of a specified region's products, handicrafts and others. However, GI and other intellectual property rights are two different things. GI is attributed to goods/services of a particular region which allows all the entrepreneurs to produce the said product of that specified region. On the other hand, intellectual property right is a sign assigned to an entrepreneur/enterprise which is the single user of that right to distinguish his/her product from others. Thus, GI is related to a specific region whereas intellectual property is related to entrepreneurs/enterprises (Chintala et al., 2021).

At present, internationally, the GIs are regulated by Article 22 of the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS, 1994) Agreement sanctioned by World Trade Organization (WTO). This defines GI 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 characteristics of the good is essentially attributable to its geographical origin". The member countries are responsible to protect all GIs through enacting respect acts and legalize the certain identity of particular local products. Few studies are available related to Geographical Indicator across the world, e.g., Bagade and Metha (2014) defined GI and its conceptual framework, Manjunatha (2016) studied and analyzed the current status of GIs in an Indian state, viz., Karnataka, Yadav et al., (2018) described the GI framework and the process of registration of goods as GI tag, Mir and Ain (2010) discussed different goods which could be considered for GI registration under the handicraft category, Bowen and Zapata (2009) correlated the certification of GIs and sustainable development in Mexico, Zhao et al., (2014) studied the GIs of Chinese agro-food



supported by Chinese Government for increasing farmers income, Venkatesh and Kumarasamy (2015) studied the problem of handloom industry and emphasis on the need of GI for handloom industry.

Globally, about 55800 goods were registered as GI tags in 2019. The maximum GIs were registered in Germany (14289) followed by China (7834) and Hungary (6494) (Chintala and Gyanendra, 2020). In India, for the protection and regulation of GIs, the government of India enacted Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act in 1999 when an American company prepares a patent of Basmati rice in USA, this act came into force in 2003. Darjeeling tea was the first GI tag product of India registered in 2004 for its natural quality. Till now, India has total 391 products registered as GIs in the GI Registry of India which comprises of agriculture (128), foodstuff (17), handicrafts (231), manufactured (13) and natural (02) goods. There are also 29 foreign goods/services from 12 different countries that have been also registered as GIs in India comprises of foodstuff (03), handicrafts (01), manufactured (25) goods. In India, Karnataka state has the maximum number of GI tagged products followed by Tamil Nadu (MCI, 2022). The specific objective of the present study is to understand the present scenario of GI goods/products of Uttarakhand and also aims to identify the potential goods/products that could be registered as GI tags in the GI Registry of India.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is based on primary and secondary data. The details of GI products of India as well as of the study area were collected from the official website of the Department for Promotion of Industries and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. The downloaded data has analyzed in MS excel and documented in MS word. The photographs of the existing GIs and proposed GIs have collected from secondary sources.

STUDY AREA

The study area, viz., the Uttarakhand state extends between 77°34' to 81°02' E longitudes and 28°43' to 31°27' N latitudes and encompasses an area 53483 km² which accounts for 1.63% of the total geographical area of the country (Fig. 1). Out of the total geographical area, about 86% (i.e., 46035 km²) area falls under hilly region and the remaining 14% (i.e., 7448 km²) area falls under plain region. Administratively, the Uttarakhand state is divided into two commissionaires, 13 districts, 95 developmental blocks, 110 tehsils, 670 nayay panchayats, 7791 gram panchayats and 16793 revenue villages (DESDP, 2020). The State is bordered by Tibet and China in the north, Uttar Pradesh in the south, Himanchal Pradesh in the west and Nepal in the east.

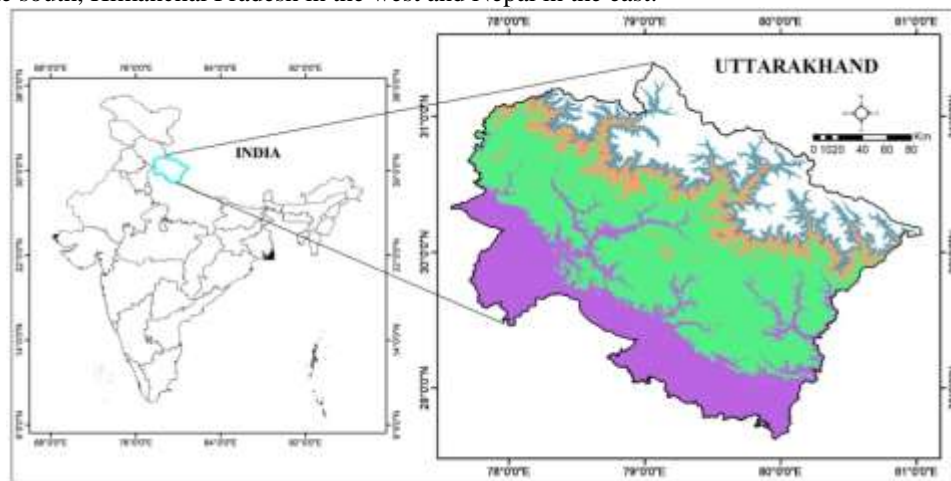


Fig.1: Location map of the study area, viz., the Uttarakhand State.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The Status of Geographical Indications in Uttarakhand

Uttarakhand State contributes only 2.04% of the total GI goods of the country. Uttarakhand Tejpat was the first Uttarakhand product that was awarded by GI tag in 2016. Till now, 8 products of the State, i.e., Uttarakhand Tejpat, Uttarakhand Aipan, Munsyari Razma, Uttarakhand Ringal Craft, Uttarakhand Tamta Product, Uttarakhand Thulma, Bhotia Dann and Kumaon Chyura Oil have been registered as GIs by the GI Registry of India. These



registered commodities belong to two different categories, i.e., agriculture (03) and handicraft goods (05) (Table-1). A brief description of these GI-tagged products is presented in the following paragraphs.

Table-1: Details of GI-tagged products, their registration year, application number and fields in the Uttarakhand state.

S.N.	Application Number	Registration Year	Name of Product (GIs)	Field of Product	State
1	520	2016	Uttarakhand Tejpat	Agriculture	Uttarakhand
2	648	2021	Uttarakhand Aipan	Handicraft	Uttarakhand
3	651	2021	Munsyari Razma	Agriculture	Uttarakhand
4	652	2021	Uttarakhand Ringal Craft	Handicraft	Uttarakhand
5	653	2021	Uttarakhand Tamta Product	Handicraft	Uttarakhand
6	654	2021	Uttarakhand Thulma	Handicraft	Uttarakhand
7	589	2021	Bhotia Dann	Handicraft	Uttarakhand
8	650	2021	Kumaon Chyura Oil	Agriculture	Uttarakhand

Uttarakhand Tejpat- Uttarakhand Tejpat (Plate-1A) was the first Uttarakhand product that was awarded by GI tag in 2016. It is known by different names in different parts of the country. The botanical name of Tejpat is *Cinnamomum Tamala* which belongs to the Lauriaceae family and its occupational name is Indian bay leaf. This plant has also medicinal quality which is commonly found in the Uttarakhand Lesser Himalayan region between the elevation of 900 m to 2000 m. In the national and international market, this is also known as ‘meetha tejpat’ and this sweetness is due to the presence of Cinnamaldehyde. This is an evergreen forest which is helpful in soil and environment conservation also. The leaves and bark of this tree are used for both kitchen and medicinal purposes. There is worldwide demand of Tejpat and related products especially in the European and North American countries.¹

Uttarakhand Aipan- Uttarakhand Aipan (Plate-1B) is a popular ritual folk art of the State made by girls and women especially in the Kumaun region. In Aipan different types of painting of God, Goddess and other theme objects are drawn on red coloured background board of paper, cloth, and wall by white colour on happy occasions such festivals, marriage etc. This aipan art is used to decorate a wall, worship place and threshold/entrance of the house.²

Munsyari Razma- Munsyari razma (Plate-1C) derives its name from Munsyari place located in Development Block of the Pithoragarh district of the State in Himalayan region. The Munsyari razma is famous for its delicious taste and protein content which came in it naturally. This is a cash crop which is grown above an elevation of 2200 m by the villagers of Munsyari region. The Munsyari razma has been awarded by GI tag in 2021 for its naturally occurring quality.³

Uttarakhand Ringal Craft- The botanical name of ringal is *Chimnobabusa falcate*. Ringal is a socio-economically important type of dwarf bamboo which is abundantly found in the Himalaya region of Uttarakhand. Ringal is an important natural resource which is crafted (Plate-1D) and used by local people in their day-to-day activities. Ringal weaving is a traditional craft of Uttarakhand almost all areas’ people were directly involved in this work but globalization has affected this traditional indigenous art by providing substitute products which are also harmful to the fragile environment of the Himalayas. However, Ringal craft has been awarded by GI tag which will protect our traditional indigenous knowledge-based product and the fragile ecosystem of the Himalaya.⁴

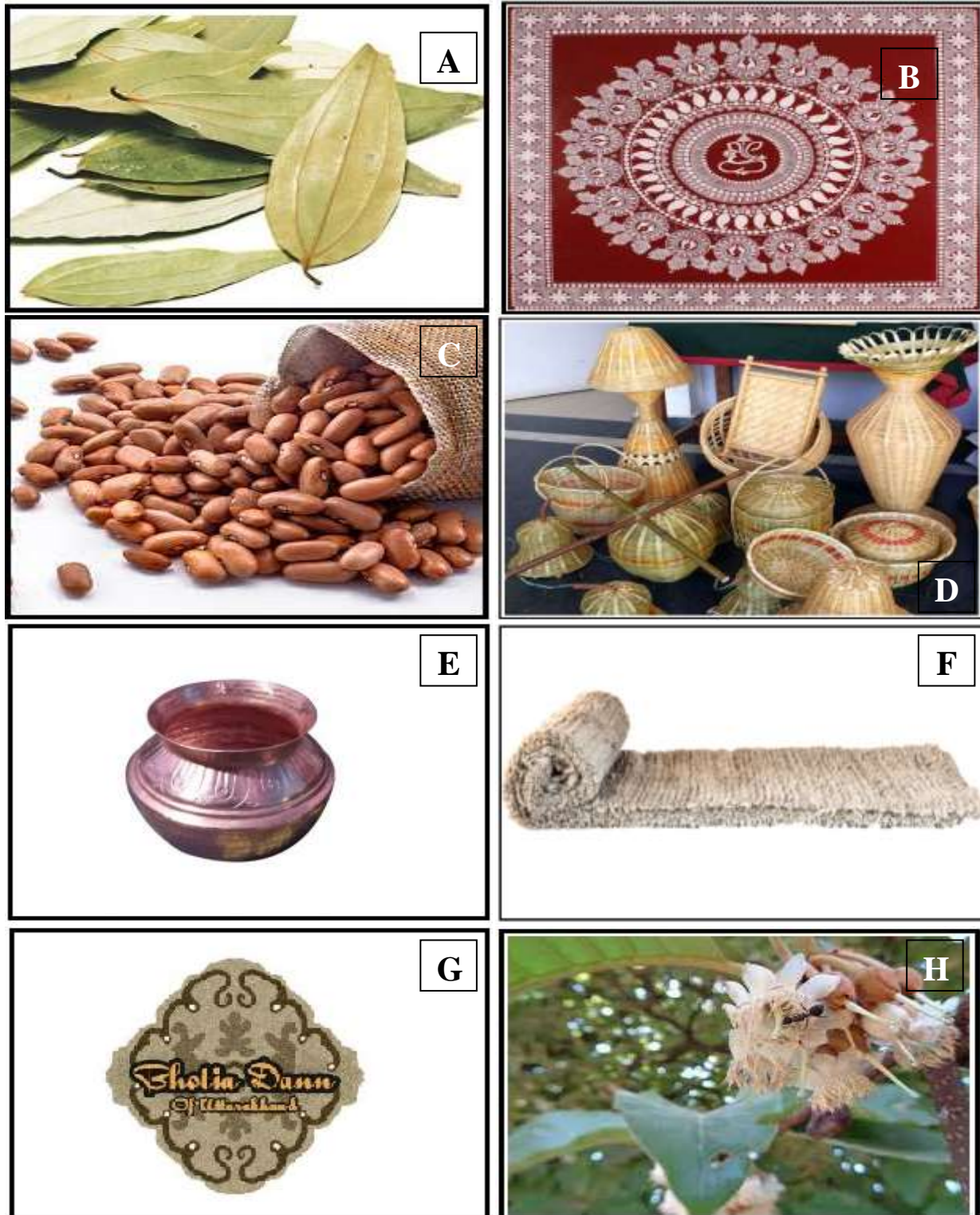


Plate-1: Typical examples of GI tagged products of Uttarakhand: A- Uttarakhand Tejpat, B- Uttarakhand Aipan, C- Munsyari Razma, D- Uttarakhand Ringal Craft, E- Uttarakhand Tamta Product, F- Uttarakhand Thulma, G- Bhotia Dann and H- Kumaon Chyura Oil.



Uttarakhand Tamta Product- Since ancient times, the coppersmiths in the State are known as ‘Tamta’ and their crafted products are called Tamta products. Coppersmith uses copper ore for making varieties of Tamta products such as water filter, utensils, musical instruments and so on (Plate-1E). Copper kitchen utensils are particularly popular for its health benefit.⁵ The Tamta products are also closely related with the cultural values of the region. Globalization has affected this indigenous knowledge-based small industry of the State. Although, the coppersmiths have updated their products as per the demand from the market but these goods are too expensive than the other available substitute products in the market. However, now Uttarakhand Tamta products have been protected under GI tag which will help in protecting indigenous knowledge-based eco-friendly technique and people will be aware of its health benefits.

Uttarakhand Thulma- Thulma (Plate-1F) is a kind of blanket which is woven with woolen threads using traditional throw fly shuttles. Generally, thulma were woven with uncoloured/undyed or white wool but the weavers have started woven thulma in different colours to meet the required demand of customers. Thulma is mainly woven by female weavers of the Bhotia community of Pithoragarh district. Thulma is mainly used in the very low/minus temperature of the higher Himalayas region to protect from extreme cold.⁶

Bhotia Dann- Bhotia Dann (Plate-1G) is a unique hand-knotted carpet which is woven in the high altitude Himalayan region of Uttarakhand by the Bhotia community/tribe. These are woven with pure wool in traditional designs and themes of the Bhotia community. Basically, geometric patterns are used for dann’s design to make it unique and attractive. Pure wool is obtained from sheep which are reared by this community at high altitudes. These products are highly durable with a life span of 20-40 years. The marketing of dann is limited to local people and traders. The registration of dann as a GI tag would help in branding, value addition, marketing and improving the socio-economic conditions of the local people.⁷

Kumaon Chyura Oil- Chyura or Indian Butter Tree found extensively in the Himalayas which is economically important for the local people. Traditionally, this tree was also used for beekeeping by local inhabitants of the region. The Chyura tree provides various goods such as seeds for chyura oil, wood/timber for fuel and furniture, fodder for cattle and flower nectar for honey. The Chyura oil is extracted from chyura seeds (Plate-1H) using the traditional indigenous technique. The Chyura ghee and honey are also important products used in cosmetic, pharmaceutical and other sectors.⁸

PROPOSED GOODS FOR GI

The State varies between 183 m to 7817 m elevation from the Tarai region in south to the Trans Himalaya region in the north which is attributed to diverse climatic conditions ranging from sub-tropical climate to alpine climate which characterize the State in diverse micro-climatic regions with special regional characteristics in terms of natural and man-made goods. Although, eight goods of the State has been registered as GI tag till now but the State has much potential and possibilities for GI tagging of naturally occurring and man-made goods. The present study proposes mainly two goods, viz., Almora Bal Mithai (Plate-2A) and Yarsa Gambu (Plate-2B) for GI tagging. Almora Bal Mithai is the famous sweet dish of the Uttarakhand state which is made with local roasted khoya and butter (pure ghee) and coated with small sugar balls. Yarsa Gambu is a kind of herb found at high altitude regions of the state and also known as Caterpillar fungus. This herb is mainly used for medicinal purposes by pharmaceutical companies.

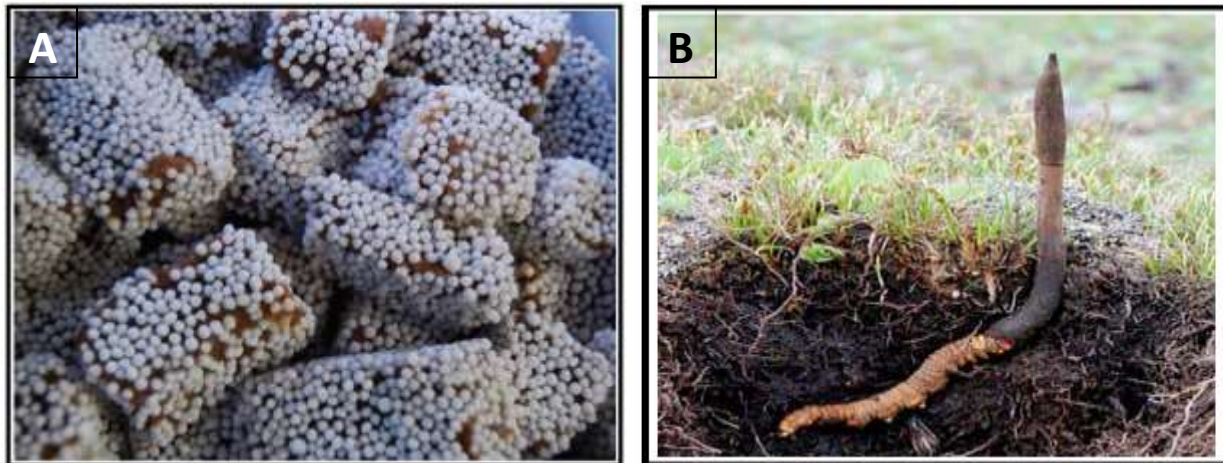


Plate-2: Proposed products for GI tagging: A- Almora Bal Mithai and B- Yarsa Gambu.

CONCLUSION

The present study aims to understand the concept of Geographical Indications and products registered as GIs in the Uttarakhand state. The study reveals that till now eight products (i.e., Uttarakhand Tejpat, Uttarakhand Aipan, Munsiyari Razma, Uttarakhand Ringal Craft, Uttarakhand Tamta Product, Uttarakhand Thulma, Bhotia Dann and Kumaon Chyura Oil) of the State have been registered as GIs by the GI Registry of India which accounts for only 2.04% of total GI goods of the country. These registered commodities belong to two different categories, i.e., agriculture (03) and handicraft (05) goods. The study shows that the people of the State are not well aware about GI tagging. Apart from the registered products/goods, the State have much potential for GI tagging of naturally occurring and man-made goods, e.g., Almora Bal Mithai and Yarsa Gambu. The study suggests that the government of Uttarakhand should lead the entrepreneurs of the State to get GI tag of indigenous and unique goods.

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