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## **Awareness Level of Geographical Indication (GI) on Madurai Malli**

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### **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study aims to assess the awareness level of Geographical indication on Madurai Malli in Madurai district. It was found that Majority of the respondents were having low level of awareness on GI Madurai malli. It was inferred from farmers in the study area doesn't know the real benefits of GI and its importance in the socio-economic development of the community. In the domestic market the farmers really find any changes in the price hike due to GI tag might be the reason for low level of awareness on Geographical indication on Madurai Malli among the beneficiary respondents.

**Keywords:** Geographical indication; madurai malli; awareness; farmers.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Floriculture which includes flowers, foliage, potted plants, ornamentals, and greens, is considered the most colourful sector of

horticulture. The demand for floriculture products has increased significantly as a result of urbanisation and an increase in disposable income. As a result, cut flowers such as roses, gladiolus, carnations, orchids, gerbera and lily

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are in high demand. Traditional flowers such as jasmine, marigold, chrysanthemum, tuberose and others are also in high demand [1]. This has resulted in the floriculture sector transitioning from a household activity to a commercial venture. Floriculture has emerged as a significant agricultural sub-sector as a source of income for small and marginal farmers. Floriculture in India was estimated to cover 2.55 lakh ha and produce 17,54,000 MT of loose flowers and 5.43 lakh MT of cut flowers [2]. The Indian flower trade is worth Rs.37,000 crores per year. Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi account for nearly 77 percent of the area under floricultural crops. Tamil Nadu is the largest state by area, followed by Karnataka, West Bengal, and Andhra Pradesh [3]. With over 300 million people in the middle- and upper-income frames out of a total population of nearly 1.2 billion, India is the world's third largest consumer base and fastest growing retail destination. People are becoming more affluent as per capita income rises [4]. Flower decoration in homes is gaining popularity as people's lifestyles in India change. Thus, flower consumption is increasing at a rate of 30% per year. Numerous festivals have increased flower demand, transforming India into a floral superpower of the future [5]. A large domestic market and high-quality export-oriented flower production provide a distinct competitive advantage. South Asia comprised of India, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan is the world's largest market, with India emerging as the world's fastest growing flower and gardening market [6].

Jasmines grow in both tropical and subtropical climates. Jasmine flowers are used to make garlands, bouquets, adorn women's hair, perfumed hair oils, attars, soaps, wines, and drinks and in religious and ceremonial functions [7]. On January 11, 2013, the Registrar of Geographical Indications granted the GI (Geographical Indication) tag to Madurai Malli, the jasmine flower known for its fragrance and distinctive petal colour that originates from the district of Madurai in Tamil Nadu. This is the first horticultural product from Tamil Nadu to be designated as a GI. Madurai Malli has become eligible for registration as a geographical indication because it meets the definition of a geographical indication under Section 2(e) of the GI Act [8]. The flower, which is grown in various parts of Madurai, is known for its strong fragrance and thick petals that change colour from greenish white in the morning to milky white

in the afternoon to creamy white with a slight silvery tinge by evening. The Madurai Malli Farmers' Association, Kurinji Vattara Kalanjam and the DHAN Foundation Madurai jointly filled the GI application in this case. Consumers who are concerned about food safety and quality regard origin as a useful quality indicator. These ongoing developments are reflected in a growing awareness of the number of products registered under the GI Act, as well as an increase in scientific literature investigating questions concerning geographical indications for food products [9].

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In Tamil Nadu, Madurai is renowned for jasmine cultivation. Madurai is the oldest inhabited city in the Indian peninsula, which is also referred as Malligai Maanagar (City of Jasmine), which shows the influence of jasmine in the city.

### 2.1 Scope of the Study

The study results would help to reduce the information asymmetry that occurs between the producers and consumers. The findings on awareness on GI will be helpful to know what extent the producers known about the GI and extent of the spread, which would helpful for the policy makers to plan for awareness programs on GI.

Tamil Nadu holds number one position in producing of jasmine in India. The flowers produced in Tamil Nadu exported to the other countries like Sri Lanka Malaysia, Singapore and Middle East countries. The major Jasmine producing districts of Tamil Nadu are Madurai (1397 ha), Dindigul (1223ha), Erode (1133 ha), Salem (546 ha) and Trichy (450 ha) [10]. Madurai district is to be purposively selected for this study. Because of the popular jasmine flower known for its heady fragrance and international reputation bringing special fame to the temple city of Madurai, has been given the Geographical Indication mark.

### 2.2 Sources of Data

Thiruparankundram block was selected based on maximum area under jasmine crop, under thiruparankundram block, the six villages were purposively selected like Valayankulam, Vedarpuliyankulam, O. Alangulam, Perungudi, Valayapatti, Kombadi based on the maximum area under jasmine cultivation. 120 Jasmine

farmers will be purposively selected as respondents for the study.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Awareness being the first stage in the participation process is considered as a pre requisite to introduce any change in implementation of development schemes. The categorization of respondents according to their overall awareness level on geographical indication was analysed and it is presented in Tables 1 and 2.

It was observed from Table 1 that majority (63.33%) of the respondents having low level of awareness on GI Madurai malli whereas, above one fourth (26.67) of the respondents having medium level of awareness and only 10.00 per

cent of the respondents had high level of awareness on GI Madurai Malli.

The table revealed that majority of the farmers in the study area (63.33%) doesn't know the real benefits of GI and its importance in the socio-economic development of the community. In the domestic market the farmers really find any changes in the price hike due to GI tag. Hence, majority fall under low level of awareness on GI. The medium and high levels (36.67%) might be due to the efforts taken by DHAN foundation and Madurai Malli Farmers Association.

#### 3.1 Awareness Level on GI Madurai Malli

Various attributes of GI and its benefits with regard to Madurai Malli and its unique characters were collected and tested to identify the

**Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their overall awareness of geographical indication on madurai malli**

S.No.	Category	Frequency	Percent
1.	Low	76	63.33
2.	Medium	32	26.67
3.	High	12	10.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>120</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Figures in parenthesis indicates percentages to overall awareness of GI*

**Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to their Awareness level on GI (n=120)**

S.No	Questions	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Geographical indications associated with names and places or production areas with products	76	63.00
2.	An individual cannot get a GI	71	59.00
3.	Registration of a GI is valid for 10 years	34	28.00
4.	Price variation for GI products	38	31.66
5.	GI is a location specific	80	67.00
6.	GI tag is an important tool that creates consumer awareness and loyalty	48	40.00
7.	Madurai Malli as a GI product	88	73.00
8.	Madurai malli has long keeping quality	102	85.00
9.	Madurai malli has thick petals, deep fragrance, lengthiest petiole and helps in postponing the anthesis (due to thick petals of madurai malli)	120	100
10.	Unique style of flower garlanding using maduari malli (uruttu kattu, pattai kattu, thirumbippaar)	96	80.00
11.	Mixing of other varieties in Madurai malli is illegal and may invite punishment	46	38.33

S.No	Questions	Frequency	Percentage
12.	If a registered geographical indication is not renewed it is liable to be removed from the register	31	26.00
13.	Credibility and benefits of GI	36	30.00
14.	GI on Madurai malli have influence on export	40	33.33

*Figures in parenthesis indicates percentages to awareness level on GI*

awareness level and the results are presented in Table 2.

The unique features of Madurai Malli like thick petals, deep fragrance, lengthiest petiole and helps in postponing the anthesis, long keeping quality for which it attains GI status were unique style of flower gardening like uruttu kattu, pattai kattu, thirumbippaar were very well known by 80.00 -100.00 per cent of the farmers. The long experience in jasmine cultivation, daily observation of flowers in the field and marketing places contributed for the awareness of the unique features of Madurai Malli.

The awareness on Madurai Malli as a GI product was known by 73.00 per cent of the respondents. Madurai Malli got GI during 2013 by the effort of Kurinji Vattara Kalanjiyam through DHAN foundation, AC & RI Madurai and Madurai Malli Farmers Association. Hence, majority aware on Madurai Malli as GI product but doesn't know the real benefits of GI. The attributes like location specific nature of GI and associated with names and production areas with products were aware by 60.00 – 70.00 per cent of the respondents. The farmers aware about the basic and important criteria of GI as location specific. The origin of the product or place of production which improves the livelihoods of producers and to get actual benefit in the supply chain. Hence majority aware on the above aspects. With regard to GI registration procedure, 59.00 per cent of the respondents very well known about the GI is not for individual person and it is a group activity. GI is a collective process and the whole community belonging to five districts namely Madurai, Theni, Dindigul, Sivagangai and Virudhunagar were benefitted out of this GI Madurai Malli. Basically it protects the interest of producers and helpful for improving the socio – economic status as a whole.

Further with regard to marketing of GI products, the awareness seems to be low to medium only. The awareness on price variation for GI products and its influence in export to other countries, GI tag in creation of consumer awareness and

loyalty, punishment for mixing of other varieties with Madurai Malli were known to the farmers ranging from 30.00 to 40.00 per cent only. The farmers had low awareness on the above aspects because they don't know the purpose of GI tag in making the product differentiation of specific and remunerative demand based on the consumer's preference and it is an important marketing tool to create consumer awareness etc., Hence resulted in the same level of marketing price obtained by the producers in the domestic and abroad markets. The GI got during 2013. Hence is with the shortest period they could have only this much awareness. But in future, if they realize it more opportunities are possible in domestic and foreign markets.

The attributes like Registration of a GI is valid for 10 years and the credibility and the real benefits of GI were aware by 25.00 to 30.00 per cent of the respondents. Further, the farmer doesn't know the valid period of 10 years and its regular renewal. Only 30.00 per cent of the respondents aware of this issues. Overall credibility and real benefits known by 25.00 to 30.00 per cent of the respondents, due to the intermediaries and lack of consumer awareness.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The overall awareness level of Geographical indication on Madurai Malli was low. Further, it was observed from the awareness level of Geographical indication, that respondents had less awareness about Registration of a GI is valid for 10 years, Price variation for GI products, mixing of other varieties in Madurai malli is illegal and may invite punishment, Credibility and benefits of GI, and GI on Madurai malli have influence on export. Hence the government has not come with proper strategies for consumer protection and for the promotion of international market for the Indian products protected under GI. Most producer groups cannot effectively defend or promote their GI brands as they do not possess the necessary resources. The Indian government has been active in registering GIs, but it has made no progress in adopting

strategies for GI product branding and promotion, as well as marketing and distribution in both domestic and export markets. Agriculture department officials may take steps to raise awareness about Geographical Indications (GI) by distributing printed literature such as GI leaflets, export-oriented avenues, and trainings.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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