

AWARENESS ABOUT GI TAGGED PRODUCTS FROM KERALA AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO PURCHASE THROUGH DIGITAL PLATFORMS FROM OUTSIDE INDIA - A STUDY BASED ON UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE).

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Abstract

GI (Geographical Indication) is an intellectual property right that identifies a product's geographical origin. Manufacturers of GI-tagged products can capitalize on the potential of online business by raising customer awareness. This study aims to better understand consumer awareness of GI-tagged products and the factors that influence online purchases. We measured the level of awareness of 30 GI-tagged products from Kerala using 100 samples from the UAE among Malayali groups. Unique Characteristics, Pride, Sentimental Factors & Memorization, Value, and Quality are the factors evaluated for the study. The Unique Characteristics of a GI-tagged product are the most important element affecting its purchasing.

Key words:- GI-tagged Products, Digital Platform, Unique Characteristics, Influencing factors, United Arab Emirates.

GI (Geographical Indication) tagged products are agricultural, natural, or manufactured goods that are connected with a certain geographical region and have unique attributes or characteristics due to nature and/or human factors unique to that region. GI tags are used to preserve and promote these products, as

well as to prevent misuse or imitation and to provide economic and cultural benefits for producers and the region. GI-tagged items are those that naturally exhibit features, reputations, or characteristics distinctive to a place and are legally protected in India through registration under the Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.

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GI branded products have grown in popularity in recent years, both in India and around the world. Kerala, a south Indian state noted for its rich cultural heritage and one-of-a-kind products, has also seen the rise of GI labeled products. There is a large untapped market for online businesses. Manufacturers of GI-tagged products can capitalize on this potential if they raise customer awareness about the GI-tagged products and their availability online. The demand for GI-tagged, or cultural heritage products, is high among Indians living outside of India, and many online platforms, such as <https://www.gitagged.com/online-store/gi-tagged-state-wise/kerala/>, provide accurate information about those products as well as the simplest way to purchase them.

Literature Review

Customers are perplexed by the market's abundance of products when it comes to identifying and picking high-quality products (Pavlov, 2013). When manufacturers of GI-tagged products raise awareness for their products online, they can reduce customer misunderstanding in purchasing decisions (Soma Basu, 2016).

Consumers recognize place of origin as quality and emotional cues when making a product purchasing decision (Felice, Adinolfi, 2011). Customers who are aware of the Geographical Indications of the products can differentiate and purchase excellent products from local sellers via online platforms.

Most firms in the modern corporate world use digital marketing to suit the expectations of the "always on"

consumer (Bourton, B. 2007a). Customers' engaging experience in the online market is dependent on their thorough knowledge of the product, the devices they use to connect to the company, and the information they see (Bourton, B. 2007b). The volume of internet visits and transactions is big and expanding rapidly (Clark, M. 2012).

Statement of the Problem

Customers' knowledge of GI-tagged products is substantially lower, particularly among the younger population. The GI tag was once used as a colloquial moniker by the elder generation to identify a famous product in a specific location, but it has faded from the memories of the younger generation due to the name's infrequent use among the people. As a result, the current study focuses on the awareness of GI-tagged items and how digitalization, or online platforms, influence the purchasing decision of GI-tagged products among Malayali's residing in the UAE.

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyse the present status of GI-tagged products.
2. Awareness about GI-tagged products among the Malayali communities in UAE.
3. Willingness to buy the GI-tagged products through digital platform.

Research Methodology

The present study used both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected from Malayali's in the UAE by the researchers. A standardized questionnaire was used to obtain 100

samples from these regions. The data were gathered by the researchers with the assistance of family and friends from the UAE. The questionnaire is divided into

four sections. i) the people's demographic profile ii) people's awareness of GI-tagged products, iii) desire to buy GI-tagged products online, and iv) reasons

Table 1
List of GI tagged Products of Kerala

| Sl. No | GI Tagged Products | Category |
|--------|--|--------------|
| 1 | Alleppey Coir | Handicraft |
| 2 | Aranmulla Kannadi | Handicraft |
| 3 | Balaramapuram Sarees and Fine Cotton Fabrics | Handicraft |
| 4 | Brass Broidered Coconut Shell Craft of Kerala (Logo) | Handicraft |
| 5 | Brass Broidered Coconut Shell Crafts of Kerala | Handicraft |
| 6 | Cannanore Home Furnishings | Handicraft |
| 7 | Central Travancore Jaggery | Agricultural |
| 8 | Chendamangalam Dhoties& Set Mundu | Handicraft |
| 9 | Chengalikodan Nendran / Banana | Agricultural |
| 10 | Kaipad Rice | Agricultural |
| 11 | Kasargod Sarees | Handicraft |
| 12 | Kuthampally Dhoties& Set Mundu | Handicraft |
| 13 | Kuthampully Sarees | Handicraft |
| 14 | Maddalam of Palakkad | Handicraft |
| 15 | Maddalam of Palakkad (Logo) | Handicraft |
| 16 | Malabar Pepper | Agricultural |
| 17 | Marayoor Jaggery (Marayoor Sharkara) | Agricultural |
| 18 | Monsooned Malabar Arabica Coffee | Agricultural |
| 19 | Navara Rice | Agricultural |
| 20 | Nilambur Teak | Agricultural |
| 21 | Palakkadan Matta Rice | Agricultural |
| 22 | Payyannur Parithra Ring | Handicraft |
| 23 | Pokkali Rice | Agricultural |
| 24 | Screw Pine Craft of Kerala | Handicraft |
| 25 | Screw Pine Craft of Kerala (Logo) | Handicraft |
| 26 | Tirur Betel Leaf (Tirur Vettila) | Agricultural |
| 27 | Vazhakulam Pineapple | Agricultural |
| 28 | Wayanad Robusta Coffee | Agricultural |
| 29 | Wayanad Gandhakasala Rice | Agricultural |
| 30 | Wayanad Jeerakasala Rice | Agricultural |

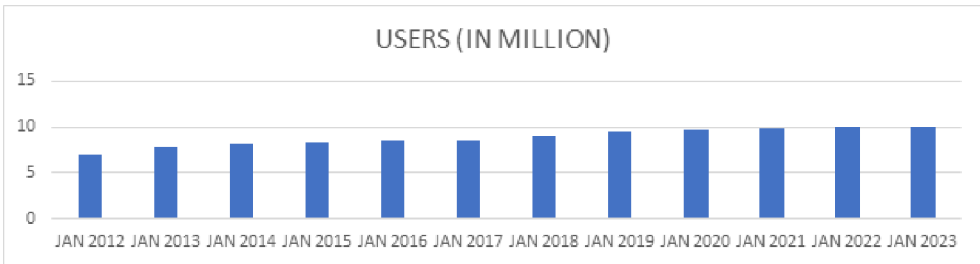
Source: - <https://www.adda247.com/upsc-exam/updated-list-of-geographical-indication-tags-in-india/>

to buy GI-tagged products. Secondary data were acquired from statistical data published by specific websites, journals and textbooks.

In this study selected 30 GI-tagged products in Kerala and used a bar chart

to determine people’s awareness levels. In the questionnaire, the researcher listed 30 GI-tagged products from Kerala and then asked participants to rate their readiness to buy them on a 5-point scale. Then, the study identified the desire of consumers

Figure 1
Internet Users in UAE (in Millions)



Source: - <https://www.globalmediainsight.com/blog/uae-internet-statistics/>

Figure 2
Level of Awareness of GI tagged Products.

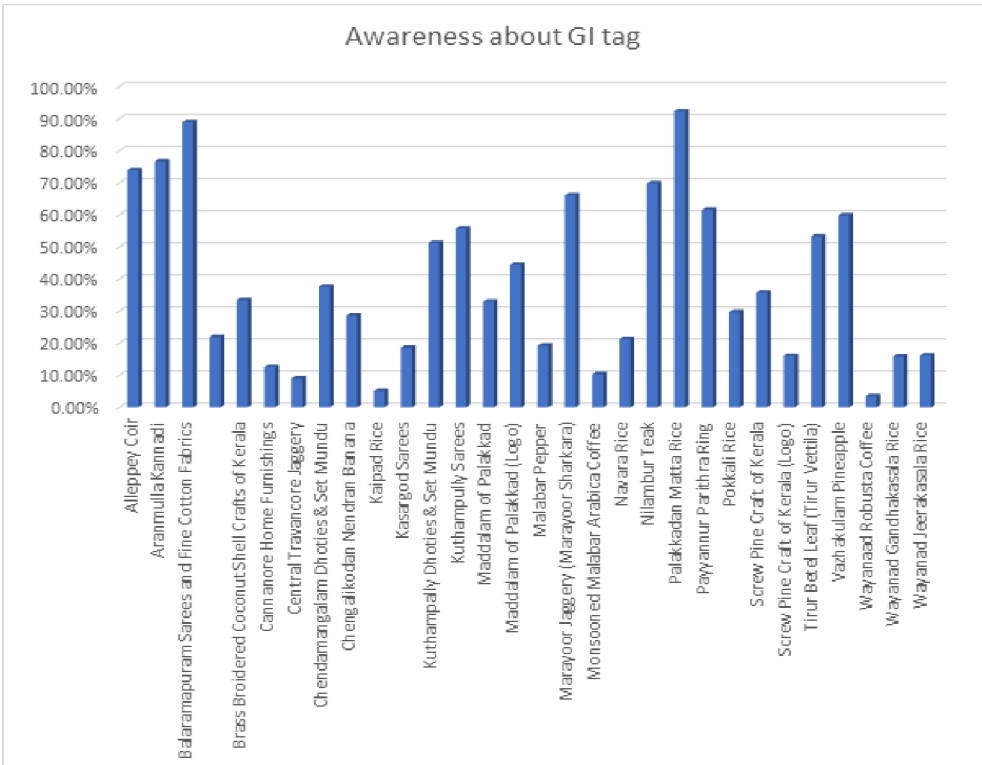


Table 2
Influencing factors to purchase the GI tagged products.

| Nos. | Influencing Factors | Mean Values | Rank |
|------|---------------------------------|-------------|------|
| 1 | Unique Characteristics | 4.59 | 1 |
| 2 | Pride | 3.80 | 2 |
| 3 | Sentimental Factors &memorizing | 3.65 | 3 |
| 4 | Value | 3.64 | 4 |
| 5 | Quality | 3.57 | 5 |

Source: Primary Data

Table 3
Readiness to purchase the following GI tagged products through Online

| No. | Products | Mean | Rank |
|-----|--|------|------|
| 1 | Palakkadan Matta Rice | 4.01 | 1 |
| 2 | Balaramapuram Sarees and Fine Cotton Fabrics | 3.85 | 2 |
| 3 | AranmullaKannadi | 3.59 | 3 |
| 4 | Alleppey Coir | 3.43 | 4 |
| 5 | Nilambur Teak | 3.40 | 5 |
| 6 | Marayoor Jaggery (MarayoorSharkara) | 3.36 | 6 |
| 7 | PayyannurParithra Ring | 3.25 | 8 |
| 8 | Vazhakulam Pineapple | 3.22 | 7 |
| 9 | Kuthampully Sarees | 3.14 | 9 |
| 10 | Tirur Betel Leaf (TirurVettila) | 3.06 | 10 |

Source: Primary data

to buy the GI-tagged products, by computing the mean value of each commodity individually.

The researchers consider the unique characteristics, quality of the product, value of the product, pride / status of having it, sentimental factors to the product and memories associated to the items to identify the reasons for acquiring the GI-tagged products. The responses were created using a Likert scale. Linear regression was performed to determine the influence of those characteristics on the purchase of GI-tagged products. For

each GI-tagged goods, a liner regression was performed between the motivations to buy GI-tagged products and the willingness to buy the product online in future.

Results & Discussions.

The products covered by the Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act of 1999 are classed as agricultural, natural, manufactured goods or handicrafts, and food stuff (Anson, 2012). Kerala’s GI-tagged items fall into two categories:

agricultural and handicrafts, as shown below.

Kerala's GI-tagged products are in high demand in the UAE, particularly among Malayali communities. The use of the internet by UAE inhabitants is also a key component in the online sales of GI-tagged products. The graph below depicts the number of internet users in the UAE over the previous ten years. It is apparent that most of the UAE inhabitants rely heavily on the internet for their daily activities.

Even though Kerala have 30 GI-tagged products, most of them are still not commonly aware among general people. The commonly awarded items are Palakkadan Matta Rice, Balaramapuram Sarees and Fine Cotton Fabrics, Aranmulla Kannadi, Alleppey Coir, Nilambur Teak, Marayoor Jaggery (Marayoor Sharkara), Payyannur Parithra Ring, Vazhakulam Pineapple, Kuthampully Sarees, Tirur Betel Leaf (Tirur Vettilla) etc. and from here we are trying to focus on the most aware GI-tagged products and its buying decision factors through online platforms.

While discussing about the factors influencing the purchase of GI-tagged products the 'unique characteristic' to the products stands first with the highest mean value of 4.59. Next 'pride' associated with the consumption of those products with mean value of 3.80. The other influencing factors like 'sentimental factors & memorizing' of visit with mean value 3.65, 'Value' with mean of 3.64 and 'quality' with mean of 3.57, are also having impact on the purchasing of the GI-tagged products. The GI-tagged products

greatly attract most of the customers because of its 'unique characteristics'.

From the analysis about the readiness to purchase the GI-tagged products through online platform, Palakkadan Matta Rice stands first with mean value of 4.01, Next to it Balaramapuram Sarees and Fine Cotton Fabrics with mean value 3.85, then Aranmulla Kannadi with mean value of 3.59. Rest all products came with mean value 3.43 to 3.06 (Alleppey Coir-3.43, Nilambur Teak – 3.40, Marayoor Jaggery -3.36, Payyannur Parithra Ring-3.25, Vazhakulam Pineapple-3.22, Kuthampully Sarees – 3.14, Tirur Betel -3.06).

The coefficient of factors influencing the purchases of Palakkadan Matta Rice (Table 3.1) through online is given in the following equation:

$$Y = 0.01155 X_1 + 0.03952X_2 + 0.190609X_3 + 0.47607X_4 + 0.12966X_5 + 1.671195$$

X_1 = Quality, X_3 = Pride, X_5 = Sentimental Factors & memorizing, X_2 = Value, X_4 = Unique Characteristics

People consider the Unique Characteristics with the product influencing them to purchase Palakkadan Matta Rice through online and also there is a significant relation between them.

The coefficient of factors influencing the purchases of Balaramapuram Sarees (Table 3.2) through online is given in the following equation:

$$Y = 0.02886X_1 + 0.053208X_2 + 0.152064X_3 + 0.454676X_4 + 0.048552X_5 + 1.14557X_1 = \text{Quality, } X_3 = \text{Pride, } X_5 = \text{Sentimental Factors \&}$$

Table 3.1
Palakkadan Matta

| Factors | Coefficient of Influencing factors to buy Palakkadan Matta | Sig. |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------|
| Intercept | 1.671195 | 0.027879 |
| Quality | 0.01155 | 0.019616 |
| Value | 0.03952 | 0.028439 |
| Pride | 0.190609 | 0.019135 |
| Unique Characteristics | 0.47607 | 0.001646 |
| Sentimental Factors & memorizing | 0.12966 | 0.00422 |

Source: - Primary data

Table 3.2
Balaramapuram Sarees and Fine Cotton Fabrics

| Factors | Coefficient of Influencing factors to buy Balaramapuram Sarees and Fine Cotton Fabrics | Sig. |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------|
| Intercept | 1.145574 | 0.044604 |
| Quality | 0.02886 | 0.039018 |
| Value | 0.053208 | 0.027858 |
| Pride | 0.152064 | 0.028467 |
| Unique Characteristics | 0.454676 | 0.002038 |
| Sentimental Factors & memorizing | 0.048552 | 0.035765 |

Source:- Primary data

Table 3.3
Aranmulla Kannadi

| Factors | Coefficient of Influencing factors to buy Aranmulla Kannadi | Sig. |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------|
| Intercept | 2.660204 | 0.047717 |
| Quality | 0.243672 | 0.024241 |
| Value | 0.14492 | 0.040549 |
| Pride | 0.22012 | 0.023478 |
| Unique Characteristics | 0.507172 | 0.000125 |
| Sentimental Factors & memorizing | 0.34839 | 0.013673 |

Source: - Primary Data

memorizing, X2 = Value X4 = Unique Characteristics Unique Characteristics with Balaramapuram Sarees is having more impact in purchasing it through online and also there is a significant relation between them.

The coefficient of factors influencing the purchases of Aranmula Kannadi (Table 3.3) through online is given in the following equation:

$$Y = 0.243672X1 + 0.14492X2 + 0.22012X3 + 0.507172X4 + 0.34839X5 + 2.660204$$

X1 = Quality, X3 = Pride, X5 = Sentimental Factors & memorizing, X2 = Value, X4 = Unique Characteristics

For purchasing Aranmula Kannadi in online the people are giving more importance to the Unique Characteristics with the product and there is a significant relationship between reasons for buying GI tagged products and purchasing it through online.

Findings

- The researcher evaluated GI-tagged items from Kerala and chose 30 products for the study, concluding that the GI-tagged products from Kerala are from the Agricultural and Hand crafts sectors.
- From the analysis the researchers inferred that the inhabitants of UAE are using the internet more often each year.
- Kerala has 30 plus GI-tagged items. The majority of them are not widely known among UAE Malayali residents. Based on their level of

awareness, the researchers consider the most well-known 10 GI-tagged products from Kerala to be Palakkadan Matta Rice, Balaramapuram Sarees and Fine Cotton Fabrics, Aranmula Kannadi, Alleppey Coir, Nilambur Teak, Marayoor Jaggery (Marayoor Sharkara), Payyannur Parithra Ring, Vazhakulam Pineapple, Kuthampully Sarees, Tirur Betel Leaf (TirurVettila) etc

- The variables influencing the buying of GI-tagged items are the most essential elements in this Study. The unique characteristic has the greatest mean value of 4.59, followed by pride connected with consumption, which has a mean value of 3.80. Other influencing elements, such as sentiment, value, and quality, have an equivalent influence on the purchase of GI-tagged items. Customers are drawn to GI-tagged items because of their distinctive characteristics.
- According to the analysis of the willingness to acquire GI labeled items via online platform, Palakkadan Matta Rice ranks highest with a mean value of 4.01, followed by Balaramapuram Sarees and Fine Cotton Fabrics with a mean value of 3.85, and Aranmula Kannadi with a mean value of 3.59. The remaining goods ranged in price from 3.43 to 3.06 (Alleppey Coir-3.43, Nilambur Teak-3.40, Marayoor Jaggery-3.36, Payyannur Parithra Ring-3.25, Vazhakulam Pineapple-3.22, Kuthampully Sarees-3.14, Tirur Betel-3.06).

- The researcher specially studied three most aware GI-tagged products from Kerala the Palakkadan Matta Rice, Balaramapuram Sarees and Fine Cotton Fabrics, Aranmula Kannadi and identified that unique characteristics of these items are attracting the residents from UAE to buy these products through online.
- The researcher considered the most aware 10 GI-tagged products such as Palakkadan Matta Rice, Balaramapuram Sarees and Fine Cotton Fabrics, Aranmula Kannadi, etc. and their willingness to purchase through online platforms, and discovered that the unique characteristics of these items are attracting the residents of UAE the most.

Suggestions

- Create an engaging and informative product description in the website; clearly highlight the unique features, cultural significance, and heritage associated with GI-tagged products. Use compelling storytelling techniques to evoke emotions and connect with potential buyers.
- Social media and influencer marketing can help boost brand visibility and attract more customers by encouraging social media influencers to share their experiences with GI-tagged products through posts, videos, and reviews.
- Partnering with e-commerce platforms can provide exposure to a larger audience, increase brand visibility, and simplify the purchasing process for customers.
- Highlight certifications and authenticity: Clearly display the GI certification logos and other relevant authenticity marks on your online platform. This assures customers of the product's quality, origin, and adherence to traditional production methods.
- Foster partnerships with local artisans and communities to create a sense of connection and social responsibility, which can resonate with customers and drive sales.

Conclusion

Consumers' curiosity in the origin and authenticity of the products they buy has led to an increase in awareness of GI-tagged products in recent years. Many consumers assume that GI-tagged products are of superior quality and have distinguishing qualities that set them apart from other products. This study demonstrates that the buying choice for things with GI tags is primarily impacted by the Unique Characteristics, followed by the Pride of owning it. However, as e-commerce continues to grow and consumers become more accustomed to purchasing products online, particularly among younger generations, there is likely to be an increase in the willingness to purchase GI tagged products through digital platforms, particularly for the elderly. A Combination of effective marketing strategies, user-friendly online platforms, and a focus on customer satisfaction is crucial for enhancing the sales of GI-tagged products online.

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