



GEOGRAPHIC INDICATION AS A BRANDING TOOL FOR SAFFRON

Natasha Saqib

Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies, University of Kashmir, South Campus, Anantnag, India.

Abstract

Significant changes are happening in the Indian agriculture sector in recent times and the idea that an agricultural product can be branded, much like other products, is gaining the attention of academicians and practitioners. Agribusiness commodities, which in the past did not have many incentives to pursue the search for differentiation, have to develop branding strategies, for establishing a prominent position in consumers. And Geographical Indication is one of the branding tools through which differentiation can be achieved. Geographical indications are legal signs which identify a good as originating in a specific country or region, where the reputation of the product is attributable to its geographical roots. India has taken legislative measures by enacting the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. GIs has proven very successful for many states across the country in recent years. Prominent examples in India include Basmati Rice, Darjeeling Tea, Kangra Tea, etc. As far as Kashmir is concerned, the state has in its possession six GIs in handicrafts, which have already built up enormous goodwill and reputation at the global level, e.g. Kashmir Pashmina, Kannai shawl etc but as other states are geographically indicating their agricultural products also Jammu & Kashmir has till date taken no steps in this regard. Kashmir which has variety of agricultural products should take some steps and one agricultural product which should be immediately registered as Geographical Indication is Saffron. "Kashmir Saffron" needs to be branded as Branding of saffron will allow saffron producers to achieve market recognition, differentiate their offerings, and gain legal protection and Geographical Indication can be the branding tool for it.

Research Objective

Geographical indications play an important role in brand building and the role of Geographical Indications as a branding tool for "Kashmir Saffron" is the basis for this paper. Drawing from the Branding and Geographical indication literatures, the paper illustrates the significance that can be derived from registering "Kashmir Saffron" as Geographical Indication and determines how this could be used by Agricultural Cooperatives and state government into a brand development strategy designed not only to differentiate "Kashmir Saffron" but also to enhance it with higher value.

Key Words: Branding, Geographical Indication, Jammu & Kashmir, & Saffron.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian agriculture sector has been witnessing some significant developments in the recent times and the idea that an agricultural product can be branded, much like other products, is gaining the attention of academicians and practitioners. As Commodities do not represent a sustainable branding opportunity because of their physical similarity with competing products and the expertise gaps in producer countries. To succeed, brands must convince consumers that the product is distinct in some way from similar competing products. Thus Over the past two decades, agricultural product business have experienced a major shift towards branding, a set of strategies and marketing activities involved in creating and managing brands in the market. Branding allows producers to achieve market recognition, differentiate their offerings, and gain legal protection. Creating a unique identity for a brand represents a primary issue in order to differentiate a product; such identity elements can be the natural characteristics of the product and the intangible or symbolic characteristics, such as social status characteristics or even more the environmental sensitivity of its consumers. And such a brand identity element is Geographical Indications henceforth (GIs). The proper use of GIs is an effective branding tool of great economic value. It indeed conveys the cultural identity of a nation, region or specific area & adds value to the natural riches of a country and to the skills of its population. GIs gives local products a distinguishable identity. GIs allows producers to create an image of "exoticness" that enables them to obtain premium prices for the products, which would otherwise be ascribed commodity status. The main source of this exoticness comes from unique quality differences that may be attributed to production in a particular geographical area based on quality characteristics associated with that location (S. Agarwal, M.J. Barone, 2005). GIs, as a branding tool, can be used by all qualified producers within a specific region or country, giving them access to the brand and brand protection. The economic benefits of such activities are becoming clearer as more geographical indication efforts are established all over the world. India started using GI system since 2003 & has till date protected 223 high-quality products based on geographical origin. GI-based branding strategies as a form of market protection and promotion have long been available to agricultural products in the India with examples including Darjeeling tea and Basmati rice. As far as Kashmir is concerned, the state has in its possession six GIs in handicrafts, which have already built up enormous goodwill



and reputation at the global level, e.g. Kashmir Pashmina, Kanni shawl etc but as other states are geographically indicating there agricultural products also Jammu & Kashmir has till date taken no steps in this regard. Kashmir which has variety of agricultural products should take some steps and one agricultural product which should be immediately registered as GI is Saffron. “Kashmir Saffron” needs to be branded as Branding of saffron will allow saffron producers to achieve market recognition, differentiate their offerings, and gain legal protection and geographical indication can be the branding tool for it (S.Natasha & S.Abid 2013).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Branding: A Value Adding Activity

According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), a brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of the competitor.

Keller & Lehmann (2006) states that for customers, brands can simplify choice, promise a particular quality level, reduce risk, and/or engender trust about the product in question. A brand thus signals to the customer the source of the product, and protects both the customer and the producer from competitors who would try to provide products that appear to be identical. According to M.Healey,(2008) Branding reinforces a good reputation ,encourages loyalty, assure quality, convey a perception of greater worth allowing a product to be priced higher ,grant the buyer a sense of affirmation and entry into an imaginary community of shared values .

There has been little consideration of agricultural and horticultural products in the branding literature. However, few authors have attempted to bridge the gap. M.Albayrak & E.A. Gunes, (2010) claims that Geographical indications are used worldwide as an instrument for brand management and diversifying products. Bowbrick (1992) points out that that Within agricultural and horticultural products branding seems to include identifying a product with various types of labels (e.g. region of origin, variety) to differentiate products and suggests that a brand is a label attached to products from a specific manufacturer, distributor, country of origin, or retailer with the aim being to "convey information on, or persuade the consumer about; the quality, reliability, social status, value for money or safety of a purchase".

Geographical Indications (GIs)

GIs is a relatively novel but important instrument in intellectual property protection. The term “Geographical Indication” has been around for many decades, but it is actually since the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) entered into force in the mid-1990s, that it has come into widespread use. According to the 1994 WTO Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement, Article 22, paragraph 1: “Geographical indications are, for the purposes of this Agreement, 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 characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographical origin” (World Trade Organization, 1994).

According to Addor and Grazioli (2002), GIs are distinctive signs which permit the identification of products on the market. If they are used in the proper way and are well protected, they can become an effective marketing tool of great economic value. GIs indeed convey the cultural identity of a nation, region or specific area. They make it possible to add value to the natural riches of a country and to the skills of its population, and they give local products a distinguishable identity. GIs can be applied to every sort of product. GI systems ensure that only producers within a specific geographical region benefit from the commercial exploitation of their heritage(C Bramley & J.F Kirsten 2007).

Moran (1993) states, “GIs are much more than the identification of a product with a place, they are a means for the social and industrial groups with rights to them to protect and distinguish their products. Small local producers are able to use them to enhance their reputations, and to sell directly to final demand, thus competing more effectively against large corporations”. O’Connor, (2005) points out that GIs are an excellent means to promote rural development, an effective market-access tool, a tool to preserve local know-how and natural resources, and an important part of our culture.

The Objectives of the protection of GIs are to protect product names from misuse and imitation, to help consumers, by giving them information concerning the specific character and the origin of the products and to encourage diverse agricultural production and rural sustainability(Soeiro 2005) .Further Vandoren,(2004)argues that GIs have a very important role as far



as consumers are concerned: they protect them against deception and ensure that they get the product they are looking for, rather than a low quality imitation or blend. (As quoted by M. Radman et.al., 2006).

With the help of GIs producers can command premium prices. Vandoren, 2004 points out that the average French cheese with a geographical indication (GI) sells at an extra 3 euro per kg compared to a non-GI French cheese. Toscano olive oil increased its price by 10% since its recognition as a GI in the EU. Jamao coffee from the Dominican Republic has seen its price/lb rise from US\$ 67 to US\$ 107 since it has been registered as a GI. Many of these products whose names are protected, are exported. 85% of French wine exports use GIs. 80% of EU exported spirits use GIs. (As quoted by M. Radman et.al. 2006).

Menapace, et.al (2009) also examined in their study that consumers' willingness to pay varies across countries and that within a country consumers have a greater willingness to pay for GI labeled than non-GI labeled products. Geographical origin labels are valued by consumers for their ability to provide information regarding the quality of the product and that the value is increasing with the informational content.

The Indian G.I. Act

Consequent upon India joining as a member state of the TRIPS Agreement a Sui –generis legislation for the protection of GIs was enacted. The Indian parliament passed the Geographical Indications Act (Registration and Protection) Act 1999 in December 1999. The act has come into force with effect from 15th September 2003. Under this act, the Central Government has established a "Geographical Indications Registry" with all India jurisdictions at Chennai, where the right-holders can register their respective GIs. The Object of the GIs of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 is three fold, firstly by specific law governing the GIs of goods in the country which could adequately protect the interest of producers of such goods, secondly, to exclude unauthorized persons from misusing geographical indications and to protect consumers from deception and thirdly, to promote goods bearing Indian geographical indications in the export market." The Indian G.I. Act, defines geographical indication as follows:

“Geographical Indication in relation to goods, means an indication which identifies such goods as agricultural goods, natural goods or manufactured goods as originating, or manufactured in the territory of country, or a region or locality in that territory where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of such goods is essentially attributable to its geographical origin and in case where such goods are manufactured goods, one of the activities of either the production or of processing or preparation of the goods concerned takes place in such territory, region or locality, as the case may be.”

“KASHMIR SAFFRON” (CROCUS SATIVUS), A CASE FOR GI ELIGIBILITY

The predominant trend in agro-industrial markets reveals a growing interest among consumers in traditional products that are closely linked to a specific place of origin. Both in developed and developing countries end-customers are showing a greater propensity to purchase food or agro-industrial products that are deeply-rooted in the various popular cultures, even if this means paying higher prices (UNIDO, Vienna Report 2010). Since Saffron produced in Kashmir is synonymous with, essence, sophistication and hundreds of years of tradition. It should not be considered just another agricultural product, rather part of the historic and cultural patrimony of the region that must be protected and preserved.

The objectives behind ensuring an effective protection of “Kashmir Saffron” as a GI includes the following

- To prevent misuse of the word Kashmir for saffron sold worldwide;
- To deliver the authentic “Kashmir Saffron” to the consumers the world over;
- To enable the commercial benefits of the equity of the brand “Kashmir ” to reach the legitimate producers of Saffron in Kashmir ;
- To preserve the intrinsic flavour of “Kashmir Saffron” and to uphold its reputation worldwide.

Saffron, the world’s oldest and most expensive spice, is derived from the stigmas of the saffron crocus (*Crocus sativus* L.) and belongs to the family Iridaceae. Its cultivation in the world extends through 0 to 90°E longitude (Spain to Kashmir) and 30 to 45°N latitude (Persia to England. Iran, Kashmir and Spain are the major saffron producing countries of the world. Jammu and Kashmir holds the distinction of producing saffron in India which after the Horticulture Industry is the biggest source of state exchequer contributing about 150 crores. Kashmir, the second largest contributor of saffron to the global market accounts pampore Tehsil of Kashmir (India) the main hub of saffron activity located at 34° 1’ N, 74° 56’ E, with an average alleviation of 1574 m.a.m.s.l. Khunmoh, Zewan, Balhama, Sampora, Ladhoor, Chandhara, Woyan, Khrew, Shar Konibal,



Dussu, Namblabal, Kadlbal, Hatiwara, Samboora and Lethpora are prominent saffron villages of Tehsil Pampore. (As quoted in S. Yasmin and F. A. Nehvi 2013).

History

Ancient history of saffron cultivation goes back to many thousands years ago. It was originated very likely in Greece and then distributed in the other Mediterranean and Near East countries (Turkey, Italy, Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, North of India, etc.). There is no record available to show when the cultivation of saffron was started in India, particularly in Kashmir, which is the only commercial saffron producing area in the country. Though Saffron finds its name in the oldest text of Kashmir (Nilamatapurane, Vol. 1). Besides, in the much celebrated ancient cluster of Kashmir, "Rajtarangini", Kalhana includes Kashmiri saffron among those special attributes of Kashmir, which according to the people of Kashmir cannot be available even in the paradise. Saffron is mentioned in the 5th century BC in Kashmiri records (Nauriyal et al., 1977). (As quoted in Salwee Yasmin and F. A. Nehvi 2013). Moreover Sir Water Lawrence, in his book "The Valley of Kashmir" has written about saffron. He undertook a detailed study of the cultivation of saffron and its utilities. He writes people from different parts of Kashmir used to throw Pampore for the cultivation of Saffron. And saffron is the exclusive preserve of the local population. Conversely, according to the traditional Kashmiri legends, saffron was brought to the region by two Sufi ascetics, Khawja Masood wali (r.a) and Sheikh Sharif-u-din wali (r.a) who arrived in Kashmir about 800 years ago, carrying flower bulbs from Asia Minor. After a local chieftain cured one of them who was ill, he was given a bulb in payment. Till today Prayers during the saffron season are offered at a golden-domed shrine in Pampore, the joint tomb of Khwaja Masood Wali, and Hazrat Sheikh Shariffudin. apparently. But Kashmir's more secular historians beg to differ. Mohammed Yusuf Teng, a poet and expert on the ancient culture of this land, claims that indigenous people of Kashmir grew saffron more than 2,000 years ago, a fact that's mentioned in the epics written during the era of Tantric Hindu kings.

Cultivation

The cool climate and rich soil, besides excellent drainage and organic content, make the region ideal for growing this spice. The autumn flowering species is cultivated for its red stigmatic lobes that constitute the spice saffron. Flowers are lavender in color with six petals; the centre is marked with yellow anthers and a pale yellow pistil. The pistil consists of an ovary from which arises a style 9-10cm long dividing at the top in three red trumpets like stigmas (2.5mm long) that is dried to form the commercial spice- saffron. Flower arises directly from corms. The biological cycle in saffron is unusual, characterized by long pause in summer and an active growth in autumn. The flower formation occurs before leaf appearance which does not happens with the majority of the flowers known- a phenomenon which compels the mind to call it a sufi spice in the land of sufi saints. The vegetative phase is marked by the months-November to May when the other flowers bloom- indeed a sufi crop. After summer, plant shows emission of tuft of leaves which wither at the onset of the dry season and during late spring and most of the summer the plant shows no aboveground organs or roots. Under Kashmir conditions, flowering occurs by mid October to early November emerging in 3-4 flushes with massive emission known as covering in the 2nd flush. Each flush lasts for 2-6 days. As soon as the flowering is over, the stem enlarges to produce daughter corms which propagate the plant. The propagation of saffron crocus has been carried out by these annual replacement corms since 4th century BC by the photosynthetic activity of leaves during winter and early spring months. (Salwee Yasmin and F. A. Nehvi 2013).

Quality

The quality of saffron is dependent on its colouring power (crocin concentration), odour (safranal) and taste (picrocrocin). The best quality saffron has high safranal content. Thus Due to very high crocin content and safranal content, the Kashmir Saffron is famous worldwide and commands a premium price over the saffron available from Spain or Iran.

Price

The price of this spice greatly depends on the country of origin, not only because of the different labour costs but also because of its different capacity to transmit the three saffron attributes to foods: colour, aroma and taste (Carmona, M et.al., 2005). The price of "Kashmir Saffron" is very high because of the high labour cost and for its world famous quality.

THE CURRENT CRISIS FACING THE KASHMIR SAFFRON INDUSTRY

Kashmir Saffron growers are having trouble maintaining market share and value in their markets, both domestic and international because of adulteration and illegal imports allegedly from Iran. Saffron is also one of the most adulterated products in Kashmir because of its unique qualities. Despite of repeated attempts to stop the adulterated practice and strict measures, Saffron adulteration remains the matter of distress for saffron growers in Kashmir. The problem of adulteration in the product started from the European regions and is now a day's practiced in Kashmir, where saffron is mixed with



different types of beets and low quality silk fibers and even mixing saffron with oils to add weight is a widely practice followed in Kashmir. Saffron is also adulterated with styles, anthers and parts of corolla and other floral parts of some Asteraceae family members like Safflower and corn silk floral material colored with coal tar dyes are also used as adulterant. These mixes are then marketed as pure Kashmir Saffron, an advance that has cost Kashmiri growers much of their income.

Illegal Imports allegedly from Iran

Illegal imports allegedly from Iran have hit the Kashmir saffron industry badly. Imports of cheap saffron from Iran have caused a decline in prices of the Saffron, thereby affecting the growers, According to G.M. Pampori, President of the Kashmir Saffron Growers Association “Iranian saffron is sold on the Kashmiri brand name. It is sold not only in major Indian cities but in Kashmir also,” Since Saffron produced in Iran is cheaper than its Kashmir grown species; many unscrupulous traders sell the product as Kashmir Saffron. Many local traders having fixed clientele across India import thousands of Iranian saffron by different means and blend it with Kashmir Saffron. The practice is going on for years and return of the spurious trade runs in crores.

Further due to adulteration of saffron and competition from Irani saffron a number of farmers in the Kashmir’s saffron belt are nowadays converting their saffron fields into apple plantation as the growers don’t get adequate rates for their produce, forcing them to shift towards fruit cultivation.

SIGNIFICANCE

Geographical indication as a branding tool for the “Kashmir Saffron.” assumes enormous significance.

GI for “Kashmir Saffron” a preventive protection tool as it will give producers the legal means to defend their reputation against unfair competition allegedly from Iran.

GI for “Kashmir Saffron” an effective market-access tool, as it will bring an added value to the products that are labeled as such and thereby ensure them better market access worldwide. Will allow producers to market differentiated products with specific characteristics that are clearly identifiable. And can be used in the domestic and in the international market in a product’s marketing strategy.

GI for “Kashmir Saffron” an excellent means to promote rural development, because it will help saffron producers to obtain a premium price for their products in exchange for guarantees offered to consumers on production methods and quality and will bring value to the region of origin.

GI for “Kashmir Saffron” an excellent means to promote female employment, since the presence of women labor force predominates during harvesting of flowers and mostly during separation of the stigmas of “Kashmir Saffron”.

GI for “Kashmir Saffron” an important part of our culture, since it will play a positive role in raising local and national identity by making producers and consumers proud of their unique traditional products;

GI for “Kashmir Saffron” an indirect means to spur tourism in the region. GI goods create an image for the region that helps the tourism sector to develop. The long cultural tradition of saffron cultivation and use for various purposes opens the door to improvement and revaluation of this spice that could be promoted as tourism product within the production regions and become the starting point of agro-tourism development by emphasizing the archaeological sites, the Kashmir historical traces of saffron, the beauties of cultivation, the shops using this spice, as well as the gastronomy of the production regions. The key is to take advantage of the enormous charm of nature during saffron flowering, attracting a significant number of visitors to the rural areas. For saffron have only two flowering periods during the entire year that last only few days. Instead of this being a weakness, it spreads an aura of fragility and uniqueness. Since Saffron fields are on the national highway so whenever tourists come and leave they can visit the fields.

Unfortunately Kashmiri producers of saffron are not completely aware of such benefits. Due to which the demand for registering the Kashmir Saffron for the GI is very low.

Eligibility

According to Josling (2006) product can obtain geographical indications if it satisfies two conditions:



- At least one stage of the production of the protected product is undertaken within the geographical area (with, say, imported raw materials) and in case of saffron all the production stages are taken in Kashmir.
- There must be a link between the product and the area, though this need not be exclusive or essential. A specific quality or reputation may be sufficient to link the product with the geographical area. Kashmir Saffron has acquired worldwide reputation and patronage of perceptive consumers all over the world for well over a century for its unique flavor. Among the saffron varieties cultivated in world, the most celebrated one is “Kashmir Saffron”. Saffron of Kashmir is superior to of any other place because of its colour and better aroma The unique and complex combination of agro-climatic conditions prevailing in the region, lends the saffron a distinctive and naturally-occurring quality and flavor. Further, the methods and stages of processing followed while converting the saffron flowers produced in Kashmir into “saffron ligaments (i.e. the final product which comes to the market) are also said to have some influence on the uniqueness of Kashmir Saffron. Since the unique and complex combination of factors, which provides Kashmir Saffron with its distinct flavour, is not found anywhere else in the world, hence the Kashmir Saffron flavor cannot be replicated elsewhere worldwide.

Fig 1 Relationship between Production Area, Producer and Product



Source: EC-ASEAN Intellectual Property Rights Co-operation Programme (ECAP II)

Fulfilling the above conditions and taking in consideration the crisis Kashmir saffron industry is facing and its significance for the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Government and Saffron Associations in Kashmir should work extensively for getting “Kashmir Saffron” to be registered as a GI.

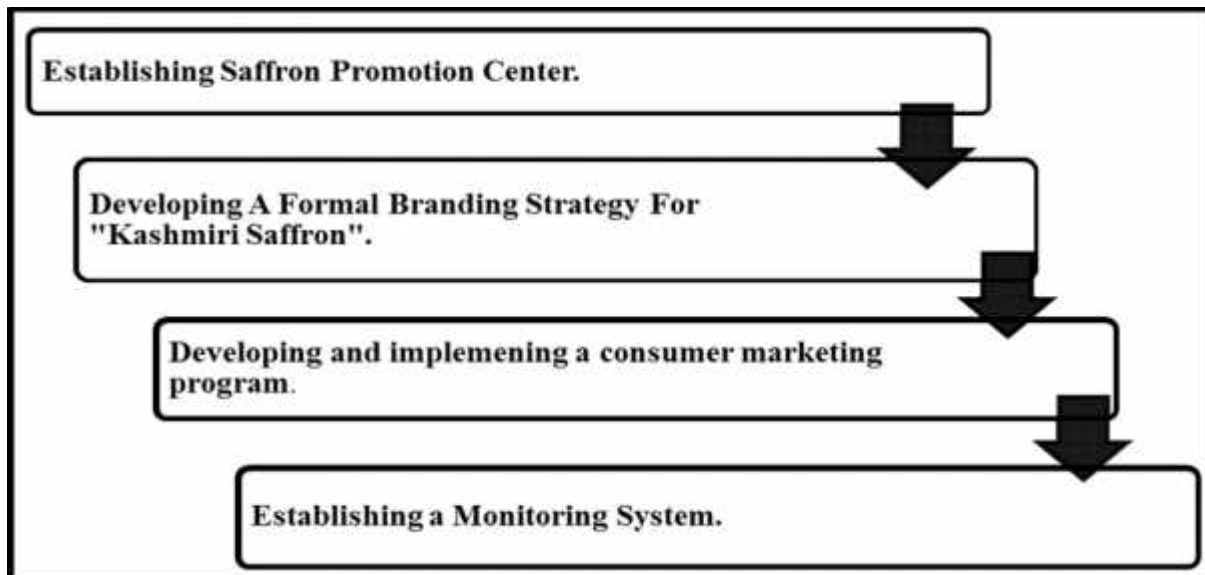
Proposed GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Taking into consideration afore mentioned arguments, it is generally believed that state government should invest in a market-oriented strategy based on brand development of “Kashmir Saffron” and specifically should use a “Geographical Indication” as a branding tool. The geographical indication Development Program for Kashmir Saffron needs the efforts from all the quarters and thus requires a well-developed plan for proper implementation. The main objectives of the Geographical indication development program for “Kashmir Saffron” should be

- To create awareness about the importance and protection of GI so that interested parties come forward to register GI.
- To disseminate, promote, look after and protect the image and prestige of “Kashmir Saffron”.



FIGURE 2: Proposed Geographical Indication Development Program



The proposed Development Program contains three key components:

The proposed Development Program contains three key components:

1. Establishing Saffron Promotion Centre

The suggested development program could be developed, coordinated and promoted by the cooperative representatives' boards such as SKUAST-Kashmir, National Horticulture Board (NHB) and Department of Tourism in the state. Though Government is running various programs, through SKUAST-Kashmir, like "Value Chain on Kashmir Saffron" project launched by the World Bank and Indian Council of Agricultural Research, which aims to boost production and quality using environmentally-friendly and the National Mission on Saffron (Rs-388-crore project, approved by the Government of India on August 18, 2010) .an interesting initiative would be the creation of a center by National Horticulture Board (NHB) in the state., established anywhere in the Kashmir, aiming just at the "Branding Of Saffron". This organization center should be involved in developing a formal branding strategy for Kashmir Saffron.

2. Developing Formal Branding Strategy For "Kashmir Saffron".

It is recommended that Saffron Promotion Center should apply in the office of the Geographical Indication Registry, Chennai for registration of Kashmir Saffron as GI and specialist should be assigned to develop its GI sign.

a. Creating Geographical Sign for "Kashmir Saffron"

A graphic symbol, used with marks that can indicate a GI. under the TRIPS Agreement For a sign to be recognized as geographical indication following conditions must be satisfied

- The sign must relate to a good;
- There goods must originate from a particular area; and
- The goods must have sign, reputation or other characteristics which are clearly linked to the geographical origin of the goods.

GIs are classified as direct and indirect (C.M.Correa ,2002). GIs are mostly geographical names ("direct" indications), such as Kashmiri Pashmina, Champagne, Scotch whisky, etc. However, GIs may also be non geographical names that are associated to a specific geographical origin, ("indirect" indications) such as Basmati. 'Basmati' is not a geographical name. But if it is perceived by the public as an indication of rice originating from India , and if such rice derives its quality, reputation or other characteristics from that particular geographical region then 'Basmati' can very well qualify to be a GI and Feta (cheese from Greece), may be from a particular place but do not use direct geographical names.

The end-customer should experience the brand visually. Most successful GIs have used a symbol and name in combinations like Darjeeling tea. The name (or symbol) serves to identify a good as originating in a certain location. GIs are usually geographical names (such as, name of a town, a region or a country) to designate the origin of the goods to which they are



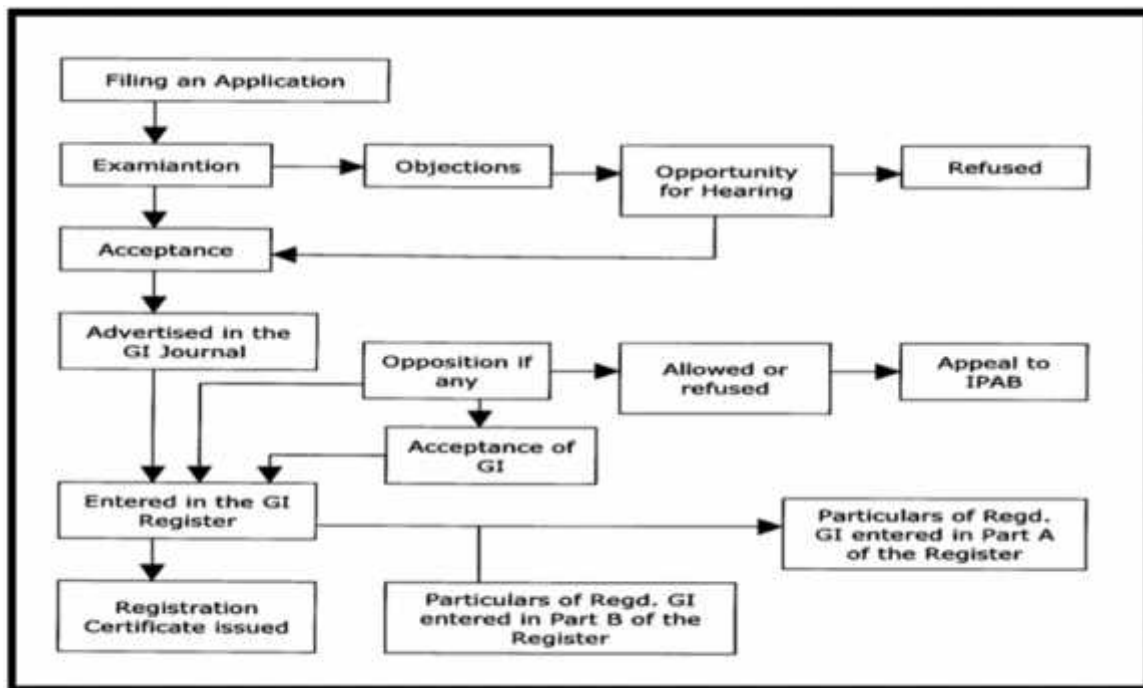
associated, or consist of symbols or Combination Marks graphics with both text and a symbol/icon that signifies the brand image .More importantly, we have to make consumers "look for the "Kashmir Saffron" logo as an assurance of quality.

b. Registering Geographical Indication for Kashmir saffron

GIs, unlike a trademark, is "identified" rather than created. As it is clear from the above discussion that there is an immediate need for obtaining geographical indication for Kashmir Saffron. Saffron Promotion Center, and Saffron Growers Association can file application for obtaining Geographical Indication for Kashmir saffron. Various stages of filing and granting of geographical indications in India are explained below. In the first step, the producers' organization or a collective body of producers, like the Kashmir Saffron Growers Association, Saffron Promotion Center and SKUAST-Kashmir for example, has to file an application in the prescribed form to the GI authority in India. They need to file the request which should consists of the declaration that how the geographical indications are connected to the quality and with other distinguishing features which are the result of the geographical environment, encompasses of the natural qualities and human factors, exclusive methods of production, processing and preparation, which occurs within the said geographical area. It is mandatory that the class of goods which have been chosen should be enclosed under the registration and according to GI registry saffron comes under (Class 30. Coffee, tea, cocoa, sugar, rice, tapioca, sago, artificial coffee; flour and preparations made from cereals, bread, pastry and confectionery, ices; honey, treacle; yeast, baking powder; salt, mustard; vinegar, sauces, (condiments); spices; ice).The applicant is needed to give the geographical map of the region in which the goods have been produced along with the descriptors method of the geographical indicators manifestation of the goods.

This application will be examined by experts appointed by GI registry; if accepted then the application will be advertised in the GI journal for public scrutiny. However, if the application is objected by experts then a hearing will take place in special courts designated for GI purposes. If the court refuses to recognize the genuineness of the application then the applicants can further appeal to the Intellectual Property Appellate Board I.

Figure 3: Registration Process



c. Developing and Implementing a Consumer Marketing Program.

Key components of the consumer marketing program should include:

- Media advertising like TV, print, radio, and billboards.
- Development of a website targeted at consumers, producers and processors, retailers and the food service industry. The website should provide information on Kashmir Saffron brand, marketing campaign, merchandising program and industry program.



3. Establishing a Monitoring System

A monitoring system should be established for reporting and following up on unauthorized use of “GI Kashmir Saffron” sign, and breaches of the licensing agreements.

The monitoring system should include:

- Having processors and producers sign licensing agreements which outline their rights and responsibilities.
- A reporting system consisting of a link through the website as well as a telephone number that people can use to report situations where the GI sign is not being used appropriately.

CONCLUSION

GIs is a well-established means of differentiation in the agri-food sector, and is likely to become even more popular in India in light of market growth trends. Agri-food systems in India have experienced a significant shift towards branding as agricultural and food products have become increasingly differentiated. Branding strategies have become an accepted part of marketing activity for manufactured and processed food products. However; there are still a wide range of food products that remain unbranded. GIs which is emerging as a branding tool for agricultural products protects the quality, reputation or other character of goods essentially attributable to their geographical origin. Jammu and Kashmir have been dawdling to develop brands through geographical indication for agricultural products but J&K has huge potential for using geographical indication for its handicrafts and agricultural products like Saffron. The arguments presented in this paper provide a strong justification for the registration of saffron as Geographical Indication. Saffron is produced in a geographical region (Kashmir) which has unique geo-climatic characteristics and uses traditional skills. These give a unique value to the product and make its replication elsewhere impossible. Kashmir Saffron has huge market potential both at national market and international market. But due to adulteration, illegal imports allegedly from Iran, poor marketing strategies and branding techniques this market remains mostly unexplored. There is need for branding of Kashmir Saffron and geographical indication can serve as branding tool for Kashmir saffron. GI of Kashmir Saffron in conjunction with an effective marketing program can help saffron producers and processors develop more profitable operations. It can help to create reliable and well-known brand for Kashmir Saffron. GI of saffron can contribute positively towards building consumer loyalty, achieving product differentiation and distinctness, creating legal protections and achieving higher profit margins. The saffron industry may benefit from geographical indication in a proper way and secure the opportunity of utilizing the maximum out of Geographical Indications both at national level and as well as international level.

REFERENCES

1. Addor Felix, and Alexandra Grazioli. (2002). “Geographical Indications beyond Wines and Spirits: A Roadmap for a Better Protection for Geographical Indications in the WTO TRIPS Agreement”, *The Journal of World Intellectual Property*, Vol. 5(6), pp. 865-897.
2. Agarwal, S. and Barone, M. J. (2005). “Emerging Issues for Geographical Indication Branding Strategies”, *MATRIC Research Paper 05-MRP*.
3. Bowbrick, P. (1992), *The Economics of Quality, Grades and Brands*, Routledge Publishers.
4. Correa, Carlos M. (2002). “Protection of Geographical Indications In Caricom Countries”, Available at http://www.virtualtradeportal.org/cms/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_details&Itemid=0&gid=95
5. Cerkia Bramley & Kirsten. (2007). “Exploring the Economic Rationale for Protecting Geographical Indicators in Agriculture”, *Agrekon*, Vol 46, No 1 , pp69-93
6. Carmona, M., Martínez, J., Zalacain, A., Rodríguez-Méndez, M. L., de Saja, J. A., & Alonso, G. L. (2005). *Analysis of saffron volatile fraction by TD–GC–MS and enose*, Springer-Verlag
7. Josling, T. (2006). “The war on terroir: geographical indications as a transatlantic trade conflict”. *Journal of Agricultural Economics* 57(3): 337-363.
8. K.L. Keller & D.R. Lehmann (2006). “Brands And Branding: Research Findings And Future Priorities”
9. Luisa Menapace, Gregory Colson, Carola Grebitus, Maria Facendola. (2009). “Consumer preferences for country-of-origin, geographical indication, and protected designation of origin labels”, Working Paper No. 09021.
10. Matthew Healey .(2008). “What is Branding?” Rockport Publishers, ISBN No :978-2-940361-45-8
11. Marija Radman, Zeljka Mesic, Damir Kovacic. (2006). “Geographical indications in Croatia A case study of Virovitica pepper, Food and Territories “ALTER 2006” Baeza (Jaén), Spain, October 18th – 21st, 2006 .
12. Mevhibe Albayrak and Erdo_an Gunes. (2010). “Implementations of geographical indications at brand management of traditional foods in the European Union”. *African Journal of Business Management* Vol. 4(6), pp. 1059-1068,
13. Moran, W. (1993). “Rural Space as intellectual property”, *Political Geography* 12(3), pp. 263-77



14. Natasha Saqib & Abid Sultan. (2013). “An Overview of Geographical Indications in Jammu & Kashmir”, Indian Journal Of Applied Research Volume 3 , Issue 4
15. O’Connor and Company, 2005, “Geographical Indications and the challenges for ACP countries”, A discussion paper .Available at agritrade.cta.int/en/.../9ff_273fdcd02bad5354991647de82f9c.pdf, Accessed on 15, October, 2012.
16. Salwee Yasmin & F. A. Nehvi (2013), “Saffron as a valuable spice: A comprehensive review” African Journal of Agricultural Research Vol. 8(3), pp. 234-242, 24

ARTICLES

17. Draft Manual of Geographical Indications Practice & Procedure Published by the Office of Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks.Available at http://ipindia.nic.in/ipr/patent/DraftPatent_Manual_2008.pdf. Accessed on 17, April ,2013
18. India—The Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act of 1999, No. 48, “The Gazette of India”, 30 December 1999, No. 61 and the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Rules of 2002 (1), pp.39-73, 2006b. Available at ipindia.nic.in/ipr/gi/gi_act.pdf, Accessed on 17 april , 2013.
19. Adding value to traditional products of regional origin: A guide to creating a quality consortium ,United Nations Industrial Development Organization Vienna, 2010 .
20. Saffron Mission’ Launched To Boost Production , Jammu & Kashmir Update Newsletter .Volume 1 No 15 Jan 2011.
21. Salwee Yasmin And And F.A.Nehvi ,2013 “Saffron - The aroma unforgettable”
22. Showkat Dar(2012).”Kashmir saffron industry heading for trouble,Growers Shifting To Fruit Cultivation.” available at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Apr/17/kashmir-saffron-industry-heading-for-trouble-41.asp>.
23. Showkat Dar (2012), “Iranian saffron damaging Kashmir brand: Growers.” Available at <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Jun/7/iranian-saffron-damaging-kashmir-brand-growers-21.asp>
24. National Saffron Mission,Mir For revival of saffron to boost agri sectorSheikh Mushtaq, (2003). “Iranian Imports Eat Into Kashmir Saffron Trade”, Available at: <http://www.m.arabnews.com/node/242281>.