GI Tagged Kangra Tea Performance and Policy Recommendation

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Abstract: Geographical Indications (GI's) form a part of Intellectual property rights, are the products which have a specific geographical origin and have some traditional knowledge attached to them. They certify purity and quality different from similar looking products. As such GI tagged products have value added to them ensuring good returns which instigates their conservation and sustainable development. Kangra tea is known for its unique taste and aroma. The paper analyses the performance of Kangra tea after acquiring the GI Tag, the awareness level of the cultivators, the role of the government both the state and the centre and suggestions for the betterment of tea industry of the state.

Keywords: Geographical Indication, Geographical Origin, Traditional Knowledge, Sustainable development, Awareness level.

JEL Classification: O34, Q01, Q10, Q57.

1. Introduction

Credit of introducing tea to the world goes to the Chinese Emperor Sheh Nung, when he saw how a leaf accidently fallen in the pot of boiling water changed its aroma and colour. The word Tea comes from 'T' E' of the Chinese Fukien dialect. (Baruah, 2006).Colonel Letter in 1815started it in Assam. In Himachal Pradesh it was initiated byDr Jameson Superintendent of Botanical Garden, Peshawar who visited Kangra District in 1849 and suggested to start tea cultivation in the lower slopes of the Dhaula Dhar.The first commercial plantation started was **"Hailey Nagar Tea Estate"** Holta in 1852 at an elevation of 1291 m. Kangra Tea is not only a unique agricultural product but also a cultural and economic heritage. However, since obtaining GI status in 2005, Kangra tea has not made it to the level where it used to be in the British era. Merely registration is not enough, but to actually reap the benefits of GI tag, high awareness level, good governance, and effective market strategies are the key (Babu and Reddy2017). This paper explores the policy landscape surrounding Kangra Tea and provides policy recommendations to enhance its value chain and socio-economic impact.

2. Background of the study and Challenges

2.1 GI tag and its implications

GI certification provides protection to GI productsthis develops the willingness to pay the premium price for the product (Wynberg 2016),Branding and developing

goodwillon the part of the consumer establishes market sustainability(Shapiro1983). By enhancing the product value and providing market differentiation GI certification can act as a tool of rural development (Das 2010).It is GI certification which establishes the quality standards which instigates the consumer willingly paying more for that particular product (Addor and Grazioli 2002). It was in France in 1824 that certification with provision of penalty for duplicity was introduced ((Lindquist 1999). GI tag has brought more profitability to the producers for example The Comte Cheese, farmers on an average get 14% more milk in Comte area and the dairy farms here earn 32% more profit (Gerz and Dupont, 2006). GI tag is area specific and has traditional knowledge which empowers community development. As a result, it is instrumental in socio-cultural and economic upliftment of the stakeholders.GI tagging encourages conservation of the biodiversity of an area hence sustainability (Laybbert et al 2002).Sustainability in rural livelihood is possible if the ownership is in the hands of the local stakeholders (Sharma and Bharti 2022). GI tag intends to safeguard traditional knowledge, check duplicity, maintain sustainability and promote rural economic development. In terms of Kangra tea,the GI tag on papers i.e. theoretically positions it for high value having great market access. But practically the scenario is entirely different. The position in which the Kangra tea stands and the gains of the producers cannot solely be attributed to the GI tag alone.

2.2. Challenges for Kangra tea

Kangra tea has got a long history of development right from its inception in 1849 to present. It is popular for its uniqueness in taste and aroma and has got many health benefits as well (Manisha et al 2019, HPKV Palampur 2000), its uniqueness can be cherished when consumed without milk (Department of Agriculture Chai Bhawan Palampur). From being highly popular in Europe during the British era to becoming a sick industry prior 2005 and the GI tagged phase post 2005, Kangra tea has witnessed many ups and downs. All this has had an impact on its performance which can be attributed to the several structural and institutional challenges which have hindered the growth of Kangra tea. Which can be grouped as:

- **Awareness level**: The awareness level towards GI tagged Kangra tea is significantly low among the Kangra tea cultivators. Mainly the marginal growers who are in majority in terms of numbers. They are nearly unaware about the GI tag and its benefits. They are also unaware of attaining the user certificate and the registration process behind it.
- **Fragmented supply chain**: Lack of organized SHG's and FPO's resulting in inefficiencies. Only two FPO's are performing well rest others have become sick. This has resulted in the lack of cultivator's interests in participation of the group's activities.
- **Branding and packaging**: Minimal investments in brand building, advertising through storytelling and packaging has had an impact on marketing and popularising the product.

- **Institutional support**: limited involvement on part of the government agencies in certification, quality control, infrastructural development has hindered the growth of Kangra tea.
- **Digital Negligence**: Majority of the cultivators are illiterates in utilising the digital platforms. They lack access to any such platform and the necessary training needed to expand and reach out to broader market.

3. Objectives

- To study the Awareness Level of GI tag amongst the Kangra tea cultivators
- To evaluate the performance of GI tagged Kangra tea
- To recommend some policy measuresin order to realise the true purpose of GI tag

4. Research Methodology

For primary data collection Snowball sampling method was adopted. To begin with the two government offices pertaining to tea i.e The Tea Board of India office at Palampur and Chai Bhawan under the government of Himachal Pradesh Palampur were contacted upon.Initially the secondary data pertaining to the tea cultivators of Kangra tea, the total land with each cultivator, the tea factories etc was taken from these offices.

A total of 258 samples were selected representing the entire population of 5900 tea cultivators big, medium and small. The tea cultivators have been categorised on the basis of land they own as Marginal growers, small growers, medium growers and finally big growers. The study adopted, Personal interviewing (Face to Face) was employed to collect first- hand information regarding the performance of tea and its impact SPSS has been utilised to process and analyse the data collected.

5. Findings:

Table: 1 Land holding Distribution As per the baseline survey of 2013

Sr No	Land holding Limit	No of Planters	% age of planters	Total Area
1	Upto 2 hectares	5803	98	1141.09 hectares
2	Above 2 hectares	97	2	1169.62 hectares
Total		5900	100	2310.71 hectares

Source: Technical Officer Tea Palampur

The table above clearly reflects the status of Tea cultivators and the total tea area under them.Out of the total 5900 total tea cultivators 98% (5803) own land under 02 hectares while only 02% (97) cultivators own above 02 hectares of total land under tea in the state. This clearly reflects that the bigger cultivators own more than half the land of the state under tea cultivation who in total number appear to be negligible.

Table: 2 Classification on the basis of area (2013)

Sr No	Land holding Limit	No of Planters	% age of planters	Total Area
1	0-0.5 hectares	5625	95.34	844.44 hectares
2	0.5-1 hectares	136	2.31	193.13 hectares
3	1- 2 hectares	42	0.71	103.52 hectares
4	2- 4 hectares	38	0.64	141.05 hectares
5	4- 8 hectares	35	0.59	220.35 hectares
6	8-10 hectares	04	0.07	38.79 hectares
7	Above 10 hectares	20	0.34	769.43 hectares
Total		5900	100	2310.71 hectares

If we further bifurcate the cultivators on the basis of total land area under them altogether a different scenario emerges.

The above table reflects that planters above 04 hectares make a total of 59 planters having 1059.57 ha land under their possession while the majority of Marginal category 5625planters own 844.44 ha of land. From the above it can clearly be concluded that these cultivators have a great influence on any new changes and introductions made in terms of tea plantations. They are the ones who are thoroughly aware of the Government policies and hence the filtration of the Government outreach is limited to these cultivators. They have a major share both in terms of production and market.
Performance of GI tagged Kangra tea.

Table: 3 Total Land Owned (in ha) Status of the awareness level regarding the GI certification of Kangra tea

Crosstab					
			Status of the awareness level regarding the GI certification of Kangra tea		Total
			Somewhat aware	Not aware at all	
Total Land Owned (in ha.)	0.1-0.5	Count	0	82	82
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	.0%	31.8%	31.8%
	0.6-1	Count	12	62	74
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	16.2%	83.8%	100.0%
		% of Total	4.7%	24.0%	28.7%
	2-3	Count	3	36	39

		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	7.7%	92.3%	100.0%
		% of Total	1.2%	14.0%	15.1%
	4-5	Count	3	20	23
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	13.0%	87.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	1.2%	7.8%	8.9%
	6-7	Count	3	14	17
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	17.6%	82.4%	100.0%
		% of Total	1.2%	5.4%	6.6%
	8-10	Count	4	1	5
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	80.0%	20.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	1.6%	.4%	1.9%
	>10	Count	7	11	18
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	38.9%	61.1%	100.0%
		% of Total	2.7%	4.3%	7.0%
Total		Count	32	226	258
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	12.4%	87.6%	100.0%
		% of Total	12.4%	87.6%	100.0%

Table no (3) is reflecting the awareness level of the cultivators regarding the GI tag of Kangra tea. Tea cultivators have been grouped into different ranges on the basis the size of land owned by them in hectares. The different range (size) ownership is as follows; 0.1-0.5 ha, 0.6-1 ha, 2-3 ha, 4-5 ha, 6-7 ha, 8-10 ha, and more than 10 ha reflecting the different cultivators either somewhat aware or not aware at all category.
Regarding the first group (0.1-0.5 ha) of Marginal growers with very small land share, none of the 82 cultivators are aware of the GI tag.This group represents 31.8% of the total respondents. The cultivators with a small or marginal share 0.6-1 ha of land also falling in the same category of Marginal grower category, 16.2% (12 individuals) are aware of the GI tagged Kangra tea, while 83.8% (62 individuals) arein the 'not aware' category, accounting for 28.7% of the total (74) respondents. In the 2-3 ha category of small growers, 7.7% (3 individuals) are aware of the GI tagged Kangra tea, and 92.3% (36 individuals) arein the 'not aware' category,accounting for 15.1% of the total respondents.For those owning 4-5 Ha, 17.4% (4 individuals) are aware of the GI tagged Kangra tea, while 82.6% (19 individuals) arein the 'not aware' category, forming 8.9% of the total respondents. In the 6-7 ha range, 17.6% (3 individuals) are aware of the GI

tagged Kangra tea, and 82.4% (14 individuals) arein the 'not aware' category,comprising 6.6% of the total respondents. For the 8-10 ha range of medium growers, a significant 80% (4 individuals) are aware of the GI tagged Kangra tea, while 20% (1 individual) in the 'not aware' category, though this group only represents 1.9% of the total respondents, while in the category of more than 10 (ha) range of large growers the 38.9% (7 individuals) are aware of the GI tagged Kangra tea, while 61.1% (11 individuals) are in the 'not aware' category, making them 07% of the total respondents.

Regarding the status of the awareness level of GI tagged Kangra tea, there are 32 (12.4%) cultivators who are aware of GI tag and a total of 226 (87.6%) cultivators across all categories are unaware of the GI tagged Kangra tea. Indicating that the majority of the tea cultivators are unaware of the GI tag of Kangra tea.Cultivators with 8 to 10 ha of land reflect the highest (80%) awareness level whereas the marginal cultivators with a very small share of land (0.1 to 0.5 ha) show the lowest awareness level. In this range the awareness level of the cultivator's is (0%), as none of the (82) cultivators are aware of the GI tagged Kangra tea. The data clearly reflects that there exists a positive relation between the cultivators and the amount of land owned by them. More the land owned more is the level of awareness.

Table: 4

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	46.487[a]	6	.000
Likelihood Ratio	43.970	6	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	27.418	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	258		
a. 6 cells (42.9%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .62.			

The Pearson Chi-Square (Table 4) value is 46.748 with 6 degrees of freedom (df), and the asymptotic significance (2-sided) is 0.000. The result is statistically significant, which indicates that there exists significant association between the total land owned and the likelihood of being aware to the GI tag of Kangra tea. The likelihood ratio is also significant (43.97 with 6 df,p = 0.000), reinforces the Pearson Chi-Square result. The linear-by-linear association value of 27.418 with a significance of 0.000 suggests a strong linear relationship between the variables. It's worth noting that 6 cells (42.9%) have an expected count of less than 5, with the minimum expected count being 0.62, which can affect the validity of the chi-square test but does not nullify the significant association found.

Table: 5

Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.424	.000
	Cramer's V	.424	.000
N of Valid Cases		258	

A moderate association (Table5) between the two nominal variables is reflected by the Phi coefficientis 0.421, with an approximate significance of 0.000. Similarly, Cramér's V, (0.424) with a significance of 0.000, which also reflects the strength of association, confirms the moderate association between land ownership categories and the awareness level of the cultivator towards GI tagged Kangra tea. Both the measures suggest that there exists a meaningful relationship between the land owned and the awareness level of the cultivator, larger landowned, more likely it to be having a more level of awareness towards the GI tagged Kangra tea. The chi-square test and Cramér's V indicate a statistically significant and moderately strong association between the total land owned and the awareness level of the cultivator towards GI tagged Kangra tea. This suggests that land ownership size is a relevant factor in determining the awareness level of the cultivators towards GI tagged Kangra tea with larger landowners more likely to adopt it.

Table: 6 Total Land Owned (in ha.) Status of income from tea plantation

Crosstab						
			Did you get income from tea plantation			Total
			Fully Increased	Somewhat Increased	Partially Increased	
Total Land Owned (in ha.)	0.1-0.5	Count	0	82	0	82
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	.0%	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	.0%	31.8%	.0%	31.8%
	0.6-1	Count	12	62	0	74
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	16.2%	83.8%	.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	4.7%	24.0%	.0%	28.7%
	2-3	Count	3	36	0	39
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	7.7%	92.3%	.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	1.2%	14.0%	.0%	15.1%
	4-5	Count	3	20	0	23

		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	13.0%	87.0%	.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	1.2%	7.8%	.0%	8.9%
	6-7	Count	3	13	1	17
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	17.6%	76.5%	5.9%	100.0%
		% of Total	1.2%	5.0%	.4%	6.6%
	8-10	Count	4	1	0	5
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	80.0%	20.0%	.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	1.6%	.4%	.0%	1.9%
	>10	Count	7	11	0	18
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	38.9%	61.1%	.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	2.7%	4.3%	.0%	7.0%
Total		Count	32	225	1	258
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	12.4%	87.2%	.4%	100.0%
		% of Total	12.4%	87.2%	.4%	100.0%

Table no (6) is reflecting the performance of Kangra tea post 2005 after it got the GI tag. Division of tea cultivators on the basis of land ownership have been grouped into different categories as follows; 0.1-0.5 ha, 0.6-1 ha, 2-3 ha, 4-5 ha, 6-7 ha, 8-10 ha, and more than 10 ha reflecting the views of cultivators on status of tea income of individual cultivators. The increase in income from tea plantations has three responses to choose from; income fully increased, somewhat and partially increased category.

The responses align with the GI tag and the awareness level of the cultivator. The ones who are fully aware believe that GI tag has positively impacted the Kangra tea and their income from tea plantations has completely increased due to the GI tag whereas the cultivators with the low level or totally without GI tag awareness are of the view that GI tag has a negligible contribution towards tea development Kangra tea. Hence there has been a partial or a marginal increase in the income which can be or cannot be from GI tag. So, the marginal grower group with of (0.1-0.5 ha)& (0.6-1)ha taking the tally to144 (92.30%) growers out of the total 156 marginal growers not completely convinced that their tea income increase is due the GI tag. Only 12 (7.69%) growers believe that the rise is dueto the GI tag. Maximum rise in favour of GI tag is reflected by the people falling in the category of 8-10 ha, land ownership.This reflects that more the land under tea plantations more is going to be the production and later income to the cultivator.

Regarding the status of income from tea plantations and GI tag, there are 32 (12.4%) cultivators who are aware of GI tag and a total of 226 (87.6%) cultivators across all

categories who state that the rise in income is not completely due to the GI tag for Kangra tea. Indicating that the majority of the tea cultivators have stated that GI has played a partial role in the upliftment of tea industry in Himachal Pradesh. Cultivators with 8 to 10 ha of land reflect the highest (80%) cultivators stating that the rise in income post 2005 is solely due to the GI tag. Whereas the marginal cultivators with a very small share of land (0.1 to 0.5 ha) show the lowest awareness level and reflects that rise in tea income not completely due to the GI tag. The overall data clearly reflects that there exists a positive relation between the cultivators, the amount of land owned by them and the rise in income. More the land owned more is the production.

Table: 7

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	60.872[a]	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	49.601	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	19.268	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	258		
a. 13 cells (61.9%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .02.			

The Pearson Chi-Square (Table 7) value is 60.872 with 12 degrees of freedom (df), and the asymptotic significance (2-sided) is 0.000. The likelihood ratio is also significant (49.601 with 12df,p = 0.000), and the linear-by-linear association value of 19.268 with 1df, p= 0.000. All the three tests indicate highly statistically significant association between the variables. GI tag has facilitated the increase in the income of the cultivator from tea plantations. Here also the cultivators who are fully aware about the GI tag, own larger land share is fully convinced about the benefits being realised from GI tagged Kangra tea.The13 cells (61.9%) have an expected count of less than 5, with the minimum expected count being 0.02, can affect the validity of the chi-square test but does not nullify the significant association found.

Table: 8

Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.486	.000
	Cramer's V	.343	.000
N of Valid Cases		258	

A moderate to strong association (Table 8) between the two nominal variables is reflected by the Phi coefficientis 0.486, with an approximate significance of 0.000. Similarly, Cramér's V, (0.343) with a significance of 0.000, which also reflects the strength of association, confirms the moderate to strongassociation between land

ownership, theawareness level of the cultivator and the status of income from tea plantations. Both the measures suggest that there exists a meaningful relationship betweenland ownership, the awareness level of the cultivator and the status of income from tea plantations, larger landowned, more likely it to be having a more level of awareness and more is the rise in income. The chi-square test and Cramér's V indicate a statistically significant and moderately strong association between the GI tag and status of income from plantations. This suggests that GI tag has provided trust and stability hence further has been significant and instrumental in increasing the income of the tea cultivator.

Table: 9 Total Land Owned (in ha) Has GI registration provided any protection in the market in terms of (Product Differentiation, Quality & Traditional Reputation)

Crosstab						
			Did GI registration provides any protection in the market in terms of-All three			Total
			To great extent	Somewhat	Very little	
Total Land Owned (in ha.)	0.1-0.5	Count	0	82	0	82
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	.0%	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	.0%	31.8%	.0%	31.8%
	0.6-1	Count	12	62	0	74
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	16.2%	83.8%	.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	4.7%	24.0%	.0%	28.7%
	2-3	Count	3	36	0	39
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	7.7%	92.3%	.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	1.2%	14.0%	.0%	15.1%
	4-5	Count	3	20	0	23
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	13.0%	87.0%	.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	1.2%	7.8%	.0%	8.9%
	6-7	Count	3	14	0	17
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	17.6%	82.4%	.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	1.2%	5.4%	.0%	6.6%
	8-10	Count	4	1	0	5

		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	80.0%	20.0%	.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	1.6%	.4%	.0%	1.9%
	>10	Count	7	5	6	18
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	38.9%	27.8%	33.3%	100.0%
		% of Total	2.7%	1.9%	2.3%	7.0%
Total		Count	32	220	6	258
		% within Total Land Owned (in ha.)	12.4%	85.3%	2.3%	100.0%
		% of Total	12.4%	85.3%	2.3%	100.0%

Table no (9) is reflecting the performance of Kangra tea post 2005 after it got the GI tag. Division of tea cultivators on the basis of land ownership have been grouped into different categories as follows ;0.1-0.5 ha, 0.6-1 ha, 2-3 ha, 4-5 ha, 6-7 ha, 8-10 ha, and more than 10 ha reflecting the views of cultivators on protection in the market as result of GI tag. The protection related issue has three responses to choose from; to great extent, somewhat and very little protection.

The responses align with the GI tag and the awareness level of the cultivator. The ones who are fully aware believe that GI tag has positively impacted the Kangra tea in terms of product differentiation, its uniqueness in terms qualityand traditional reputation. Tea comes from other areas of the country and even internationally. To compete and maintain standards the GI tag of Kangra tea has helped to stabilise Kangra tea by rendering it its identity. Other majority of cultivators with the low level or totally without GI tag awareness are of the view that GI tag has a negligible or very little contribution towards the development and protection of Kangra tea. As the land ownership increases so does the dynamics towards the GI tag and its contribution towards market protection of the product also change as it is here that the cultivators having more share of the land are updated to all that is happening all around. Only 32 (12.4%) growers completely believe that the GI tag provides protection in terms of product differentiation, quality and traditional reputation, whereas 220 (85.3%) cultivators have not completely ruled out the contribution of GI tag. In this also the marginal cultivators with 0.1-0.5ha of land believe that GI tag has made negligible contribution.

The overall data clearly reflects that there exists a strong positive relation between the cultivators, the amount of land owned by them and GI tag providing market protection in terms of product differentiation, quality and traditional reputation which has stabilised the sale of Kangra tea thereby ensuring the flow of income. More the land owned more is the production.

Table: 10

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	132.553[a]	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	84.196	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.633	1	.031
N of Valid Cases	258		
a. 13 cells (61.9%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .12.			

The Pearson Chi-Square (Table 10) value is 132.553 with 12 degrees of freedom (df), and the asymptotic significance (2-sided) is 0.000. The likelihood ratio is also significant (84.196 with 12df,p = 0.000), and the linear-by-linear association value of 4.633 with 1df, p= 0.031. All the three tests indicate statistically significant association between the variables. GI tag has facilitated the protection in the market in terms product differentiation, quality and traditional reputation and further ensuring market stability and cultivators income. Here also the cultivators who are fully aware about the GI tag, own larger land share is fully convinced about the benefits being realised from GI tagged Kangra tea.The13 cells (61.9%) have an expected count of less than 5, with the minimum expected count being 0.12, the caveats put a question mark on the accuracy of results but still do not nullify the significant association found.

Table: 11

Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.717	.000
	Cramer's V	.507	.000
N of Valid Cases		258	

A strong association (Table 11) between the two nominal variables is reflected by the Phi coefficiento.717, with an approximate significance of 0.000. Similarly, Cramér's V, (0.507) with a significance of 0.000, which also reflects the strength of association, confirms the moderate to strong association between land ownership, the awareness level of the cultivator and the status of income from tea plantations and the role of GI in providing market protection to Kangra tea in terms of product differentiation, quality and traditional reputation. Both the measures suggest that there exists a meaningful relationship betweenland ownership, the awareness level of the cultivator, the status of income from tea plantations and GI tag providing market protection to Kangra tea, larger landowned, more likely it to be having a more level of awareness and more is the rise in income. The chi-square test and Cramér's V indicate a strong statistically significant and moderateto strong association between the GI tag, status of income from plantations and market protection in respect to product differentiation,

quality and traditional reputation. This suggests that GI tag has provided trust and stability hence further has been significant in increasing the income of the tea cultivator by providing market protection to Kangra tea.

6. Policy Recommendations

6.1. Increase in the Awareness level

The awareness level of the marginal growers is negligible; hence the outreach of the Government should be focussed on these marginal tea growers, who are maximum in strength with the land ownership ranging between 0.0 to 0.5 ha, they account for 95.34% (5625 out of 5900 total planters) and having 36.54%(844.44ha out of the total 2310.71ha) of the total plantation area under them. They have shown the least interest and are unaware of the GI tag and its benefits. To handle the marginal growers The Tea Board and The State Agricultural Department need to:

- Organize local level awareness drives especially in the remote localities showcasing the GI tag and its benefits
- Simplifying the process of Registration for the GI user
- Incentives to the first timers which can be in any kind like vouchers, rebates etc.

6.2. Strengthening the Farmers SHG's and FPO's

The Government encourages Small Tea Growers form self-help groups (SHG's) and Farmers Producing Organisations (FPO's) in order to have a better voice in the value chain of tea process. These bodies are formed with a purpose to address the challenges faced in terms of improved access to investments, technology, inputs and market access which are important aspects of tea cultivation process. This will further enhance production, productivity, profitability and will improve the tea quality. Apart from this the FPO's also act as the agents of knowledge dissemination (Schemes Tea Board of India) regarding various tea production aspects like cultivation, processing, marketing. This may include:

- Subventions in certifications, soil testing, tea testing etc for quality sustenance.
- Organising capacity building workshops for cooperative governance and collective amalgamation.
- Financial incentives and schemes available for common or collective processing units.
- Instigating efficient paper work for hassle free functioning and organising frequent meetings and correspondence with the agencies concerned for the success of the motive of formation.

6.3. Branding and Advertising

Investing in making Kangra tea a brand in the market both at the national and international level somewhat at the parameters of Darjeeling tea. When it comes to tea everyone is aware of Darjeeling tea or Assam tea but mostly people are unaware of

Kangra tea. For this along with branding advertising is also required especially in form of storytelling, which should be woven around the tradition and culture of the geographical region involved. This can be achieved by:

- Creating a unified brand or identity for Kangra tea along with highlighting the uniqueness of the tea in terms of its taste and aroma, its organic and medicinal potential, the traditional reputation and culture, The GI tag potential.
- Corelating it with Tea Tourism which will highlight the essence of nature and geographical location in the uniqueness of taste, flavour and aroma. This will help in integrating Kangra tea at the local, national and international level on tourism experiences.

6.4. Digital Marketing

In the times of internet, the world has become a global village. Digital platform holds a key to the success of marketing. Direct digital marketing should be encouraged. This will rule out the intermediaries from the middle and directly connect the producer and the consumer.This thing is being practised but only by a small number of cultivators, who utilize this online platform for sales. To achieve this the government should:

- Provide technical assistance in training the stakeholders in using the e-commerce websites available.
- Create an official portal for Himachal or Kangra agricultural products, the services of which can be utilised by the common stakeholders.
- Offer financial assistances for development of infrastructure in the remote localities.

6.5. Quality Assurance and Infrastructure

Tea depends on the consistency of its quality which further is dependent on timely plucking and processing. This all is defined by the tea cupping, which is unique and speciality for the different existing varieties. For Kangra tea, different studies and experts (Tea Board and Research institutes like CSIR-IHBT Palampur) have the cupping should roughly be as under:

- Liquor Colour: bright amber- golden.
- Aroma: delicate floral, slightly fruity (like orchard blossoms mainly with apricot and peachy hints)
- Taste: it should bellow, less stringent than the Darjeeling/ Assam tea, light bodied but brisk with sweet after taste
- Green Kangra Tea: very subtle, vegetal-floral with a refreshing, non-bitter finish

To achieve this there should be a provision of:

- Testing lab either at Dharamshala or Palampur; ideally suited will be Palampur as it is centrally located. This will help in establishing the Kangra flavour and help in reproducing the same with frequency and consistency.

- Investment in small scale modern processing units and package facilities.
- There is a need of mobile tea testing units looking at the geographical scenario. These mobile units will be of great utility in reaching remote areas.

6.6. Policy Integration and Monitoring

For the success of tea industry both the State Government and The Tea Board of India have to initiate some steps in collaboration with each other like:

- Appointment of a nodal agency within the state to see the entire GI ecosystem.
- Adoption of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP model) for marketing at both the National and International level.
- Appointment of watchdogs for detecting any foul play in terms duplicity, blending etc.
- Conduct regular impact assessment to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of GI policies.

Conclusion

There lies a great potential in GI tagged Kangra tea. The performance which it had in the past times. Lack of planning, structural inefficiencies low awareness level of the cultivators and weak market integration obstruct the success.Kangra tea sector can be benefitted and transformed with a holistic policy which will focus on cooperative development, quality assurance strategic branding and digital empowerment especially targeting the remote localities. Empowering marginal and small producers through targeted initiatives will revitalize the Kangra tea industry. This further will contribute to the increase in the rural livelihood and preserve the traditional and cultural heritage of the Kangra tea cultivators.

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