

GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS OF MAHARASHTRA: A TREASURE OF CULTURAL AND AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE

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Abstract :

Maharashtra stands as a leader in India's Geographical Indication (GI) landscape, with 54 registered products showcasing its rich agricultural and cultural heritage. This study examines Maharashtra's GI-registered products in a chronological and category-wise manner, organized by district. Additionally, it evaluates certain commodities that failed to secure GI status, along with the reasons for their rejection. The study also investigates why five products failed to secure GI status, offering visions into registration challenges. This article covers the role of libraries and their services to promoting Geographical Indications.

Keywords : Maharashtra, Geographical Indications, agricultural heritage, Handicrafts goods, Library services, refused GI tag

Introduction :

Located along India's western coastline, Maharashtra ranks as the country's third-largest state by area and second-most populous. It has seemed as a key player in India's Geographical Indication (GI) landscape. The state's distinct soil, climate, and age-old practices contribute to its outstanding agricultural GI contributions. Its handicraft such as the sophisticated Warli paintings, wonderful Paithani sarees, and traditional Kolhapuri chappals are showcasing generations of artistic excellence. GI recognition helps preserve these traditions, protecting the indigenous knowledge and cultural identity of these products. Maharashtra, with its 54 registered Geographical Indication (GI) tags, possesses a rich repository of cultural and agricultural heritage. Libraries across the state can play a dynamic role in protecting and promoting this heritage.

The Role of Libraries in Promoting Geographical Indications :

Forming dedicated GI corners libraries could showcase iconic products such as Alphonso mangoes, Warli paintings, Kolhapuri chappals, and Paithani sarees to attract local residents and tourists alike who are interested in regional heritage.

The arrange of multimedia kiosks to explain GI certification processes would further educate both producers and local communities about the value and procedures associated with GI tags.

Some functions of libraries to strengthen their impact :

1. Providers of Authentic GI Information :

- Granting access to official resources such as the *Geographical Indications Journal* and the IP India database.
- Displaying success stories of GI-registered products and outlining the step-by-step GI registration process within the library.

2. Localized Information Dissemination Hubs :

- Translating GI-related materials into regional languages to enhance accessibility.
- Developing informative pamphlets, posters, and audio-visual content tailored to local contexts and needs.

3. Digital Access Gateways :

- Offering free internet access and digital literacy training to help users navigate official GI portals.
- Creating and maintaining digital repositories focused on GI products specific to their region.

4. Taking the Library to the People :

Library extension work involves taking services beyond physical walls to engage the community directly. For GI awareness, this includes:

i) Community Workshops and Training :

- Organizing sessions on identifying authentic GI products, featuring talks by registered artisans and farmers.
- Collaborating with intellectual property experts to explain the legal and economic advantages of GI certification.

ii) Exhibitions and Cultural Programs :

- Hosting GI product exhibitions during local festivals or fairs to increase visibility and public engagement.

iii) Collaboration with Government and Educational Institutions :

- Partnering with agricultural universities (such as ICAR) to disseminate GI knowledge among farmers.
- Working with schools to introduce GI concepts through student projects and interactive workshops.

Types of GI Products and Their Significance :

GI registration provides significant socio-economic benefits, especially for local communities and farmers in Maharashtra:

Maharashtra is a leading state in India with a rich diversity of GI products. These products reflect the state's unique cultural traditions, agricultural practices and expertise. As of the latest data, Maharashtra holds **54 registered GI tags**, with **39 in agriculture**, **13 in handicrafts**, **1 in food stuff** and **1 in manufactured goods**. The tables are as follows:

Table:1 Registered GI in Maharashtra during 2005-2025

Sl. No.	Year of GI registration	Application No.	Geographical Indications	Categories of Goods	Status of application	District
1	2005-2006	8	Solapur Chaddar	Handicraft	Registered	Solapur
2		9	Solapur Terry Towel	Handicraft	Registered	Solapur
3	2009-2010	128	Puneri Pagadi	Handicraft	Registered	Pune
4		123	Nashik Valley Wine	Manufactured	Registered	Nashik
5	2010-2011	150 & 153	Paithani Sarees and Fabrics	Handicraft	Registered	Aurangabad
6		154	Mahabaleshwar Strawberry	Agricultural	Registered	Pune
7		165	Nashik Grapes	Agricultural	Registered	Nasik
8	2013-2014	240	Kolhapur Jaggery	Agricultural	Registered	Kolhapur
9		470	Ghansal Rice	Agricultural	Registered	Kolhapur
10		472	Mangalwedha Jowar	Agricultural	Registered	Solapur
11		474	Sindhudurg & Ratnagiri	Agricultural	Registered	Sindhudurg

			Kokum			
12	2015-2016	476	Waghya Ghevada	Agricultural	Registered	Satara
13		477	Navapur Tur Dal	Agricultural	Registered	Nandurbar
14		489	Vengurla Cashew	Agricultural	Registered	Sindhudurg
15		491	Lasalgaon Onion	Agricultural	Registered	Nasik
16	2016-2017	490	Sangli Raisins	Agricultural	Registered	Sangli
17		494	Beed Custard Apple	Agricultural	Registered	Beed
18		495	Jalna Sweet Orange	Agricultural	Registered	Jalna
19		471	Waigaon Turmeric	Agricultural	Registered	Wardh
20		500	Purandar Fig	Agricultural	Registered	Pune
21		501	Jalgaon Bharit Brinjal	Agricultural	Registered	Jalgaon
22		502	Solapur Pomegranate	Agricultural	Registered	Solapur
23		473	Bhiwapur Chilli	Agricultural	Registered	Nagpur
24		478	Ambemohar Rice	Agricultural	Registered	Pune
25		493	Dahanu Gholvad Chikoo	Agricultural	Registered	Palghar
26	2016-2017	498	Jalgaon Banana	Agricultural	Registered	Jalgaon
27		499	Marathwada Kesar Mango	Agricultural	Registered	Beed
28		390	Karvath Kati Sarees & Fabrics	Handicrafts	Registered	Bhandara
29	2018-2019	139	Alphonso	Agricultural	Registered	Ratnagiri
30		496	Sangli Turmeric	Agricultural	Registered	Sangli
31	2022-2023	685	Alibag White Onion	Agricultural	Registered	Raigad
32		688	Bhandara	Agricultural	Registered	Bhandara

			Chinoor Rice			
33		785	Vasmat Haldi (Turmeric)	Agricultural	Registered	Hingoli
34		786	Nandurbar Amchur	Agricultural	Registered	Nandurbar
35		787	Nandurbar Mirchi	Agricultural	Registered	Nandurbar
36		791	Miraj Tanpura	Handicraft	Registered	Sangli
37		792	Hupari Silver Craft	Handicraft	Registered	Kolhapur
38		793	Miraj Sitar	Handicraft	Registered	Sangli
39		806	Sawantwadi Wooden Craft	Handicraft	Registered	Sindhudurg
40	2023-2024	825	Panchincholi Tamarind	Agricultural	Registered	Latur
41		826	Borsuri Tur Dal	Agricultural	Registered	Latur
42		827	Kasti Coriander	Agricultural	Registered	Latur
43		899	Badlapur Jamun	Agricultural	Registered	Thane
44		947	Bahadoli Jamun	Agricultural	Registered	Palghar
45		949	Pen Ganesh Idol	Handicraft	Registered	Raigad
46		950	Kunthalgiri Khawa	Food stuff	Registered	Latur
47		952	Kavdi Maal of Tuljapur	Handicraft	Registered	Latur
48		953	Dagdi Jowar of Jalna	Agricultural	Registered	Jalna
49		1012	Akola Kagzi Lime	Agriculture	Registered	Akola
50	2024-2025	1306	Amravati Pippal	Agriculture	Registered	Amravati
51		1307	Amravati Chana	Agriculture	Registered	Amravati
52		239	Warli Painting	Handicraft	Registered	India (Maharashtra- Thane Gujarat, Dadara &

	2013-2014					Nagar Haveli, Daman Diu)
53		385	Nagpur Orange	Agricultural	Registered	India (Maharashtra - Akola & Madhya Pradesh)
54	2018-2019	169	Kolhapuri Chappal	Handicraft	Registered	India (Karnataka & Maharashtra - Mumbai)

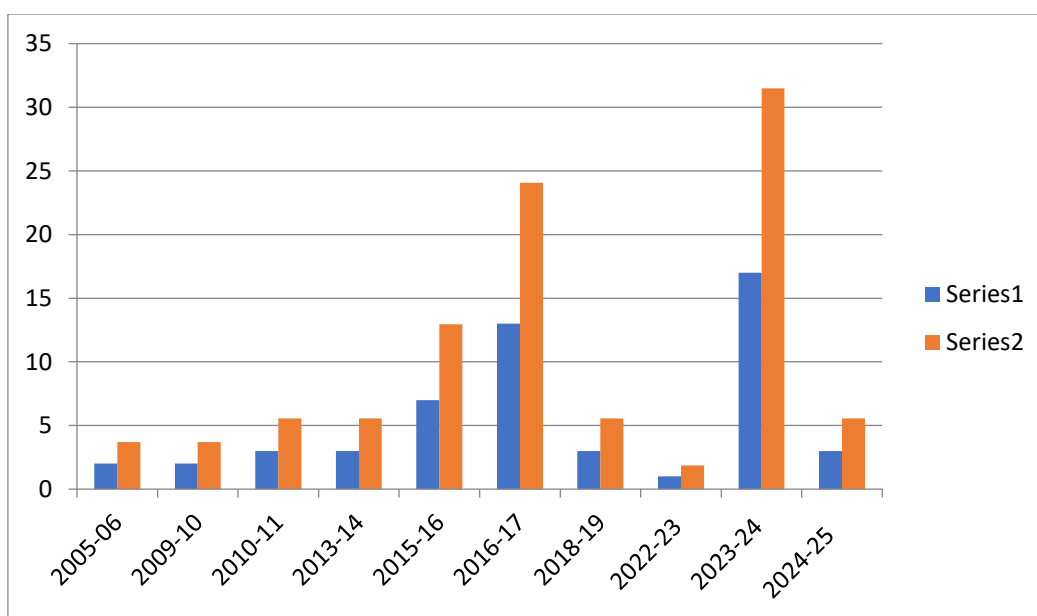


Figure: 1 Year –wise GI registration in Maharashtra during 2005-2025

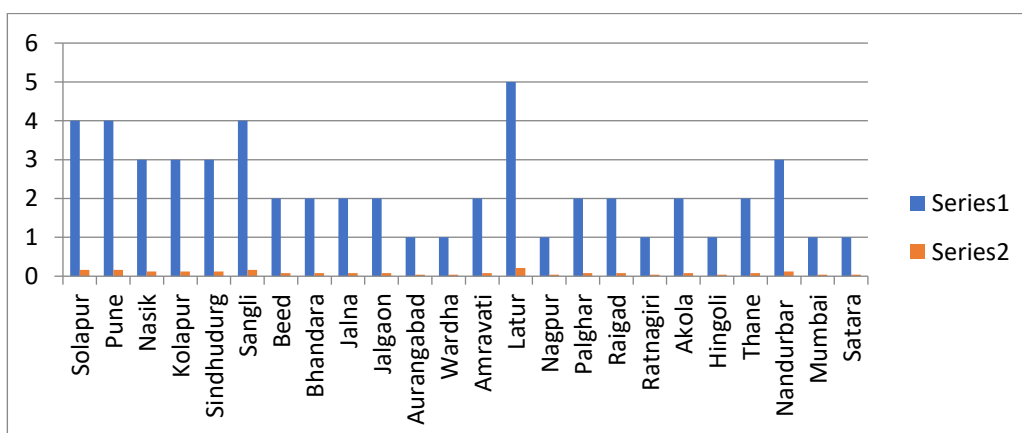


Figure 2: District wise GI Tag registration in Maharashtra during 2005-2025

Categories of registered GI products:

Agricultural	Handicraft	Food stuff	Manufactured	Total GI tag received
39	13	1	1	54

Table 2: Different Categories of registered GI products

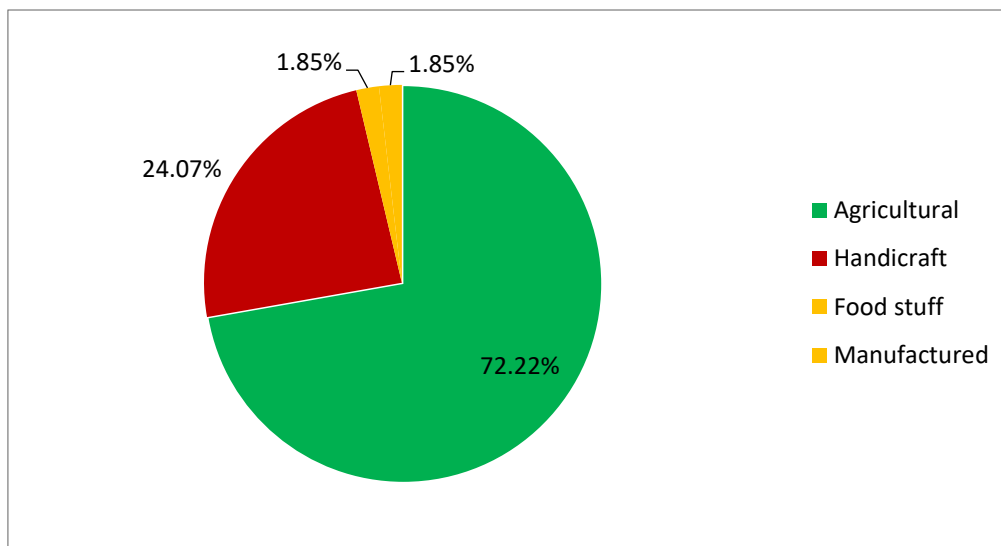


Figure 2: GI Tag received in various categories by Maharashtra during 2005-2025

Table 1 displays the year-wise distribution of Geographical Indication (GI) registrations in Maharashtra, which has a total of 54 GI tags. The year 2023-2024 recorded the highest number of registrations, accounting for 31.5% of the total. Maharashtra's GI contributions are predominantly in the agricultural sector, with 39 (72.22%) tags, followed by handicrafts with 13 (24.07%) registrations. The manufactured and foodstuff category has just one (1.85%) registration, as shown in Table 2.

Among Maharashtra's 36 districts, only 24 have registered GI products. Pune, Solapur, and Sangli lead with 4 GI tags each (16.66%). Kolhapur, Nashik, Sindhudurg, and Nandurbar follow with 3 products each (12.50%). Beed, Bhandara, Jalna, Jalgaon, Amaravati, and Akola have 2 registrations each (8.33%), while the remaining 7 districts have only one GI tag each (4.16%), as detailed in Table 2.

While many products gain GI status, some applications face refusal. Here are some reasons of five goods from Maharashtra have been denied registration:

Sl. no.	Applic ation no.	Name of the Goods	Status of application	Category of goods	District
1	391	Terracotta of pen	Refused	Handicraft	Mumbai
2	392	Silver Craft of Hupari	Refused	Handicraft	Mumbai
3	394	Copperware of Pune	Refused	Handicraft	Mumbai
4	469	Solapur Chutny	Refused	Handicraft	Mumbai
5	475	Kolhapuri Masala	Refused	Agricultural	Kolhapur

Table 3: Products Refused GI Tags

Reasons to refuse applications :

Geographical Indication (GI) tags are granted only when a product's quality, reputation, or uniqueness is directly linked to its geographical origin. The registration process is strict, and applications can be rejected if they fail to meet key criteria. In Maharashtra, five products were denied GI tags due to insufficient evidence, lack of distinctiveness, or failure to prove a strong connection with source of origin. Here's a detailed look at each case:

1. Terracotta of Pen (Application No. 391) – Refused :

- **Reason:** The application did not sufficiently prove that the terracotta's unique qualities and reputation were tied exclusively to Pen from Raigad district.
- **Possible Issues:**
 - Similar terracotta products exist in other regions (e.g., West Bengal, Rajasthan).
 - No documented historical origin or scientific evidence showing that Pen's soil or climate gives the terracotta a distinct identity.

2. Silver Craft of Hupari (Application No. 392) – Refused :

- **Reason :** While Hupari is known for silver jewelry, the application failed to demonstrate that its technique is **significantly different** from silverwork in other parts of India (e.g., Rajasthan, Odisha).
- **Possible Issues :**
 - No unique techniques or designs exclusive to Hupari were proven.
 - Lack of historical records linking the craft's reputation solely to this region.

3. Copperware of Pune (Application No. 394) – Refused :

- **Reason :** Insufficient proof that Pune’s copperware has **distinct characteristics** due to its geographical origin.
- **Possible Issues :**
 - Copper utensils are made across India (e.g., Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu).
 - No evidence showed that Pune’s artisans use **locally unique** methods or materials.

4. Solapur Chutney (Application No. 469) – Refused :

- **Reason :** The chutney was not proven to be **geographically unique** to Solapur.
- **Possible Issues :**
 - Similar spicy chutneys exist in other regions (e.g., Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka).
 - No scientific data linked Solapur’s climate or soil to the chutney’s taste or ingredients.

5. Kolhapuri Masala (Application No. 475) – Refused :

- **Reason :** The blend of spices was not shown to be exclusive to Kolhapur.
- **Possible Issues :**
 - Many regions in India produce similar spice mixes (e.g., Goda Masala in Maharashtra, Sambar Powder in South India).
 - No evidence that Kolhapur’s environment (soil, climate) affects the masala’s flavour uniquely.

Common Reasons for GI Tag Rejections :

- **Lack of Geographical Uniqueness** – If the product is made similarly elsewhere, it won’t qualify.
- **Insufficient Historical/Cultural Proof** – GI tags require documented heritage.
- **No Scientific Link to the Region** – The product’s qualities must arise from local soil, climate, or traditional methods.

Conclusion :

Geographical Indication (GI) tags hold immense value as they represent the rich heritage of human traditions. Maharashtra’s GI-registered products—from the Warlis’ organic farming techniques to the difficult Paithani weaves and Nashik’s renowned wines—are more than ordinary commodities. They represent centuries of inherited wisdom.

Safeguarding these traditions through GI recognition ensures that the state's cultural and agricultural heritage sustains for generations to come. Promoting research into eco-friendly methods while conserving age-old techniques is equally crucial. Strengthening legal protections and enforcing anti-imitating measures will safeguard GI rights. Additionally, raising consumer awareness about the authenticity and significance of GI products can be increased by the intense involvement of the public and special library services.

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