

Report on

Celebrating Azadi ka Amrit Mahaotsav

as

**Brain Storming on prospects of protecting
indigenous Ginger varieties of Assam using tools of
IPR**

on 11th March 2022

Organized by

DPIIT-IPR Chair at TUIPR Cell, Tezpur University



Photo: DPIIT-IPR Chair Professor, Dr. P. Deb during welcome address

A brainstorming session on “**prospects of protecting indigenous Ginger varieties of Assam using tools of IPR**” was organised on 11 March, 2022 at Tezpur University under the aegis of DPIIT-IPR Chair to discuss various scopes for protecting regional bioresources from facing unfair competition in the market and find out ways to give visibility and authentication in the national and international market through tools of IPR. Farmers groups practicing Ginger cultivation in various parts of the state participated in the programme.

The welcome address was delivered by the DPIIT-IPR Chair Professor, Dr. Pritam Deb where he informed the participants about the genesis of the initiatives designed by the TUIPR Cell to protect indigenous bioresources. Through various examples he asserted the importance of the present programme. Dr. Juri B. Saikia, Research Assistant in the TUIPR Cell briefly introduced the theme and concluded by giving the



Photo: **Mr. P.K. Bhairappanavar**, from GI Registry, Chennai during technical session -I

Vote of thanks to the invited participants and the Experts. She also acknowledged support from the Tezpur University Administration and the DPIIT for organizing the programme. This was followed by a brief introduction of the farmers and the invited experts. A brief discussion was also held on the challenges faced by the farmers during cultivation and marketing of the ginger crop in their local markets. The discussion continued informally during the Tea Break. It was followed by a group



Photo: Shri Dharmendra Das during the technical session -II



Photo: Felicitation of Shri Dharmendra Das by Prof. P. Deb



Photo: Dr. Ranjan Kumar Bhagobaty during the technical session -III

photography session outside the venue. The technical session was initiated with the presentation from Shri. Prashanth Kumar Bhairappanavar, Senior Examiner at Geographical Indications Registry, Chennai (India). He deliberated on **Geographical Indication Systems in India**. Starting with the definition, he stated how GI is a common man's IPR right having collective ownership that connects products with its place of origin. It's a community's right. He discussed the scope of products that can be protected through GI.

He discussed five parameters for ascertaining qualification of a product as GI. These are **geographical origin, linkage between the geography and the product, product's reputation** (local, national or international), **historical origin/proof** for establishing the product's origin with the place, **uniqueness and characteristics** of the products. The presentation apprised the participants about the practice and procedures for applying Geographical Indications status for any product or good in India. Through various examples, he stressed upon the importance of having

correct documents/historical records supporting the origin and continuous existence of the product in the given geographical area for a long time. He also discussed about the irreplicable characteristics and qualities in a product leading to the established reputation as a unique product originating from a particular locality or area. The concept of 'Applicant' and 'Authorised User' was also elaborately discussed under the provisions of the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. Various formal requirements were also discussed for filing the GI application. The supporting documents required for filing GI application for agricultural and non-agricultural goods were also discussed. Finally, the entire registration process was discussed.



Photo: Felicitation of Dr. Ranjan Kumar Bhagobaty by Prof. P. Deb

The second technical session was on "**present status and future prospects of Indian Spices**" presented by **Shri Dharmendra Das**, Deputy Director, Spices Board of India-Regional Office, Guwahati. In this session, the speaker started with brief history and functions of the Spices Board. While discussing about various spices cultivated in the North East region, he stressed upon the need to have a quality evaluation lab with ISO standards in Assam to cater to needs of local farmers. He informed that there are 52 scheduled spices in India which are under the Spices Board. Other than Cardamom, rest of the 51 spices are under state departments and universities for issues related to development, post harvest improvement and exportation of domestic market. There are around 109 spices in the world. Therefore, the farmers of NE region have lots



Photo: Participants of the Brain Storming Session



Photo: Presentation by Dr.SubarnaHajong, scientist, NBPGR, Shilling Station during technical session-IV

of scope for cultivating other spices. He discussed about various schemes for financially supporting the farmers who cultivate spices. The speaker expressed concern on the dismal number of registered exporters from NE region and urged the farmers from Assam to get themselves registered as exporters. He informed that India is a

global leader in terms of spice production. Export of Spices contribute about 10% of the total foreign revenue earned by the country. He stated that value addition of the spices may help the farmers get better price for their produce. Also, he stated that being organic is itself a value addition and spices from NE region are organic by default as these are not grown as commercial crop like tea. Mostly are part of the homestead garden, jhum cultivation or collected from wild as forest products. The farmers may concentrate on cultivating low volume high value spices for getting better financial output. Oil and oleoregins can be major consideration as these are value added products that have high export demand. He apprised the gathered farmers that they may focus more on certain spice crops which have high demand like Chilli, Cumin, Mint, Spice Oils, Tuemic, Ginger etc. Finally, the speaker expressed optimism on the upward surge of the spice exports during pandemic due to increased demand from the foreign consumers. He also stated that there is increased demand of spices from Pharmaceutical and Ayurvedic sectors, besides the regular demands from Nutraceuticals and Cosmetic industries. Thus, there is a huge demand for the spices from the region. He felt that farmers need to be more organised for cultivation and marketing. Finally, he urged the farmers to put more efforts on post harvest improvements as it increases the value of the spices considerably. He also requested them to take part in the export oriented quality improvement training programmes conducted by the Spices Board to make their produce more suitable for exports. He mentioned about the market linkages created by the online and offline domestic Buyer-Seller Meets (BSM) and International Buyer-Seller Meets (IBSM). He informed the

gathered farmers about the unique initiative from Spice Board for Young Entrepreneurs where Study Tour Training Programme are organised to provide the farmers with first hand exposure on the latest technical knowledge, technologies, post harvest processing etc. through the elite traders and entrepreneurs identified from southern states which are considered the Spice Hub.

This discussion was followed by the presentation on “**Need for GI Registration of Indigenous Ginger varieties of Assam**” by Dr Ranjan Kumar Bhagobaty, Ex-Scientist, Quality Evaluation Laboratory, Spices Board, Kochi and presently Chief Research Scientist at Oil India Limited, Duliajan.

Dr Bhagobaty started with a historical perspective on nomenclature of commercial Ginger (*Zingiber officinale* Roscoe) by English botanist William Roscoe who named the plant Zingiber after the Sanskrit word ‘Singabera’ which meant ‘horn-shaped’ due to the protrusions on the typical ginger rhizome. The Greek name for Ginger is Zingiber which in similar sounding to the Tamil name ‘Inchiver’, clearly indicate that Greek merchants conveyed these articles and their names to Europe from India. The usage of the Assamese name for fresh ginger ‘Aada’ can be related to the ancient Indian name of ginger ‘aardrakam’. He explained that based on the usage there is a subtle difference between a ‘Spice’ and a ‘Condiment’ and generally, spices are food ingredients mainly used to season a food dish during its preparation. In contrast, condiments are mainly used at the dining table to enhance the dish. Ginger is used both as a ‘Spice’ and a ‘Condiment’ in the world. He informed the august gathering that it is a matter of great pride that India is one of the largest producer of Ginger in the world and India’s North-Eastern region accounts for more than 50% of India’s total ginger production. Assam in particular has a unique agroclimatic character that imparts high commercial value to ginger varieties originating in the region. These characters are high Ginger oil and Ginger Oleoresin which fetch premium price in domestic as well as global spice processed products markets. Stressing upon the need for having GI registration for indigenous ginger cultivars from Assam Dr Bhagobaty provided a chronology of scientific research carried out by various organizations in India for popular and important ginger varieties of Assam. This chronology revealed that the popular ‘Moran’ ginger landrace or cultivar of Assam is also referred to as ‘Maran’ based on its pronunciation in some of the published scientific literature.

Summarizing his talk which was delivered in vernacular language for the benefit of the farmers present, Dr Bhagobaty informed that traditionally, the export of spices from India was predominantly done from historically important seaports like Cochin (Kochi) as a result of which ‘Indian Ginger’ became synonymous (came to be referred) as ‘Cochin Ginger’ or ‘Calicut Ginger’ in the global spice trade circuit. However, the name is a misnomer as there is no specific variety called Cochin or Calicut being grown as a cultivar in India and these names are used for grading of ginger in the spice markets (reference Agmark specifications for dried ginger). ‘Moran/ Maran Aada’ or ginger originating from Moran/Moranhath in upper Assam is a superior variety of Ginger. The superior characteristics of ‘Moran/ Maran Aada’ in terms of its high oil and oleoresin content and its prospects as a High Value Spice is established from numerous scientific research literature published from India and Abroad over the last 30 years. Despite the release of various improved varieties of ginger and derivatives from moran/maran germplasm, moran/maran has been able to retain its uniqueness and appeal in terms of quality parameters and preference amongst ginger growers and consumers. The medicinal properties of ‘Moran/ Maran’ ginger has been known to Assamese Traditional Medicine Practitioners since time immemorial, due to its wide use in traditional medicine.

Recently, to complicate things further, this popular cultivated variety / land race of commercial Ginger (*Zingiber officinale* Roscoe) originating and cultivated in Assam, has been attempted to be grouped as a new species altogether (thereby having a likelihood of nullifying any references to the extensive field collection, hybridization,



Dr. Juri B. Saikia delivering the vote of thanks

research, developmental work carried out with this cultivated variety since the 1980s or prior to that in India). Dr Bhagobaty concluded by urging TUIPR to take the lead for GI registration of indigenous ginger cultivars of Assam specifically Moran/ Maran Ginger in association with stakeholders i.e the indigenous ginger variety farmers / growers of Assam.

The forth and final technical session was on “**protecting indigenous bio resources**” by **Dr. Subarna Hajong**, Scientist, Economic Botany & Plant Genetic Resources, ICAR-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, Regional Station-Shillong. In her presentation, she talked about the existence of rich genetic resources in the North Eastern states, but also expressed concern on the genetic erosion of the traditional crop varieties due to the development of less diverse but improved varieties. She discussed various scientific approaches to conserve the plant genetic diversity. While discussing various factors causing plant genetic erosion, she mentioned the adverse impacts of jhum cultivation and unmindful



Photo (above and left): Participants and speakers with local ginger varieties



collection of forest produce on the genetic diversity. She discussed the importance of conserving plant genetic resources. Finally, she concluded by stating the role of NBPGR for conserving the plant genetic resources. She further elaborated on the importance of “Community Seed Banks”. To give encouragement to the farmers for conserving genetic diversity, she gave reference of a successful community seed bank in the Chizami Village in Nagaland.

Glimpses of Expert- Participant interaction



The forth technical session was followed by an interaction session with the farmers where the farmers were encouraged to share their concerns and problems while cultivating and marketing of traditional ginger variety. The programme finally concluded with reading out of the conclusions drawn from the deleberations made by the speakers and the participants.



Photo: Participants of the Brain Storming Session on 11th March, 2022 at Tezpur University.

Conclusions drawn at the end of the Brain Storming Session:

The production *Moran Aada*, an endemic variety of Ginger from Upper Assam, is considerably reduced due to shrinking of the market demand. This unique variety of Ginger, well known for its unique taste and pungency, shall soon become extinct, if not given legal protection from counterfeit products through Geographical Indications. The GI status will restrict all other variants of Ginger to be sold with the same name. The GI status, shall also help *Moran Aada*, get the required visibility in the national and international market and attract premium pricing. It will act as a certificate of authenticity and guarantor of purity. Upon grant, if the GI Tag is used by the Authorized Users on the raw or value added products, it will help the interested consumers to identify and connect with the product conveniently. From April 2022, TUIPR Cell intends to initiate data mining from the published literature and a field study for exploring scope of protection for Moran Ginger through Geographical Indication (GI) registration.

On 11th March , 2022 a Brain Storming session was organized for looking into the prospects of protecting indigenous Ginger varieties of Assam using tools of IPR. Four experts deliberated on the topic. 9 farmers practicing Ginger cultivation in various parts of Assam participated in the session.

Welcome address was delivered by Prof. P.Deb, DPIIT-IPR Chair Professor, TUIPR Cell, Tezpur University. Discussions on the technical session ranged from importance of **protecting indigenous bio resources, present status and future prospects of Indian Spices, Need for GI Registration of Indigenous Ginger varieties of Assam and formal requirements for filing GI application**. The follow up discussions converged towards helping the indigenous farmers realize economic benefit by exploiting IP rights in the form of GI and saving Moran Aada from losing its unique identity due to unfair completion in the market.

Outcomes of the Brain Storming Session:

1. In view of the information available in public domain and extensive deliberations on the prospect of GI registration for Moran Ginger Variety, it was agreed by all members present that the GI application filing process for Moran Ginger should be initiated without further delay by TUIPR Cell.
2. Technical assistance as and when necessary to TUIPR Cell for processing of the GI application will be provided by the members participating in the brain storming session.

Actionable Points from the Brain Storming Session:

	Particulars	Action By
1	Collection, annotation and review of available information on Moran Ginger for preperation of draft GI application	TUIPR Cell
2	Preparation of GI application	TUIPR Cell
3	Concurrently, research/survey/quality evaluation activity if necessary for complete GI application will be taken up	TUIPR Cell

Timeline: GI application to be filed by one year

Anticipated domain Specific role/ technical assistance required from invited experts/guests

Stakeholder	Technical assistance required
Expert from Spice Board	Data on current growers of Moran Ginger, promotion and incentives provided by Spices Board for Ginger growers, Ginger marketing and Registration for Export License etc.
Expert From Quality Evaluation Laboratoty (Now working with CPSU):	Initial draft of the application, quality evaluation, ginger quality.
Expert from NBPGR	Technical assistance related to germplasm and accession of Moran Ginger, identification etc
Expert from GI Registry, Chennai	Formal requirements for GI application, facilitation etc.
Farmers	To take up cultivation of Ginger, particularly Moran. Develop farmer groups/society dedicated to Moran Ginger cultivation. This will help in identification of registered user based required for Authorised User , if grant is received. Assistance and guidance to TUIPR Cell for survey and sample collection if necessary

About the Speakers

Dr Ranjan Kumar Bhagobaty :

Dr Ranjan Kumar Bhagobaty, Chief Research Scientist, R&D Department, Oil India Limited (OIL), Duliajan a post-graduate in Microbiology from Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, did his Doctoral studies in the field of Microbial Biotechnology from North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong. Prior to joining OIL, he was working as Scientist-B (Microbiology) in the Quality Evaluation Laboratory of Spices Board of India (Ministry of Industries & Commerce, Govt. of India) in Kochi (Cochin). He



has authored many research articles in peer reviewed, SCI indexed, scientific journals and is a recognised Reviewer for journals like Journal of Microscopy & Ultrastructure and Fungal Biology (Elsevier). His research Interests include Applied Industrial Microbiology, Biodegradation of Xenobiotics/Hydrocarbons, Bio-prospection of microbes for novel molecules and biofuels.

Dr. Subarna Hajong:

Dr. Subarna Hajong received her Ph.D degree in Botany (Plant Biotechnology Laboratory) from North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya in 2013. She worked on “Biochemical Studies and Effects of Photon Flux Densities on In Vitro Establishment of Mycorrhizal Association in *Dendrobium chrysanthum* Wall. ex Lindl.” under the supervision of Prof. Pramod Tandon and Prof. Suman Kumaria during her Ph.D. In July 2013, she joined Applied Mycology Laboratory, Dept. of Botany, University of Delhi and worked under the DBT-RA program of the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India, under the supervision of Prof. Rupam Kapoor. She is currently working as Scientist at ICAR-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, Regional Station, Shillong. Her current research interest includes genetic diversity of *Coix lacryma-jobi* and other potential and underutilized crops of NE India and management and conservation of plant genetic resources of NE India. She has published several research papers in both national and international peer reviewed journals.



Shri Prashanth Kumar S. Bhairappanavar:

Prashanth Kumar Bhairappanavar is presently working as Senior Examiner of Geographical Indications at Geographical indications Registry, Chennai (India), he got selected as an Examiner of GI through UPSC and has been with the department from 2008. He has examined more than 750 GI Applications and 11000 GI Authorised User Applications. He has a Degree of Bachelor of Arts and Law from Karnataka University, India. He enrolled as an advocate on the Roll of Bar Council of



Karnataka in 2005 and worked as a senior consultant with the Law firm WinLexis, Legal Consultants (Corporate), in Bangalore from 2005 to 2008, in the IPR wing relating to trademarks and geographical indications.

Shri Dharmendra Das

Presently working in the capacity of Deputy Director in the Board and taking responsibilities and accountabilities for development and export promotion of Spices Industry of NE region. A dynamic professional with more than 19 years of experiences in Spices Industry of India and has contributed immensely towards the development of Spices sectors in NE region as well as Socio-Economic Development of the region.



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Brain Storming on prospects of protecting indigenous Ginger varieties of Assam using tools of IPR

Organized by

DPIIT-IPR Chair at TUIPR Cell, Tezpur University

Detailed Programme

Date: 11.03.2022 (Friday)

Venue: Video Conference Room, Deans' Building, School of Engineering

TIME	PROGRAMME
9.30 AM —10.00 AM	Registration
10.00 AM—10.30 AM	Welcome Address by Prof. P.Deb , DPIIT-IPR Chair Professor, TUIPR Cell, Tezpur University Vote of thanks by Dr Juri B. Saikia, Research Assistant, TUIPR Cell, Tezpur University
10.30 AM —11.00 AM	High Tea and Group Photo session
11.00 AM—1.30 PM	TECHNICAL SESSION
11.00 AM—11.40 PM	Session A: Presentation on “ Geographical Indication Systems in India ” by Mr. Prasanta Kumar Bhairappanavar , Senior Examiner, GI Registry, Chennai.
11.40 PM—12.20 Noon	Session B: Presentation on “ present status and future prospects of Indian Spices ” by Shri Dharmendra Das , Deputy Director, Spices Board of India-Regional Office, Guwahati.
12.20 Noon—1.00 PM	Session C: Presentation on “ Need for GI Registration of Indigenous Ginger varieties of Assam ” by Dr. Ranjan Kumar Bhagobaty , ExScientist-B (Microbiology), Quality Evaluation Laboratory, Spices Board, Head Office, Kochi and presently Chief Research Scientist at Oil India Limited, Duliajan
1.00 PM—1.30 PM	Session D: Presentation on “ protecting indigenous bio resources ” by Dr. Subarna Hajong , Scientist, Economic Botany & Plant Genetic Resources, ICAR-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, Regional Station- Shillong
1.30 PM -2.00 PM	Interaction with the participants and way forward.
2.00 PM - 3.00 PM	LUNCH

Attendance of the Brain Storming Session

Sl No	Name	Expert/Farmer/Organiser	Signature
1	Sharmila Perme	Farmer	Sharmila
2	Siraj Hasan Dady	do	Siraj
3	Bharishwar Karmam	Dr	Bharishwar
4	Dulan Dulla	Farmer	Dulla
5	Jyoti Prasad Baruah.	Farmer	Baruah
6	Hitesh Gogoi	Farmer	Hitesh
7	Binod Dao	B.O.D. Aboltani F.P.C. & D.O.	Binod Dao
8	Anam Taze Morang	B.O.D. Aboltani F.P.C.	Anam
9	Saurav Oeka	Organiser	Saurav
10	Nihal Sarmah	"	Nihal
11	Koushik Saikia	"	K. Saikia
12	Bishal Roy Choudhury	Documentator	Bishal Roy Choudhury
13	Ranjit Go. Bora	Proposedor	Ranjit
14	Dharmendra Das	B.V. Apromatics (KBA) Deputy Director, Spices Board, regional office Cauwabat	Dharmendra
15			
16	Pratam Deb	IPR Cell, Tezpur University	Pratam
17	Im? B. Saikia.	"	Im? B. Saikia.
18	DR. RANTAN K. BHAGOBATY	CHIEF RESEARCH SCIENTIST R&D DEPARTMENT OIL INDIA LIMITED DULIADAN	DR. RANTAN K. BHAGOBATY

Rajan Kumar Bhagobaty
11/03/2022

①9 Pratam Choudhury Organiser

Pratam

20. Dr. Subarna Hajong Scientist, NBPGR- Shillong online mode
21. Shri P.K. Bhairappanavar Senior Examiner, GI Registry, Chennai online mode

Date: 11.03.2022

Place: Tezpur University