

**MOTHER TERESA WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY, KODAIKANAL
BEST PRACTICES**

:

Best Practice 1

GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (GI) FOR TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS PRODUCTS

India is a land of rich traditional practices and products which date back to ancient times. Owing to modernization and commercialization, the prestigious products and practices reflecting our rich culture and heritage have become extinct. In order to retrieve and revive these lost practices, the Centre for Intellectual Property Rights of MTWU (CIPR), in collaboration with the Department of Biotechnology, has ventured to identify the deserving products all over the country and facilitate Geographical Indication Registration.

As a first step, the native product of Kodaikanal, where the University is situated, '*Kodaikanal Malai Poondu*' (Kodaikanal Hill Garlic) has received its first Geographical Indication Registration. Located in the Western Ghat, Kodaikanal is an indisputable princess of hills in the cultivation of native, indigenous, hill garlic which is known for its unique medicinal application. This garlic being invisible in the world's eye, there is an intense need to make this miracle herb known to the world and render it useful to all.

Objectives

- i. To inspire the people to uphold the values of traditional arts and crafts
- ii. To motivate farmers to return to the cultivation of hill garlic on a massive scale and to improve its market value
- iii. To save these traditional products/indigenous plant varieties from the brink of extinction
- iv. To give an impetus to farmers by enabling Geographical Indication Registration
- v. To inculcate in the farmers and the general public the benefits of obtaining GI adopting due process for all unique regional plant varieties
- vi. To create a platform for farmers to globally propagate worthiness and genuineness regional plant varieties

Context of the Practice

Modernization has ushered in several less healthy practices eroding and nearly annihilating existing traditional practices and mores with particular reference to native agro-based products. With analogous practices creeping into native structures, old, ancient practices are gradually becoming abandoned. The Kodaikanal Hill Garlic is one such product that has over time ceased to being cultivated. As an agricultural product, the Kodaikanal Hill Garlic has a tough, staying self-life and is renowned for its medicinal properties. With its popularity declining and considered not commercially viable, farmers were forced to cultivate commercially successful cash garlic which was however not indigenous to its native soil.

The Practice

The CIPR & Department of Biotechnology in Association with TNSCST is involved in facilitating GI registration for deserving products.

The following systematic efforts were taken to facilitate GI registration.

- i. Meeting the traditional practitioners of various villages and providing awareness on the benefits after GI registration
- ii. Studying the unique properties and medicinal values of the products.
- iii. Collecting proof of over 100 years history for the practice
- iv. Filing the application to GI Registry with necessary documents and applying to TNSCST
- v. Motivating the farmers and agri-practitioners to form formal farm facilitation and avail authorization.

Evidence of Success

With the successful registration of Geographical Indication of '*Kodaikanal Malai Poondu*', the farmers have attempted to move back to its cultivation on a huge scale. Significantly the market value of garlic has risen from being a mere Rs.80 to Rs.350 per Kg, registering 337.5% rise translating into family income fillip, with lot more derived benefits. The farmers have formed their own "Farmer Producing organization", which helped promote and boost the economics of farming. This organization has secured the firm support of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural Department Extension and Marketing Division. Finally, the Primary Processing Centre worth Rs. 8 crores has been established in Kodaikanal by the Government with the provision of 1000 metric tons capacity storage house, 500 metric tons capacity smoke house and 1000 metric tons capacity trading room.

The success of acquisition of GI Registration for *Kodaikanal HillGarlic* has motivated the IP Cell and the Department of Biotechnology to file application for '*Udangudi Panang Karuppatti*' and '*Aathangudi Tiles*' as next products for GI Registration.

Problems encountered

- i. Kodaikanal is subject to inclement weather with torrential rains and stormy conditions.
- ii. Logistics problem due to the unique terrain of Kodaikanal, added by constant surface erosion. Nearly, twelve villages lie far apart from each other and are isolated from vital information.
- iii. Dearth of adequate finance drives farmers to opt to cultivate *Commercial Garlic*, instead of growing *Hill Garlic*.

Resources Required

A GI Research Centre & Felicitation Wing

Funds from Government, Research Institutes, NGOs and Corporate houses, besides self-generation.

Best Practice: 2

KNOWLEDGE BUILDING VIA EXPERT INTERVENTIONS

In this digital era, epistemology building is an important component that provides for a holistic formation of a student, both internally and externally. By its very location, *Kodaikanal* as a hill station has the advantage of being an attraction for all. Besides the Mother Teresa University has Regional Centres in Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai and a few more places.

The University enjoys the privilege of renowned experts from both within the country and abroad paying a visit to it. Having heard of the University's distinctiveness as a unit run, 'by women, of women & for women', they get attracted to visiting the University.

The University has created a platform for these visiting skilled minds to interact with researchers and students through formal and informal structures that enables learning on a sound basis. Hence, the Institution has acknowledged, '**Knowledge Building via Expert Interventions**', as one of its best practices.

Objectives of the Practice

- i. Exposing students and scholars to lectures/speeches of subject experts
- ii. Emulating experts as modular role models
- iii. Garnishing knowledge through face-to-face interaction
- iv. Upgrading and updating knowledge through acquisition of latest information
- v. Providing a cross section of knowledge from Regional, National/ International perspectives
- vi. Paving the way for more collaborative work, MOUs, Internships and Joint publications

The Context

A pack of knowledge building exercises, mainly through Seminars/ Conferences/ Invited Lectures/ Workshops, National and International, is taking place periodically in the campuses of the Mother Teresa University, where the students are provided with a plethora of

opportunities to interact with and hold dialogues with the experts, as an extended and enriched platform to learn and re-learn.

As a holistic learning process, cultural exchanges, knowledge transfer, skill impartation, exposure to novel ideas and ideologies and the like are enabled for the students and faculty making them within reach of a paradigm of ever-evolving frontiers of knowledge. An extended outcome of the learning process is the launch of many joint research projects, scores of collaborations on academic and extension phases, joint publications, and MoUs have been initiated.

The Practice

During the five years (2015-2020), under this practice, the University Departments have successfully organized and conducted about 100+ Regional/ National/ International Seminars, Conferences and Workshops and 363 Invited Lectures on various themes and topics from their respective disciplines, enhancing cross/ multi/interdisciplinary research culture. This practice has paved the way for signing MOUs and enabling academic exchange of staff and students and joint publications.

Evidence of Success

- i. Active MoUs signed – International 16, National 4, State level MoUs 27
- ii. Engaged the scholars and students actively in keeping abreast of knowledge development
- iii. The faculty members have actively participated in overseas programs in National Energy University, Kuala Lumpur, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, Tohoku University, Japan, Multimedia University, Malaysia, and Amity University, Malaysia. (7 faculty made paper presentation in these Universities)
- iv. About 73 research collaborations have been initiated for joint publications(37), Academic projects (3), Internships(30) and Industry linkages (3).