Hapus GI Tag Issue

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Agriculture*

Why in news?

A dispute over the name Hapus has pitted mango growers in Maharashtra's Konkan region against those from Gujarat's Valsad.

- **Background** – Alphonso, popularly known as Hapus, is among the best-known mango varieties grown in the Konkan region.
- **GI tag recognition** – In October 2018, after a nearly decade-long effort by growers and the Dr Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth, Alphonso mangoes from Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Raigad, Thane and Palghar received a GI tag.
- **GI Tag** – A GI tag identifies a product with a particular geographical origin and recognises that its qualities or reputation are linked to that place.
- It protects the name from being used for products from elsewhere and allows registered growers from the recognised region to market their produce under that identity.
- **Same Cultivar, Different Terroir** – "Hapus" is the local Marathi and Gujarati name for the Alphonso mango (Mangifera indica).
- While it is the exact same cultivar as the famous Ratnagiri and Devgad Alphonso, Valsad Hapus grows in the fertile alluvial soil and coastal microclimate of South Gujarat.
- **About the Dispute** – The growers from Valsad (Gujarat) have applied for a separate GI tag for "Valsad Hapus", claiming a long tradition of Alphonso cultivation and distinct fruit characteristics.
- The application was filed by Bharatiya Kisan Sangh and Navsari Agricultural University in 2023.
- **Konkan growers' opposition** – They oppose the use of the name "Hapus", arguing that it is intrinsically linked to the Konkan region and its unique agro-climatic conditions.
- **Gujarat's Arguments** – Valsad growers contend that their mangoes possess distinct qualities, including taste, aroma, colour, and shape.
- They argue that Valsad and Navsari should have been included in the original GI region due to their proximity to the coastal Sahyadri belt.
- A separate GI would help farmers establish a unique identity and prevent their produce from being marketed under another region's name.
- **Concerns of Konkan growers** – They fear that allowing another region to use the name Hapus would –
    - Create consumer confusion.

    - Dilute the premium reputation of Konkan Alphonso mangoes.
    - Weaken the economic value of the existing GI tag.
- Konkan Hapus generates an estimated Rs. 200 crore in domestic sales and Rs. 80 crore in exports.
- **Measures to protect authentic Konkan Hapus** – The Maharashtra State Agricultural Marketing Board has recommended GI logos, registered grower details and QR codes for traceability and authenticity verification.

Reference

[Indian Express | Why Maharashtra and Gujarat farmers are fighting over Hapus tag?]

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering