

WITH GI TAG, MAYURBHANJ'S SUPERFOOD 'ANT CHUTNEY' SET TO FIND MORE TABLES

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: Issues relating to Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs)

Weaver ants are abundantly found in Mayurbhanj throughout the year. Special Arrangement

People often keep a safe distance from red weaver ants as their sting inflicts a sharp pain and reddish bumps on the skin.

Despite this, weaver ants are popular among the people, mostly of the tribes, of Mayurbhanj district in Odisha for the mouth-watering dish made of them — the *Kai* chutney.

This savoury food item, rich in proteins, calcium, zinc, vitamin B-12, iron, magnesium, potassium, sodium, copper, fibre and 18 amino acids, is known to boost the immune system and keep diseases at bay.

In Odisha, scientists are now fine-tuning their research to make a presentation for the Geographical Indications (GI) registry of *Kai* chutney. Applied under food category, the GI tag will help develop a structured hygiene protocol in the preparation of *Kai* chutney for standard wider use.

Geographical Indications labels enhance the reputation and value of local products and support local businesses.

Weaver ants, *Oecophylla smaragdina*, are abundantly found in Mayurbhanj throughout the year. They make nests with leaves of host trees.

"When required, leafy nests of ants are plucked from their host trees and collected in a bucket of water before sorting and separation from leaves and debris. Larval and adult stages of the ants are preferred and are either eaten raw or turned into 'chutney' by mixing them with spicy ingredients," said Jagannath Patra, a scientist at the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK).

The chutney is prepared by mixing and grinding salt, ginger, garlic and chilly and is sold by tribal people in rural markets.

"The tribes of Mayurbhanj consume *Kai* chutney or soup to get rid of flu, common cold, whooping cough, to increase appetite and enhance eyesight naturally without corrective eye wear and to treat joint pain and stomach diseases, and for the development of a healthy brain and the nervous system," Deepak Kumar Mohanty, a senior scientist with the KVK, said.

"The tribal healers also prepare medicinal oil by dipping the collected *Kais* in pure mustard oil. After 30 days, this oil is used as baby oil and externally used to cure rheumatism, gout, ringworm infection and skin diseases. So, it is the only panacea for the tribes," the application for GI registry says.

"The *Kai* family consists of three category members — workers, major workers and queens. Workers and major workers are mostly orange-colored. *Kais* feed on small insects and other invertebrates, their prey being mainly beetles, flies and hymenopterans," it said.

[Our code of editorial values](#)

END

Downloaded from [crackIAS.com](https://crackias.com)

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS.com