



MP HC Rules Garlic as a Vegetable

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Why in News?

Garlic, a staple in kitchens across India, recently became the centre of a legal battle in the Madhya Pradesh [High Court](#). The court was asked to resolve a contentious issue: **whether garlic should be classified as a vegetable or a spice.**

- This classification has significant implications for where and how garlic can be sold in the state's markets, directly affecting the livelihoods of farmers and commission agents.

What is the HC's Ruling Regarding Garlic's Classification?

- **Case Background:** The case began in 2015 when the Madhya Pradesh Market Board, responding to farmer requests, classified garlic as a vegetable. This decision was contested by the Agriculture Department, which reclassified garlic as a spice under the Agricultural Produce Market Committee Act of 1972.
 - The Potato Onion Garlic Commission Agent Association challenged the Agriculture Department's decision in 2016. The single-judge eventually ruled in their favour in February 2017.
 - This ruling was opposed by business people, who argued it would benefit commission agents rather than farmers. In July 2017, a review petition was filed, which led to the current two-judge bench.
- **Madhya Pradesh High Court Ruling:**
 - The court upheld the 2017 order, **ruling that garlic is perishable and should be classified as a vegetable.**
 - The court's decision **allows garlic to be sold in both vegetable and spice markets**, providing flexibility in trade and potentially better prices for farmers.
- **Implications:** Farmers can now sell garlic in both vegetable and spice markets, increasing their price opportunities. Commission agents can bid for garlic in vegetable markets, enhancing competition and benefiting farmers and traders.
 - Garlic is currently at an all-time high price, and this ruling is expected to further boost its market value.

What are the Key Facts About Garlic?

- Botanically, **garlic (*Allium sativum*)** is considered a vegetable, as it has a bulb, tall stem, and long leaves.
 - The distinctive smell of **garlic and onion is due to the presence of sulphur-containing chemicals.**
- Garlic grows best in well-drained, fertile loamy soil with a pH range of 6-8. **Soils rich in organic matter are preferred** for their moisture and nutrient retention and reduced risk of crusting and compaction. **Heavy soils may cause deformed bulbs**, while poorly drained soils can lead to

discoloured bulbs.

- Garlic thrives at **1200-2000 meters above sea level**. Requires cool, moist climate during growth and warm, dry weather during maturity.
- **Production:** India is the **world's second-largest garlic exporter**, with record-high exports in 2023 due to supply chain issues in China.
 - Indian garlic flakes have become more popular in **West Asian countries**, with the United States, Malaysia, Brazil, Germany, and the United Kingdom being India's main garlic export markets.
- **Geographical Indication Tag:**
 - **Riyawan Garlic**, a GI-tagged garlic from **Madhya Pradesh**, is renowned for its **high yield, pungent and robust flavour, and higher oil content** compared to other varieties.
 - **Kodaikanal Malai poondu (Hill Garlic)** a GI-tagged garlic from Tamil Nadu, is known for its medicinal and preservative properties due to its **antioxidant** and antimicrobial potential, which are attributed to the presence of the **higher amount of organosulfur compounds, phenols and flavonoids compared to the garlic varieties**.
 - **Kanthalloor Vattavada Veluthuli**, a GI-tagged garlic from **Kerala**, is renowned for its strong aroma and flavour. Grown in the high-altitude areas of Kanthalloor and Vattavada, this **small-sized garlic is prized for its medicinal properties and culinary use**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Among the agricultural commodities imported by India, which one of the following accounts for the highest imports in terms of value in the last five years? (2019)

- (a) Spices
- (b) Fresh fruits
- (c) Pulses
- (d) Vegetable oils

Ans: (d)