

Country's liquor companies may approach FSSAI

Separate standard for Indian single malt whisky

NEW DELHI, Dec 29: Homegrown Indian liquor makers are mulling approaching food & beverages regulator FSSAI for a separate standard for the Indian single malt whisky that is rapidly scaling with the ongoing trend of premiumisation and has won several prestigious international awards.

This will help maintain the sanctity and reputation of Indian single malt whisky - now exported to 60 countries - and Indian producers are discussing the move, according to the Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC), the industry body of domestic AlcoBev manufacturers.

The Indian distillers are also taking steps to get a geographical indication tag for their single malt whisky that will enhance the brand's credibility and standards.

While the sale of Indian single malt whisky rising in high double digits in the country - the world's largest whisky market - the industry is also facing a challenge to keep a check on the emergence of smaller single malt whisky brands. According to CIABC Director General Anant S Iyer, the definition of FSSAI is that it should be malt-based,



but it does not define single malt. Single malt whisky means that it should come from a single distillery and not multiple ones.

Those not following proper standards should be restrained from claiming themselves as Indian single malt whisky, Iyer said. "We believe that FSSAI should amend its regulations to include a separate standard applicable to Indian single malt whisky. This way, producers who are not following the required standards can be restrained from calling it Indian single malt whisky. It will also help maintain the sanctity and reputation of Indian single malt whisky," Iyer told PTI.

In recent years, Indian single malt brands, including Amrut, Paul John, Radico Khaitan's Rampur, Indri

from Picadilly Industries, Gianchand from Dewansons, Crazy Cock from South Seas Distilleries, and Doaab (Globus), have broke into the segment which was shadowed by the imported Scotch whisky.

In 2023, Indian single malts accounted for nearly 53 per cent of total sales, scoring over the global brands such as Glenlivet, Macallan, Lagavulin, Glenfiddich, and Talisker in the 'desi' market, where the ASP (average selling price) is going up.

CIABC has expressed concerns over misrepresentation of the Indian single malt category by some manufacturers, calling their produce "single malt" despite it being sourced from different distilleries. CIABC says it undermines the efforts of Indian producers who have worked hard over

the years to create a niche for Indian single malt whiskies globally.

"Now a host of other Indian domestic players are setting up and maturing Indian malt spirit, using malted Indian Barley in Oak Barrels, which are mainly imported. They are in the process of launching their own Indian single malt whisky brands in the immediate to near future," said Iyer.

Indian whiskies are finding their play in the huge whisky category worldwide dominated by scotch, American, Irish, Japanese, and Canadian whiskies, he added.

Earlier this year, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) issued its definition of single-malt and single-grain whisky, which came into effect on March 1. - PTI