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# **GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS AS TOOL FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Intellectual property refers to the products of human creativity and intelligence. Currently, there exist different types of Intellectual Property Rights that are given to safeguard and encourage creativity and innovation. One of these categories is called "Geographical Indications" (GI). Geographical Indications typically establish a connection between a specific geographic region and the distinctive features, excellence, or reputation of a product that has historically originated from that region. The utilization of Geographical Indication-protected products deeply embedded in the culture and tradition of a specific geographical area is crucial for local manufacturers to thrive in global markets and generate value for rural populations at the international level. This paper aims to increase awareness of the significance of geographical indication in the context of development. It does so by emphasizing its application and contribution to the progress of rural or underprivileged areas. Additionally, it also emphasizes the diverse facets and advantages of Geographical Indications (GIs) in fostering rural development in India.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

A geographic indication serves as a mark used on goods that come from a particular area and are unique or esteemed due to that specific origin, embodying unique attributes or a reputation linked to their place of origin. These indications are typically safeguarded through different means of protection, ensuring that a product is associated with a specific geographic area. "Geographical indications of origin" and "appellations of origin" both necessitate that the product possesses specific traits or characteristics that are reflective of its geographic location. There must exist a connection or correlation between the product and its location.

Geographical indications of origin extend beyond merely denoting the product's quality; they also capture its reputation or unique features. For consumers, origin can signify that the product has certain desirable qualities or attributes. Often, consumers are prepared to pay a premium for such

products. Brand recognition is a dominant aspect of marketing, and GI is a characteristic that provides for the origin of such Products.

The GI Spring framework represents an all-encompassing strategy for rural advancement, focusing on boosting economic benefits while simultaneously preserving and uplifting community values including culture, heritage, and environmental guardianship. Geographical indications serve as a means to legally represent, safeguard, and enhance local cultures and economies by promoting products and services on a global scale. Geographical indicators have greatly aided in the creation of high-quality rural jobs and economic growth. This may promote the preservation of the distinctive social, cultural, and intellectual property associated with traditional knowledge, crafts, and the highly prized modes of expression specific to a given area.

## WHAT IS GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION?

Geographical indications have long been recognized as a type of intellectual property. “Article 1(2) of the Paris Convention of 1883 defines indications of source and appellations of origin as industrial property”.<sup>1</sup> According to “paragraph (3) of Article 1(2)”, “the term industrial property encompasses not only industry and commerce but also agricultural and extractive industries, as well as all manufactured or natural products such as wines, grain, tobacco leaf, fruit, cattle, minerals, mineral waters, beer, flowers, and flour”.

The term "Geographical Indication" has been in existence for numerous years, but its widespread application emerged with the enforcement of the WTO's TRIPS Agreement in the mid-1990s. Article 22 of this agreement outlines the definition of Geographical Indications as:

*"Geographical indications are, for the purposes of this Agreement, indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a member, or a region or locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographic origin"*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>“Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, as last revised at the Stockholm Revision Conference, Mar. 20, 1883 21 U.S.T. 1583; 828 U.N.T.S. 305, Article 1 (2).”

<sup>2</sup>“TRIPS: Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, Apr. 15, 1994, Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization, Annex 1C, 1869 U.N.T.S. 299, 33 I.L.M. 1197 (1994) , Article 22 (1).”

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) defines GI as:

*“A geographical indication (GI) is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin. In order to function as a GI, a sign must identify a product as originating in a given place. In addition, the qualities, characteristics or reputation of the product should be essentially due to the place of origin. Since the qualities depend on the geographical place of production, there is a clear link between the product and its original place of production.”*

This generally means that the sourcing and the processing of the raw material shall be done at the same place. With Geographical Indications (GIs), having even a single characteristic associated with its place of origin is adequate, whether it be the product's quality, a unique aspect of the product, or simply its renown.<sup>3</sup>

Following the introduction of the TRIPS agreement in 1994, there has been a surge in attention towards Geographical Indications (GI) from policymakers, trade negotiators, and producers. Consequently, due to the TRIPS Agreement, Geographical Indications (GIs) are increasingly gaining traction among a broader array of nations, moving beyond the small group that has historically implemented active GI strategies.

### CONSENSUS OVER THE DEFINITION

The concept of "Indications of Source" is a key element in international agreements such as "The Paris Convention" and "The Madrid Agreement" that safeguard industrial property rights. While no formal definition is given in these agreements, the wording in the Agreement suggests that a source indication refers to the nation or a particular area within that country from which a product originates.

The "Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property" does not encompass the concept of "geographical indications." However, "Article 1, section (2)" of the convention does recognize subjects of industrial property to include both indications of source and appellations of origin. This creates a differentiation where "indications of source" denote the origin of a product or

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<sup>3</sup> “Frequently Asked Questions: Geographical Indications.  
[https://www.wipo.int/geo\\_indications/en/faq\\_geographicalindications.html](https://www.wipo.int/geo_indications/en/faq_geographicalindications.html). (Accessed 22 Feb. 2024).”

service, and "appellations of origin" specify the geographical name of the place from which a product originates, highlighting its unique qualities.<sup>4</sup>

The Lisbon Agreement protects appellations of origin, which are "geographical denominations of a country, region, or locality that serve to designate a product originating therein, the quality or characteristics of which are due exclusively or essentially to the geographic environment, including natural and human factors."<sup>5</sup>

The 1958 Lisbon Agreement outlines the definition of appellations of origin, or geographical indications, as the specific geographical location that gives a product its unique quality or characteristics. The term "appellation" is often seen as more restrictive than "indication," but with the recognition of the influence of human factors, this distinction is becoming less relevant in today's understanding.

The Paris Convention defines "indication of source" broadly, including agriculture, manufactured or natural products, as well as industry and commerce. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) defines Geographical Indication (GI) as "product or service originates in a country" and refers to the characteristics of a product that are unique to a specific location or region. Finally, the TRIPS Agreement defined GI as a "good that originated in the territory or region where a given quality can be attributed to its geographic origin. The definition places a strong emphasis on products or services that originate in a specific locality or territory and have the quality, reputation, or characteristics of that location. The quality, reputation, and characteristics of products or services vary from location to location due to climatic conditions, geographic conditions, and the method and means of production."

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR GI IN INDIA

In India, a legal system protecting Geographical Indications (GI) has only recently been established. Previously, there was no separate statute on GI, but there were a few other ways to

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<sup>4</sup> "Introduction to geographical indications and recent developments in the world intellectual property organization (WIPO), worldwide symposium on geographical indications, WIPO/GEO/SFO/03/1, (July 9 to 11, 2003)."

<sup>5</sup> "Lisbon Agreement for the Protection of Appellations of Origin and Their International Registration, 923 U.N.T.S. 205 (October 31, 1958), *as revised*, (July 14, 1967) and as amended, (September 28, 1979) 923 U.N.T.S. 205, Article 2"

protect geographical tags in the Indian legal system. Some of the ways in which GI protection were available:

- Under consumer protection laws.
- By filing a passing off action in court.
- Obtain a certification mark under trademark laws.

With the passage of time and the emergence of modern complexities, a specific statute was deemed necessary to safeguard “Geographical Indications (GI) in India. In 1999, the Indian parliament approved the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act 1999”, drawing significant inspiration from New Zealand's GI protocols. This legislation aims to enhance the registration and protection of GI associated with products, prohibiting unauthorized individuals from utilizing such indications. The primary objective of the act is to shield the interests of producers, manufacturers, and consumers against deception regarding the geographic origin of goods and to bolster the economic success of these products bearing geographical indications in the global market.

Section 2 (1) (e) of the act defines GI as: *“geographical indication, in relation to goods, means an indication which identifies such goods as agricultural goods, natural goods or manufactured goods as originating, or manufactured in the territory of a country, or a region or locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of such goods is essentially attributable to its geographical origin and in case where such goods are manufactured goods one of the activities of either the production or of processing or preparation of the goods concerned takes place in such territory, region or locality, as the case may be.”*

### REASONS FOR POPULARITY OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS

Numerous opportunities exist to promote geographical indications, potentially enhancing the market value and success of origin-based producers through trade standards. Safeguarding certain information guarantees quality for consumers. Geographical indications attribute significant qualities to products and services that may not be immediately apparent, providing insight into the production process of items like wine or cheese. By linking a product to a specific region and its distinctive qualities, consumers are assured of the product's authenticity and are more eager to engage with it.

A 1999 EU survey involving 20,000 consumers regarding their purchasing habits of GI products revealed several motivations: 37% were primarily motivated by the assurance of origin, 35% by the anticipated quality, 31% by the specific origin and production method of the product, and 16% by its traditional value. Additionally, 51% of the respondents, representing roughly 180 million EU citizens, expressed a willingness to pay a premium of 10-20% for GI products over similar non-GI items. This indicates a strong consumer inclination towards products with geographical indications.

The analysis further suggests that the protection of geographical indications in the EU positively influences traditional agricultural practices and their connection to their place of origin, gradually attracting consumer interest. There's a clear indication that when the interests of producers are safeguarded, either directly or indirectly, it significantly benefits the rural economy.<sup>6</sup>

Consumers establish an intimate connection with producers, acknowledging their unique approach to processing and manufacturing, along with the inherent qualities bestowed upon their products by the surrounding climate or geographical location. This unquestionably safeguards the interests of both local consumers and those from beyond the community.

### THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS WORLDWIDE

The demand for GI products is vast, particularly in the affluent regions of the United States, Europe, and other prosperous nations. It is estimated that the global market for GI products exceeds a staggering \$50 billion, with a significant portion of this sum allocated to the indulgence of wines and spirits.

According to a comprehensive analysis conducted by the European Commission, the esteemed Geographical Indications (GIs) protected by the European Union attribute a staggering sales value of €74.76 billion. Remarkably, more than a fifth of this colossal sum is derived from exports beyond the confines of the European Union. The study further reveals that products bearing the distinguished mark of certification enjoy a sales value that is approximately twice as substantial as their non-certified counterparts.

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<sup>6</sup> “Daniele Giovannucci, Guide to Geographical Indications: Linking Products and their Origins, International Trade Centre, Chapter 1 Pg 17 (2009).”

In 2017, the collective sales of products with geographical indications and those with traditional specialties guaranteed amounted to an impressive €77.15 billion, accounting for 7% of the total sales in the European food and drink industry. The category of wines led the way with sales of €39.4 billion, followed by agricultural products and foodstuffs, which made up 35% of the total with €27.34 billion, and spirit drinks, which constituted 13% with sales of €10.35 billion. Out of the 3,207 product names registered that year, nearly half were wines, 43% were agricultural and food products, and 8% were spirit drinks.<sup>7</sup>

In the context of India, the Central Government, through “the Agricultural and Processed Food Export Development Authority” (APEDA), is facilitating trial exports of a variety of products such as “Kala Namak rice, Naga Mircha (chili), Assam Kaji Nemu (lemon), Bangalore Rose Onion, Nagpur Oranges, different Geographical Indication (GI) varieties of mangoes, GI-tagged Shahi Litchi, Bhalia wheat, Madurai Malli (jasmine), Bardhaman Mihidana and Sitabhog (sweets), Dahanu Gholvad Sapota (chikoo), Jalgaon Banana, Vazhakulam Pineapple, and Marayoor Jaggery to new international markets”. These efforts are in line with the Prime Minister's campaigns for 'Vocal for Local' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (Self-reliant India), aimed at promoting indigenous products on a global scale.

In 2021, notable exports of Geographical Indication (GI) products included shipments such as “Naga Mircha (King Chilli) from Nagaland to the UK, Black Rice from Manipur and Assam also to the UK, and Assam Lemon to the UK and Italy. Additionally, three GI-tagged mango varieties (Fazli, Khirsapati, and Laxmanbhog) from West Bengal, along with one GI variety of Mango (Zardalu) from Bihar, were exported to Bahrain and Qatar. Furthermore, around 30 kilograms of Joynagar Moa, a sweet specialty from the South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, was dispatched to Bahrain through Kolkata airport, showcasing the diverse range of GI-tagged Indian products reaching international markets”.<sup>8</sup>

## MAKRANA MARBLE FROM RAJASTHAN

Makrana Marble is the most well-known marble in our country, and it can be found in the Krishnagarh region of Rajasthan.<sup>9</sup> In Rajasthan, there are many different kinds of marbles that

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<sup>7</sup> “European Commission, Geographical Indications: A European treasure worth €75 billion, European Commission Press release, 2020 [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_683](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_683).”

<sup>8</sup> “Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Centre focusses on promoting exports of GI-tagged niche agricultural products, Press Release India, 2022 <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1806816>.”

<sup>9</sup> “Indian Bureau of Mines, Indian Minerals Year Book, 60th edition p. 30 - 3 202, available at [https://ibm.gov.in/writereaddata/files/1683715376645b75306254b15\\_Marble.pdf](https://ibm.gov.in/writereaddata/files/1683715376645b75306254b15_Marble.pdf)”

come in different colors. One place called Makrana is well-known for its white marble that looks like crystals. There are also other types of marble in Makrana, like Albeta, Adanga, and Dongri Pink.<sup>10</sup> The marble from the Rajsamand area is extensively mined. It's off-white and greyish white. With 600 mines present, the area has a large market potential for a variety of businesses.<sup>11</sup>

In this region, the marble stone procured is believed to be of unparalleled excellence on a global scale. Boasting an enduring luster and an astonishingly minimal presence of impurities, this stone resource has garnered remarkable recognition. On the esteemed date of July 19, it achieved the prestigious GHSR status, as affirmed by IUGS, an illustrious international non-governmental body committed to fostering collaboration in the realm of geology.<sup>12</sup>

The enduring splendor of Makrana Marble can be witnessed in the timeless grandeur of ancient monuments such as the illustrious Taj Mahal, a masterpiece from the 17th century, and the majestic Victoria Memorial in Calcutta, meticulously crafted in 1900. Remarkably, despite the passage of centuries, these architectural marvels continue to radiate a remarkable brilliance and remain unyielding in the face of nature's relentless trials. They serve as poignant testaments to the unparalleled resilience of Makrana Marble, a stone that defies the forces of time.

Makrana Marble, a calcitic marvel, is discovered in the Makrana and Parbatsar Tehsils, nestled within the Nagaur District of Rajasthan, India. Boasting an astonishing calcium carbonate content of over 98%, this exquisite stone is virtually untainted by impurities and showcases a delightful array of additional constituents such as magnesium oxide, iron oxide, silica, alumina, sulfur, and more. Revered for its exceptional purity, resplendent hues, and impeccable grain quality, Makrana Marble has earned a prestigious reputation as one of the most extraordinary materials for intricate carving and breathtaking sculptural masterpieces. For countless generations, craftsmen have tirelessly quarried this majestic marble in the revered Makrana region of Nagaur District, Rajasthan, India.

With the existence of diverse impurities and additional elements like magnesium and iron, the hue of Makrana Marble displays a range from immaculate white to white imbued with hints of

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<sup>10</sup> *ibid* p. 30 - 2

<sup>11</sup> "Department of Mines & Geology, District wise Report (Minor Minerals), 2021-22, available at <https://mines.rajasthan.gov.in/dmgcms/page?menuName=/q/rwh/KECHeRGa880t62w/Ij7hT0oZj>"

<sup>12</sup> "Tabeenah Anjum, Makrana Marble is now a Global Heritage Stone Resource, Deccan Herald, 2019, available at <https://www.deccanherald.com/india/makrana-marble-is-now-a-global-heritage-stone-resource-749162.html>"

grey or pink throughout. Remarkably, its pristine white shade endures for centuries, a quality that sets it apart from other marble formations which undergo a transformation from white to variations of grey, black, or yellow as a result of the gradual oxidation of magnesium and iron into their corresponding oxides.

Its distinguishing characteristics include fine grain, consistent, evenly distributed colors, and pleasing and appealing designs and patterns. For the highest quality monumental marble, the white and albeta varieties of Makrana Marble are preferred over others. It differs chemically from other marbles due to its high calcium carbonate content. As a result, it does not turn yellow due to various external factors, but rather remains white and long-lasting. The chemical structure is so well blended that it is extremely strong but easy to carve with a standard chisel.

Rajasthan produces 90% of India's marble. Only the Makrana Marble from Nagaur District and the Sirohi Marble from Sirohi District are calcitic marbles. All other marbles in India are dolomitic marbles, which turn yellowish over time.

Given their commercial potential, adequate legal protection for Makrana Marble became necessary to prevent misappropriation, particularly at the national and international levels, resulting in registration under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act of 1999.

#### REGISTRATION OF GI

The Makrana Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation Area Marble Association filed an application for registration of 'Makrana Marble' as GI on April 9, 2013, with GI Application No. 405 in Class 19 with respect to Marbles (classified under Natural goods). The application was notified in GI Journal No. 64 on November 28, 2014, after the examination process had been completed. After completing the mandatory period of four (four) months of advertisement, the application was registered on March 30, 2015, under Certificate No. 233. It has recently been renewed as a GI on 13th April 2023.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> "Geographical Indications Registry, Intellectual Property India, <https://search.ipindia.gov.in/GIRPublic/Application/Details/405>."

**GI LOGO<sup>14</sup>****REVENUE AND SALES**

Marble production from Makrana is currently around 3,36,396 tonnes per year, with an annual revenue of Rs. 206309000.<sup>15</sup> There are currently over 5.5 million tonnes of deposits available.<sup>16</sup>

Prior to GI registration, the annual production was as follows:

<b>Years</b>	<b>Production (Tons)</b>	<b>Sale Value (INR)</b>	<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Employment (Nos.)</b>
<b>2011-2012</b>	742195	4071536500	206178000	10095
<b>2012-2013</b>	747195	4471536500	220530000	11097
<b>2013-2014</b>	744195	4824536500	260567000	11097
<b>2014-2015</b>	603570	3923205000	192910000	11000
<b>2015-2016</b>	562954	4948196500	234448000	11380

Post GI registration i.e., after March 30, 2015, the annual production for the following years was<sup>17</sup>:

<sup>14</sup> ibid.

<sup>15</sup> "Department of Mines & Geology, District wise Report (Minor Minerals), 2021-22, available at <https://mines.rajasthan.gov.in/dmgcms/page?menuName=/q/rwh/KECHeRGa880t62w/Ij7hT0oZj.>"

<sup>16</sup> Supra note 13

<sup>17</sup> Supra note 16

Years	Production	Sale Value	Revenue	Employment
	(Tons)	(INR)		(Nos.)
2016-2017	636550	4137550000	261700000	3540
2017-2018	632142	2528568000	277847000	15500
2018-2019	664497	2657988000	241435000	15700
2019-2020	1325025	53000100000	2223363000	10700
2020-2021	276876	1107504000	116288000	10700
2021-2022	336396	6727920000	206309000	10700

Furthermore, after GI registration, the sale rate of Makrana Marble increased by about 10%. This has enabled the Registered Proprietor's producers to raise the wages of their employees who work in various production roles. Despite the fact that the government mandates a minimum wage for labourers, producers provide more than that.

#### EMPLOYMENT GENERATION

At the time of GI registration, it is stated that approximately 7000 families are directly involved in the mining of Makrana Marble, with another 35,000 families involved in its transportation, processing, and sale. Overall, approximately 60-70,000 families are involved in the industry at various stages.<sup>18</sup>

However, it is understood that Makrana employs at least 1 million people from approximately 200 surrounding villages in approximately 900 mines located throughout the Aravallis. Makrana, along with Rajsamand, is one of Rajasthan's main marble production centres. The global marble industry has grown rapidly since the 1990s and is expected to grow by more than 8% per year in the future. The marble industry is large and growing, with the majority of global producers focusing on international trade.

<sup>18</sup> "As per the affidavit given by the applicant during GI registration, <https://search.ipindia.gov.in/GIRPublic/Application/ViewDocument>."

Employees in this industry work in a variety of sectors, including mine operations, factory operations, marble processing activities (such as marble cutting), trading establishments, and handicraft showrooms.

### LEGISLATIONS

#### *Under State Laws:*

- The Rajasthan Minor Mineral Concession Rules, 2017, enacted Mar. 01, 2017,
- The Rajasthan Minor Mineral Concession (Amendment) Rules, 2016,
- The Rajasthan Marble Policy, 2002.

#### *Under Central Laws:*

- The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957.

## **GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS: CATALYSTS FOR RURAL PROGRESS**

Through this study it is indicated that GIs possess the potential to foster the growth of rural regions. Local producers are generally granted the privilege of employing GIs, and the additional value produced by these GIs ultimately serves the collective benefit of these producers. Given the likelihood of GI products commanding a premium brand price, they play a pivotal role in stimulating job opportunities within the vicinity, thereby curbing the trend of rural inhabitants migrating to urban settings. Moreover, it is not uncommon for GI products to engender consequential effects, particularly in the domains of tourism and gastronomy.

The utilization of geographical indications serves to enhance a region's economic growth, foster community pride, and support emerging talent, ultimately contributing to the establishment of a strong regional identity.

It's important to recognize that merely establishing a Geographical Indication (GI) for a product does not guarantee regional prosperity; GIs need to contribute to regional development actively. To develop a GI strategy that suits the region, several aspects must be taken into consideration. Particularly, the human aspect is vital, ensuring that traditional products such as 'Kanchivaram Silk' and 'Muga Silk' sarees are produced by skilled craftsmen in Tamil Nadu and Assam, respectively.

## THE FRAMEWORK FOR ADVANCEMENT

The safeguarding of geographical indications presents a promising development framework, offering a plethora of advantages to the region of origin. Not only do geographical indications benefit producers, but they also create opportunities for various sectors of society. These benefits encompass the promotion of traditional and indigenous cultural values, as well as tangible economic advantages like enhanced employment opportunities, increased incomes, and expanded market reach.

Geographical indications (GIs) offer a multitude of ancillary benefits, subtly transforming local governance, enticing tourists with their captivating allure, elevating land values, and even extending their esteemed reputation to other regional products - think Champagne's mustard or the Jamaican Blue Mountain's tantalizing honey.<sup>19</sup> Globally, the advantages that emerge can take on various forms of distinction and competitive edge that prove difficult to diminish. Geographical indications (GIs) serve as conceptual frameworks that facilitate a comprehensive strategy for diverse rural development. GIs possess the capacity to go beyond a limited emphasis on a singular product and foster multifaceted progress.<sup>20</sup>

Geographical Indications (GI) require little to no innovation, unlike patents. This allows more producers to apply for GI protection without the costs and efforts typically associated with innovation.

It is widely acknowledged that GI inherently pertains to traditional and cultural aspects, and this characteristic can even be seen as the opposite of innovation. Geographical indications (GIs) can also contribute to the prevention of bio-piracy and the unauthorized use of traditional knowledge. Additionally, GIs may contribute in protecting traditional agriculture systems, including seed selection and food conservation measures. The deployment of GI production methods and procedures would allow the preservation of natural vegetation and wooded regions, yielding to favorable consequences for ecosystem and landscape conservation. This, in turn, would build substantial ties between goods and culture, while simultaneously boosting development.

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<sup>19</sup> Supra note 6, Pg. 31

<sup>20</sup> "Sylvander B & Allaire G, WP3 Report: Conceptual Synthesis Task 1, Strengthening International Research on Geographical Indications (SINER-GI) Project (2007). <https://hal.inrae.fr/hal-02821136/document>."

Europe has determined that GIs have greatly contributed to advancements in various areas. These include improved collaboration between municipalities, authorities, commercial and social partners within regions. Additionally, geographical indications have played a significant role in positively characterizing regions, particularly in terms of culture, landscape preservation, and marketing. Furthermore, they have led to improvements in overall infrastructure and rural services, as well as the promotion of regions as attractive business destinations. Finally, geographical indications have also resulted in advancements in environmental quality and the efficient utilization of resources.

The bulk of Geographical Indications are associated with agricultural goods and represent longstanding cultural or traditional wisdom. This places them firmly in the realm of intellectual property, which ideally should bolster agricultural economies and, particularly, those of developing nations. However, only a small number of developing nations have capitalized on the possibilities presented to them, with most seeing little to no benefit.

Stronger rural development policies can be achieved by utilizing the GI development approach, which has an inherent tendency to integrate various functions. Local and regional GI governance may even benefit from the strong institutional framework as complementary strategies. A sound legal framework and a comprehensive strategy for rural development will undoubtedly be indispensable as GI policy tools.

#### POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION

After carefully examining the diverse data, the researcher has deduced and analyzed that there are several ways in which society will benefit, which are outlined below:

##### *SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS:*

Because GI-protected products are high-quality, distinctive, and original, there is a growing global demand for their manufacturing. Because of this growing demand, economic activity has been encouraged in rural areas and has grown to be a significant source of income for the majority of the population. Additionally, it has produced a number of job opportunities that have improved the social standing and standard of living of the locals while also halting the mass migration of people into metropolitan areas. Furthermore, local producers find it simpler to differentiate their traditional goods from comparable ones sold in the marketplace and to improve the reputation of their traditional products with the support of GI protection. However, because GI products are

unique and primarily related to their geographical origin, local producers must guarantee a particular standard and quality level. As a result, GI products are typically sold for more than ordinary goods of a similar nature. Thus, GIs do play a significant role in the social and economic advancement of India's rural areas.

*CUSTOMER ASPECT:*

One of the most notable aspects of Geographical Indications is their ability to give customers the information they need to make better purchasing decisions based on their needs and desires by describing the qualities, attributes, and uniqueness of the products covered by GI protection. Customers are given a better understanding of the uniqueness, safety, features, and quality of a given GI product by providing them with the required information regarding the location of the resources as well as the traditional knowledge and manufacturing process.

*PRODUCER'S ASPECT:*

By meeting the demands of conscientious and picky customers, GI protection is crucial in helping local manufacturers and producers maintain their revenue streams. These businesses typically suffer large financial losses when sales decline or their product's reputation is tarnished. Furthermore, because GI products can be promoted directly to end users without the help of middlemen or big businesses, they are far more profitable.

*GOVERNANCE:*

The expansion of geographical indication tagging will necessitate a heightened involvement of governmental and regulatory entities to safeguard their interests and advance their objectives. The local populace will be incentivized to actively engage in the governance process. Enhanced safeguarding of geographical indications will undoubtedly foster regional collaboration and empower local institutions.

*ECOSYSTEM:*

This approach will also contribute to the safeguarding of biodiversity, the conservation of ecosystems, and the communal management of local resources.

**CULTURE:**

Safeguarding additional Geographical Indications will aid in maintaining the area's traditional production and processing expertise, as well as its superior quality. This process enables the inclusion of more products linked to geographical features, climatic conditions, and so on.



*Importance of local and GI products for the environment, consumers and economy*

## CONCLUSION

Geographical Indications serve as a testament to a product's unique qualities derived from its specific geographical location, climate, and origin. Consequently, these certifications not only captivate consumers' interest but also justify higher price points. Given that establishing a brand's recognition is crucial in the realm of marketing, products labeled with Geographical Indications face direct competition. Ultimately, Geographical Indications act as a legal framework to safeguard and enhance local cultures and economies by promoting products and services on a global level. Significantly, they have been instrumental in enhancing the standard of rural employment and driving economic growth.

The TRIPS Agreement characterizes geographical indications as products associated with specific attributes that originate from their place of origin. This designation emphasizes goods or services that are sourced from particular regions and embody the quality, reputation, or other characteristics intrinsic to those locations. The distinctiveness of products or services often stems from the unique geographical and meteorological conditions of the area, along with specific production techniques.

Considering the points discussed above, the researcher fervently advocates for the implementation of the following protections for Geographical Indications:

- The concept of expanding the scope of interpretation in order to garner greater safeguarding of Geographical Indications ought to encompass elements such as water, stone, earth, and salt. Even the venerated holy water, referred to as 'Ganga Jal' in the Hindu faith, holds a divine status as a deity and finds application in propitious ceremonies. 'Ganga Jal' possesses the unique attribute of being storable for prolonged durations without acquiring a foul odor, unlike its counterparts sourced from alternative origins.
- The preservation of animals, their milk, meat, and excrement necessitate the safeguarding of Geographical Indications, as their very existence relies upon the unique interplay of climatic conditions, geographical locale, and the manner in which they are reared.

