

INDO-ASIAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND
MANAGEMENT RESEARCH VOL 2 (01), JANUARY – JUNE
2025, PP. 60-74

PRESERVING THE PAST, NURTURING THE FUTURE: GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS AS GUARDIANS OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN INDIA

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Received-29/8/2024

Accepted-04/01/2025

ABSTRACT

This research paper investigates the mutually harmonious link between Geographical Indications (GIs) and cultural heritage preservation, examining their function as custodians of traditions and identity. Cultural heritage confronts increasing risks in a globalized society, and this research tackles the urgent need for effective procedures to protect varied cultural manifestations. GIs, as defined by different international treaties and national laws, emerge as important tools with the capacity to balance commercial interests and cultural preservation.

The review of works of literature examines the historical development of GIs, their legal frameworks, and the delicate relationship between GIs and cultural heritage. Case studies of successful implementations and issues observed give significant insights, acting as a bedrock for a conceptual framework that defines the function of GIs in cultural asset preservation. The study adopts a thorough approach that includes case study analysis and comparative legal analysis, alongside primary sources such as interviews and surveys. Examining the beneficial effect of geographic indicators on cultural items, the study explains how these indications work as guardians, not only protecting against theft but also stimulating economic and social growth within communities. However, the research critically examines obstacles such as globalization and legal enforcement issues, as well as cultural appropriation concerns.

The policy ideas at the heart of the article attempt to improve the efficacy of GIs in cultural heritage protection. Strengthening legislative frameworks, increasing international collaboration, and involving local populations in the GI process are among the recommendations. The findings provide a nuanced view of the interaction of intellectual property rights and cultural preservation, establishing the framework for future research paths in this critical topic. As the landscape of cultural variety changes, this paper recommends for proactive efforts to guarantee that GIs become steadfast custodians of our common cultural inheritance.

KEYWORDS

Intellectual Property Rights, Cultural Heritage, Globalization, Legal Framework, Economic Development, Community Empowerment, Cultural Appropriation, Heritage Guardianship, Socioeconomic Impact, Traditions and Identity, Future Research Directions, Preservation Strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Geographical indications (GIs) are characteristics that identify a product as coming from a specific geographical location, and when a given product's quality, reputation, or other attribute is fundamentally due to its geographical origin (WTO, TRIPS Agreement, Article 22(1)). GIs go beyond conventional trademarks by stressing the geographical relationship and the impact of that origin on the distinctive attributes of the product (World Trade Organization, 1994). The cultural heritage represents a community's common past, customs, and distinct identity. This includes both tangible along with intangible aspects, such as historical monuments and customary behaviors, that make a contribution to the cultural fabric of communities. Cultural heritage preservation is critical for preserving variation, creating social cohesion, and handing along precious wisdom to future generations (Smith, 2006). With its rich tapestry of cultural variety, India has always associated items with their geographical origins. The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act of 1999 acknowledges the cultural and economic importance of GIs in the Indian setting. From Darjeeling tea to Banarasi silk, India has a multitude of items that are strongly entrenched in its cultural past, and GIs act as guardians, conserving the distinctive attributes associated with each area. In the modern era, cultural heritage suffers a myriad of difficulties, ranging from globalization and commercialization to environmental changes and military conflicts. These threats endanger the integrity and authenticity of cultural display, needing meticulous assurances (Blake and Hare, 2017). The current topic concerns the ability of Geographical Indications (GIs) to be useful tools in mitigating threats to cultural heritage. With an eye on the relationship between product features and geographical origin, GIs give a promising route for combining profit motives with cultural identity preservation (Giuliani and Van der Werf, 2009). The present research tries to Study the function of geographical indications in ensuring the longevity of cultural heritage, Examine how effective of existing legal systems in protecting cultural products and Propose suggestions to improve the link between the use of geographic information systems and cultural heritage preservation. Thus, the study addresses the following concerns:

- What role do Geographical Indications serve in the protection of cultural heritage?
- What are the current problems and wins in using GIs to safeguard cultural heritage?

- How can legal and policy frameworks be enhanced in order to improve the efficacy of GIs in this context?

The research focuses on the interaction between Geographical Indications and cultural heritage, with a particular emphasis on the legal, economic, and social components. The different approaches to GIs between countries, as well as the changing nature of cultural heritage protection, are constraints to the Geographical Indication process. This study is significant because it provides insights for legislators, legal practitioners, and communities aiming to find a balance between economic interests and cultural heritage preservation. The study contributes to the ongoing debate on creative methods to cultural asset conservation by critically analyzing the role of GIs (Harvey, 2011).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Historical Evolution of Geographical Indications

Geographical Indications (GIs) may be traced back to the late nineteenth century in Europe, when products such as Champagne and Roquefort cheese sought protection based on their geographical origins. The global perspective on GIs emphasizes the importance of international agreements such as the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). TRIPS developed a framework for the protection of geographical indications (GIs), highlighting the relevance of GIs in fostering fair trade and combating misuse (Cottier, 2005). This worldwide evolution reflects a common appreciation of the economic and cultural value contained in items associated with certain geographic areas. GIs have strong historical origins in India, coinciding with the country's rich cultural history and traditional behaviors. The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act of 1999 was an important step in the country's legal recognition and protection of GIs. This act aims to protect the rights of producers linked with certain areas as well as the distinctive attributes of indigenous goods. In India, the growth of GIs represents a compromise between the demand for economic security and the preservation of cultural identity.

2.2 Cultural Heritage and Intellectual Property

The conceptual connections between cultural heritage and intellectual property, especially geographic indications (GIs), highlight the delicate relationship between tangible and intangible elements that make up a community's identity. Intellectual property protects traditional knowledge, skills, and cultural manifestations by providing a legal framework. As a subcategory of intellectual property, GIs bridge the gap between commercial interests and cultural heritage protection. This conceptual relationship highlights the function of geographical indications (GIs) in providing legal recognition and protection to items that are firmly anchored in the cultural past of certain places(Dreyfuss, 1989).

2.3 International Precedents

International examples demonstrate the various ways nations have taken in recognizing and safeguarding GIs in order to conserve cultural heritage. The European Union's severe protection of geographical indications (GIs), as demonstrated by the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) labels, serves as a model. The success of geographical indications (GIs) in areas such as Bordeaux wine in France and Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese in Italy shows the potential of this intellectual property instrument in supporting economic growth while conserving cultural authenticity(European Union, "Quality Schemes Explained".n.d.). These foreign examples give useful insights for countries looking to deepen the relationship between GIs and cultural heritage, including India.

2.4 Role of GIs in Preserving Cultural Heritage

Case studies from around the world demonstrate the many applications and accomplishments of GIs in cultural asset preservation. Tequila in Mexico, Scotch Whisky in Scotland, and Darjeeling tea in India are examples of the global significance of GIs in protecting historic products. These case studies demonstrate how GIs may help with economic empowerment, biodiversity protection, and the promotion of sustainable agriculture techniques. Analyzing other nations' experiences teaches vital ideas for developing effective GI programs that balance cultural preservation with economic progress(World Intellectual Property Organization, "GI View: Protecting Your Products., n.d.).GIs have played an important role in maintaining and promoting the cultural legacy linked with various items in the Indian setting.

Banarasi silk, Pashmina shawls, and Alphonso mangoes have all been designated as GIs, highlighting the varied range of items associated with certain locations. These instances show how GIs contribute to the economic well-being of local communities while also assuring product authenticity and quality (Office of the Controller General of Patents, Designs & Trademarks, India, "List of Geographical Indications", n.d.). However, concerns such as enforcement issues and the need for increased stakeholder knowledge persist.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The legal framework for intellectual property rights (IPRs) in India is extensive, including a wide variety of categories such as copyright, trademarks, and patents. The Copyright Act of 1957 oversees literary, artistic, and musical works, whereas the Trade Marks Act of 1999 regulates trademark registration and protection. The Patents Act of 1970 governs patents, outlining the requirements for patentability as well as the rights of patent holders. Each of these IPRs serves a specific purpose in the protection of various types of intellectual creations and advances. Geographical Indications (GIs) in India have distinct characteristics in the intellectual property environment. GIs are especially meant to safeguard items originating in a certain geographical place, when the product's quality, reputation, or features are inextricably related to that origin. GIs provide protection that extends beyond individual trademarks or patents, concentrating on the collective legacy associated with a certain region. This distinguishing feature highlights the cultural and economic value of items associated with certain geographical places (Cottier, 2005). The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, is the legislative framework that governs GIs in India. The Act's goal is to give legal protection for geographical indications and to prohibit the unlawful use of indicators that falsely portray the geographical origin of goods. It creates a registration system for geographical indications, allowing producers to get formal recognition and protection for their products. The Act also defines registered proprietors' rights and enforcement measures. In accordance with international norms such as the TRIPS Agreement, the Act establishes registration requirements, including the requirement that a product have traits, reputation, or characteristics related to its place of origin. It also creates the Geographical Indications Registry to facilitate the registration of GIs. The Act allows registered proprietors to take legal action against infringers, protecting the interests of producers in certain regions. Subsequent modifications to the Geographical Indications Act

seek to strengthen GI protection and management in India. Amendments frequently respond to new issues and reconcile law with changing international norms. For example, changes may address problems such as the definition of GIs, the extent of protection, and registration processes. The impact of the amendments is visible in the improved clarity and efficiency of the registration procedure, as well as the strengthening of enforcement tools. Evaluating the impact of changes entails examining their efficacy in addressing practical difficulties encountered by stakeholders, raising awareness, and maintaining the legal framework's continuous relevance in the ever-changing context of intellectual property and commerce.

4. CULTURAL HERITAGE & GIs IN INDIA

4.1 Diverse Cultural Practices

India is known for its vast cultural legacy, which includes a tapestry of traditions, dialects, and creative manifestations. The country's cultural environment includes a mix of customs passed down through centuries, from the lively festivals of Diwali to classical dance forms like Bharatanatyam. These different cultural activities are profoundly entwined with people's everyday lives, forming identities and maintaining a feeling of continuity with the past.

4.2 Traditional Knowledge and Skills

Indian cultural legacy includes a plethora of traditional knowledge and skills in addition to rituals and festivals. Generations have maintained and transferred essential skills and information, from Ayurvedic medical techniques to the meticulous workmanship of handwoven fabrics. These traditions are frequently associated with specific places, reflecting the distinctive ways in which people interact with their surroundings and carry on their knowledge.

4.3 Case Studies (Specific GIs Protecting Cultural Heritage)

4.3.1 Darjeeling Tea

Darjeeling tea's geographical indicator shows the safeguarding of cultural assets linked with a specific place. Only tea produced in the authorized Darjeeling area, recognized for its distinct terroir, can wear the Darjeeling label. This certification protects the cultural value of Darjeeling tea, maintaining the region's particular scent and flavor. In 2004-2005, Darjeeling Tea became India's first GI-labeled product. Darjeeling tea has been around since the early

1830s. It was statutorily managed by the government as part of the Tea Industry beginning in 1933 and culminated in the Tea Act of 1953. The Tea Board has the jurisdiction to oversee all phases of tea cultivation, processing, and sale by different orders. Darjeeling Tea is a well-known flavor and quality that has garnered the approval and recognition of discriminating customers all over the world. There have been some disagreements on the GI status of Darjeeling Tea. The Tea Board initiated legal action against ITC Limited based on their registered GIs. Since 2003, ITC Limited has maintained a top executive lounge called "Darjeeling Lounge" at its ITC Sonar Hotel. In 2010, the Board launched a legal complaint in Calcutta High Court, requesting an interim injunction to prevent ITC Limited from using the brand Darjeeling Lounge(*"Darjeeling Tea Gets Geographical Indication (GI) Tag,"* 2004). They claimed that ITC's use of the term 'Darjeeling' infringed on its registered GIs and certification trademarks. They further said that the usage of the 'Darjeeling Lounge' is an unfair competition act that causes confusion among visitors visiting the Darjeeling Lounge and leads such tourists to assume that there is some link with Darjeeling Tea.

The defendant argued that Darjeeling is essentially a place name and that tea is not the most significant component of Darjeeling. Tea Board is therefore not able to claim uniqueness over 'Darjeeling' considering that its monopoly terminates at 'tea'. Furthermore, it was argued that the complaint was precluded by limitation since the usage of the 'Darjeeling Lounge' began before the adoption of the GI Act and there was a delay in filing the suit. The complaint brought by the Tea Board was dropped, and the case was ruled in favor of ITC. The Court held that the Plaintiff's registered GI and Certification trademarks are limited to tea and that the protection they provide does not extend to lounge services.

4.3.2 Banarasi Silk

Banarasi silk, a Geographical Indication, reflects Varanasi's historic silk weaving legacy. The GI classification not only protects genuine Banarasi silk against counterfeit, but it also helps to preserve the region's centuries-old weaving skills and designs. It strengthens the cultural identity inherent in Banarasi silk sarees(*"Banarasi Sari Gets GI Status,"* 2009).

4.3.3 Navara Rice

Navara Rice is a unique grain plant in the *Oryza* group and one of the various forms of rice found in India. It is indigenous to Kerala and is well-known for its therapeutic benefits. The

award of GI to Navara Rice Farmers' Society in 2007 has enraged other producers of the crop in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. However, it is said that only farmers from this community are permitted to market their harvest as Navara rice.

"Nobody has evidence on the historical origin of Navara rice," says Sridhar of the Kerala-based NGO Thanal, which works with farmers on sustainable agriculture. Furthermore, you cannot confer GI to seeds since seeds travel and adapt to local ecosystem through genetic modifications." He advocates for greater clarity in GI legislation("The case of Navara rice – Tamil Nadu vs. Kerala",n.d.)

4.3.4 Kolhapuri Chappals

In 2019, the Controller General of Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks (CGPDTM) granted a Geographical Indication (GI) tag for Kolhapuris, the ethnic leather chappal, to the Maharashtra districts of Kolhapur, Sangli, Solapur, and Satara, as well as the Karnataka districts of Belgaum, Dharwad, Bagalkot, and Bijapur. In 2009, the Sant Rohidas Leather Industries & Charmakar Development Corporation Limited of Maharashtra (LIDCOM) and the Dr. Babu Jagjeevan Ram Leather Industries Development Corporation of Karnataka (LIDKAR) jointly bid for the GI tag of Kolhapuri Chappals, which resulted in the GI tag being granted in favor of the artisans of the two states.

The reason for giving the GI for Kolhapuri Chappals to two states and eight districts within them was due to high demand for Kolhapuris and a shortage of leather in Maharashtra. The second issue has been a shift in taste among young people in India and throughout the world("The famous Kolhapur chappals",n.d.) . The last cause was an increase in competitiveness. The ever-present fear of 'Chinese mimicry' looms enormous.

4.3.5 Tirupathi Laddu

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam sought for Tirupathi Laddu GI tag registration under class 30. It was awarded the GI tag in 2009. The purity, renown, and distinctiveness of the Laddu stem from its use as naivedyam to the Lord. This laddu is frequently served as prasadam to devotees after they worship Lord Venkateshwara, the presiding deity of Tirupathi's Sri Vari Temple.

Mr. R.S. Parveen Raj, a Trivandrum resident, filed a PIL against the GI Tag for the 'Tirupati Laddu' before the Madras High Court in 2009. He based his action on three claims. The first is that the GI was awarded to a single manufacturer, the second is that there is a lack of individuality, and the third is that the name is generic. The petition was denied on the basis that an alternative and effective venue for resolving such a disagreement existed ("Tirupathi laddu – The Savoury from Andhra", n.d.). According to the G.I. Act, such a petition might have been filed with either the G.I. Registry or the IPAB.

5. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

5.1 Legal Challenges

In India, the adoption of Geographical Indications (GIs) for cultural heritage meets a number of legal hurdles. These include difficulties concerning the definition and extent of GIs, as well as enforcement methods and the requirement for clarity in legislative rules. The changing character of cultural practices may pose difficulties in establishing permanent standards for the registration and preservation of GIs. Furthermore, the legal system may need to evolve in response to new types of infringement, such as digital counterfeiting and cross-border conflicts. Academic literature, such as that by Dutfield and Suthersanen (2004), highlights the complexity of preserving cultural assets through intellectual property, especially GIs .

5.2 Socio-Economic Challenges

The socioeconomic issues associated with adopting GIs for cultural assets concentrate upon balancing economic gains with the social impact on local populations. While GIs can increase product market value and help to economic growth, issues may arise in ensuring fair benefit sharing among all stakeholders. Issues such as local producer empowerment, fair trading procedures, and the prohibition of monopolistic control over GIs require careful attention (Ghimire, 2008). Socioeconomic issues are addressed in studies such as Ghimire's, which investigates the socioeconomic consequences of geographic information systems in the context of cultural heritage protection.

5.3 Policy Recommendations

Strategic policy proposals are required to solve the problems of adopting GIs for cultural resources in India. These might include improving the current legislative framework,

expediting registration procedures, and improving coordination between government agencies and local communities. Policy interventions should strive to encourage sustainable practices, enhance community involvement, and improve the social and economic well-being of persons affected by GIs.

Reports from government agencies and international organizations frequently offer policy suggestions (World Intellectual Property Organization, 2013). The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), for example, offers guidelines and policy suggestions on GIs and cultural asset protection.

5.4 Strengthening Institutional Frameworks

Strengthening institutional frameworks entails increasing the competence of entities in charge of GI registration, protection, and enforcement. This involves offering training sessions, increasing stakeholder awareness, and strengthening collaboration across various agencies. Strengthening institutional frameworks is critical for assuring GI implementation effectiveness, overcoming legal issues, and maximizing socioeconomic advantages for local communities. Studies such as those by Bently and Sherman, which address the role of institutions in the preservation of intellectual property, particularly GIs, stress the importance of building institutional frameworks (Bently and Sherman, 2014).

6. CASE FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Technological advancements

In India, the future growth of Geographical Indications (GIs) for cultural heritage is inextricably connected to current technology improvements. The use of technologies such as blockchain and the Internet of Things (IoT) can improve the traceability and authenticity of GI-related items. Due to its decentralized and tamper-resistant nature, blockchain can provide a safe and transparent mechanism for tracking the whole supply chain of GI goods (Simon, 2020). This not only combats counterfeiting but also strengthens the legitimacy of cultural heritage protection operations. The potential of blockchain technology to improve GI protection is addressed in works like as Simón's research paper, which focuses on the application of blockchain in the context of GIs.

6.2 Changing Consumer Preferences

Future development must consider the changing tastes of consumers who are becoming more aware of the cultural and ethical implications of their choices. Consumers like items that have a clear link to their geographical origin and cultural history. This shift in consumer behavior provides an opportunity to use GIs not just for legal protection, but also as a commercial feature that resonates with the ideals of conscientious customers. The shifting dynamics of customer preferences and their influence on GIs are examined in studies such as Marette and Crespi's research, which investigates the economic consequences of GIs in the context of consumer preferences(Marette and Crespi, 2010).

6.3 Aligning Policies with Future Needs

Policymakers must deliberately match rules and policies with anticipated future demands. This entails including measures that handle developing difficulties relating to technology, globalization, and the fluidity of cultural norms. A forward-thinking regulatory framework should make it easier to integrate technology solutions, shorten registration processes, and guarantee that GIs are adaptable to shifting cultural contexts .The need of matching regulations with future demands is emphasized in studies by organizations like as the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), which analyze and give advice on policy implications for GIs on a regular basis(World Intellectual Property Organization, 2009).

6.4 Balancing Protection and Innovation

Striking a balance between cultural heritage conservation through GIs and innovation is crucial for long-term growth. Future policy should foster innovation within traditional methods, ensuring that local populations gain economically while maintaining their cultural identity. This entails developing systems to encourage traditional knowledge transmission, incentivize sustainable agriculture practices, and create community-industry partnership.

The difficult balance between preservation and innovation is a frequent issue in academic discourse, as shown in works such as Broude and Shur-Ofry's paper, which addresses the conflict between traditional knowledge protection and the encouragement of innovation(Broude and Shur-Ofry, 2003).

7. CONCLUSION

The investigation of "Geographical Indications as Guardians of Cultural Heritage in India" has yielded several insights on the relationship between cultural heritage and intellectual property. The journey through historical history, legal frameworks, cultural practices, and case studies has shed light on Geographical Indications (GIs) and their critical role in conserving India's unique cultural heritage. The historical history of GIs, both internationally and within India, demonstrates their importance as a dynamic instrument adjusting to the changing context of intellectual property protection. With their own characteristics, geographical indications emerge as a critical tool that goes beyond ordinary copyright, trademarks, and patents, providing a specialized type of protection strongly anchored in the cultural identity of certain locations.

This study adds considerably to the academic literature by providing an in-depth assessment of the problems, possibilities, and future prospects of GIs for cultural heritage in India. The examination of legal difficulties and socioeconomic concerns offers policymakers, legal practitioners, and researchers with significant insights. The case studies, based from specific GIs preserving cultural heritage, show both success stories and the ongoing issues that stakeholders encounter. In the future, further study in this topic might explore more into the influence of technical improvements on GI implementation. Furthermore, investigating the complex link between GIs and sustainable development, as well as the potential of GIs in the digital era, might add to our knowledge. Furthermore, a nuanced analysis of the role of GIs in solving modern concerns like climate change and globalization may open the way for novel policy responses.

This study's conclusions have practical ramifications that go beyond academics. Policymakers may use the policy recommendations to improve existing frameworks and link them with changing cultural heritage protection demands. Institutional frameworks must be strengthened to promote effective implementation and enforcement, supporting an environment in which protection and innovation coexist.

In India, the symbiotic link between Geographical Indications and cultural heritage highlights the difficult balance necessary to conserve the past while nourishing the future. The path forward necessitates the strategic integration of technology, a clear grasp of altering

consumer tastes, and the constant evolution of legislation in order to establish a robust and dynamic framework that really protects the nation's cultural riches. The pursuit of cultural heritage preservation via GIs is a dedication to the essence of a nation's identity, a monument to the enduring history passed down through generations. Geographical Indications serve as guardians as India navigates the rich fabric of its cultural variety, ensuring that the threads of tradition stay lively, contributing to a future in which cultural heritage flourishes in harmony with innovation and development.

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