



EVALUATION OF THE SOCIO- ECONOMIC IMPACT OF GEOGRAPHIC INDICATIONS (GI) IN UTTARAKHAND

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ABSTRACT

Purpose- The main purpose of the paper is to study that how could Geographic Indications (GI) play an essential role in the promotion of original products in local as well as in overseas markets. GI protection has economic implications both for the consumers and producers. **Design/Methodology/Approach** –The study explores that GIs are collective IPRs which protect traditional regional heritage that has long been practiced among the local people in certain specific regions to preserve their agricultural Products, Handicrafts, Industrial Products, Foodstuffs etc moreover that also functions as an anti-counterfeiting mechanism. **Findings-** This paper contributes to the socio-economic impact evaluation of GIs by carrying out a study in Uttarakhand having total 27 GI tag products. The theoretical studies on GIs mostly focus on the consumer welfare based on the other hand it is an attempt to examine the producer welfare effects of GI protection. **Research Implications-** This study provides insights for GI producers, policy makers emphasizing different factors influencing GI and explores the future outlook.

KEYWORDS : Consume Welfare, Protection, Handicrafts, Foodstuffs, Protection

BACKGROUND

Geographical indication (GI) is given to the goods of a particular region, which has a special geographical importance and place. Due to the same geographical origin, the good has special properties and identity. One cannot copy another product after getting the GI tag and to promote the identification and marketing of local products of the state the registered select local products and by getting the GI tag, fake products will be avoided in the market.

Top five states in India which holds maximum number of GI tags includes Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Kerala. Tamil Nadu and Karnataka holds maximum number of GI tags followed by Kerala with 35 GI tag, Uttar Pradesh with 34 GI tag and Maharashtra with 31 GI tag.

In January 2022, Uttarakhand, like many other regions in India, is known for its unique products that have received GI that identifies a product as originating from a specific geographical area, where qualities, reputation, or characteristics of the product can be attributed to that location.

For the first time in the 20-year journey from the enactment of the GI law in 2003 to 2023, GI certificates have been issued to 18 products of a state simultaneously in a single day.

To promote local products in all the districts of Uttarakhand, work is being done rapidly in the state on 'One District, Two Products' scheme. Under this scheme, two products are being developed in each district on the basis of skill development, design, raw material, new technology, etc. as per the market demand. *The main objective of the scheme is to identify local products and develop traditional industries accordingly in all the 13 districts of Uttarakhand.*

With this scheme, on one hand, self-employment opportunities are increasing for local farmers and artisans, while on the other hand local products of every district are getting world-class recognition. These GI tags help protect the intellectual property rights of local producers and promote the unique products of in domestic and international markets. They also contribute to the socio-economic development of the region by creating opportunities for local farmers and artisans.

Thrust Points

- A total of 27 products of the state have received GI tag.
- The 18 products of the state which have received GI (geographical Indication) certificates include *Uttarakhand Chola, Jhangora, Mandua, Red Rice, Almora Lakhori Chilli, Berinag Tea, Burans Sharbat, Ramnagar (Nainital) litchi, Ramgarh Aadu, Malta, Pahari Tor, Gahath, Kalah Bhatt, Bichhubati Fabric, Nainital Mangbatti, Rangoli Pichoda, Chamoli Raman Masks and Kitai Wood Carving.*
- Earlier nine goods of Uttarakhand *Tejpat, Basmati rice, Aipan art, Munsiyari white kidney beans, Ringal craft, Thulma, Bhotiya dan, Chura oil and copper products* have already received GI certificate.
- The main objective is to identify the local products in all the districts and develop traditional industries accordingly. Due to this, self-employment opportunities are increasing for local farmers & craftsmen and local products of every district are getting world class recognition.
- Also hold significant importance for various stakeholders, including producers, consumers, and policymakers.

Evaluating the socio-economic impact of geographic GI in Uttarakhand would involve assessing various aspects of how GIs have influenced the region's economy, culture, and society. The framework covers the following impacts:

(A) Economic Impact:

I. Revenue Generation:

Analyze the revenue generated by products with GIs in Uttarakhand compared to non-GI products.

II. Employment Opportunities:

Assess the employment opportunities created directly and indirectly due to GI products, including farming, processing, marketing, and tourism.

III. Market Expansion:

GIs have helped local products penetrate new markets, both domestically and internationally.

IV. Value Addition:

GIs have added value to products, leading to higher prices and better returns for producers.

(B) Social Impact:

I. Preservation of Traditional Knowledge:

GIs have contributed to preserving traditional knowledge and skills related to product production.

II. Community Empowerment:

GIs have empowered local communities by providing them with a sense of identity and pride.

III. Gender Dynamics:

GIs have impacted gender dynamics within local communities, particularly regarding access to resources and decision-making power.

IV. Cultural Promotion:

GIs have helped in promoting the cultural heritage of Uttarakhand, both within the region and beyond.

(c) Environmental Impact**I. Sustainable Practices:**

GIs have incentivized the adoption of sustainable agricultural and production practices to preserve the environment.

II. Biodiversity Conservation:

There is a special role of GIs in promoting biodiversity conservation by preserving indigenous plant varieties and animal breeds.

III. Resource Management:

GIs have contributed to better management of natural resources like land, water, and forests.

ADVANTAGES-**1. Improves Reputation:**

Improves the product's reputation not just domestically but also globally, attracting customers from all over the world to visit the place of origin that also assure tourism growth.

2. Preservation of Cultural Heritage:

GIs play a crucial role in preserving traditional knowledge, skills and cultural practices associated with the production of goods in specific regions. They help maintain the uniqueness and authenticity of local products, contributing to the preservation of cultural heritage.

3. Quality Assurance:

GIs provide consumers with assurance regarding the quality, authenticity, and distinctiveness of products. Consumers can trust that products bearing GI tags meet certain standards and specifications associated with their geographical origin.

4. Rural Development:

GIs can stimulate rural development by promoting local industries and creating employment opportunities in rural areas. They encourage investment in local production processes, infrastructure and marketing thereby fostering economic development in rural communities.

5. Market Access:

GIs can enhance market access for producers by differentiating their products from competitors and creating a niche market for unique regional products. They can also facilitate international trade by providing legal protection against unauthorized use of geographical indications in foreign markets.

CHALLENGES -**1. Legal Framework:**

Developing and implementing a robust legal framework for GIs can be challenging, particularly in countries where intellectual property laws are still evolving. Ensuring effective protection and enforcement of GI rights requires comprehensive legislation and institutional capacity building.

2. Procedural Requirements:

Obtaining GI protection often involves complex administrative procedures, including documentation, verification of geographical criteria and stakeholder consultations. These procedures can be time-consuming, resource-intensive and bureaucratic, posing challenges for producers, especially small-scale farmers and artisans.

3. Market Awareness:

Building awareness and recognition of GIs among consumers, retailers, and other market actors is essential for their success. Lack of awareness about the significance of GIs and their potential benefits may hinder market acceptance and undermine the value of GI protected products.

4. Counterfeiting and Misuse:

Protecting GIs from unauthorized use, counterfeiting and misuse remains a significant challenge. Producers may face competition from counterfeit or falsely labelled products that claim to be associated with a particular geographical origin, undermining the integrity of genuine GI products.

5. Sustainable Development:

Balancing the promotion of GIs with sustainable development goals, such as environmental conservation and social equity is essential. Ensuring that GI production practices are environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive requires careful planning and stakeholder engagement.

Addressing these challenges requires coordinated efforts from governments, producers, civil society organizations and other stakeholders to promote the effective protection and promotion of GIs while maximizing their socio-economic benefits.

Future Outlook-**Policy Recommendations:**

Based on the evaluation there is a need of recommendations for policymakers to further support the development and sustainability of GIs in the state.

Research Needs:

further research is needed to understand the long-term impacts of GIs on the socio-economic fabric of Uttarakhand. There are more than 100 products in the state that can be given the GI tag. These include *cereals, pulses, oilseeds, spices, fruits, vegetables, handicrafts and handloom products, traditional instruments*. Getting the GI tag will give these products legal protection

Stakeholder Collaboration:

Emphasize the importance of stakeholder collaboration among government agencies, industry associations, NGOs, and local communities to maximize the benefits of GIs.

By systematically evaluating these dimensions and gain insights into the socio-economic impact of GIs and develop informed strategies for their sustainable development. Looking into the future, Uttarakhand has several opportunities to leverage Geographical Indications (GIs) for economic development, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability. Here are some potential future opportunities :

Diversification of GI Products:

While Uttarakhand already has some products with GI tags, there is potential to identify and promote additional products unique to the region. This could include traditional handicrafts, herbal medicines, specialty fruits, and other agricultural products that reflect the diverse cultural and ecological landscape of the state.

Promotion of Eco-Friendly Practices:

GIs can be used as a tool to promote sustainable agriculture,

forestry, and other land-use practices in Uttarakhand. By linking GI products to environmentally friendly production methods, such as organic farming, agro forestry and eco-tourism the state can enhance its reputation for sustainable development and attract environmentally conscious consumers.

Tourism Development:

Gis can contribute to the development of rural tourism in Uttarakhand by showcasing the unique cultural and natural heritage associated with GI products. Tourists interested in authentic experiences may be drawn to destinations where they can learn about traditional crafts, culinary traditions and agricultural practices linked to GI products.

Value Addition and Marketing:

Uttarakhand can explore opportunities for value addition and market diversification of GI products through branding, packaging and marketing initiatives. By promoting GI products as premium quality, niche market items the state can capture higher value and increase income for producers.

Capacity Building and Institutional Support:

Investing in capacity building programs, research initiatives, and institutional support for GI producers can enhance their competitiveness and innovation capacity. Providing training in product development, quality control, marketing strategies, and GI management can empower local communities to maximize the benefits of GI protection.

International Trade and Export Promotion

Uttarakhand can leverage GI status to access international markets and promote exports of its unique products. Establishing partnerships with international buyers, participating in trade fairs and exhibitions, and obtaining international recognition for GI products can open up new opportunities for economic growth and global integration.

Policy Support and Collaboration:

Developing a supportive policy environment for GIs, including streamlined administrative procedures, financial incentives, and legal protections, is essential for their successful implementation. Collaboration between government agencies, industry associations, research institutions, and community organizations can facilitate the development and promotion of GIs.

By capitalizing on these opportunities and addressing associated challenges, Uttarakhand can harness the potential of Geographical Indications to promote sustainable development, cultural preservation, and economic prosperity in the state.

The conferment of GI tags on these diverse products not only celebrates Uttarakhand's cultural wealth but also opens up new avenues for economic growth. These products, now recognized on a global scale are poised to contribute significantly to the state's identify and economy ensuring their legacy for generations to come.

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