

Book Reviews

Made Only in India: Goods with Geographical Indications by Anu Kapur, Routledge India, Oxon, 2015, 272 pages, INR 895.00, ISBN. 978-1-138-66805-8.

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Geographical Indications is perhaps the only term after Geographical Information System (GIS), which uses the word 'Geography' in true sense, providing a unique identity to the goods originating from a specific geographical locality. The Geographical Indications (GI) Act, the only Act among others beholds the essence of the discipline as "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....."¹

On 22nd December, 1999, unanimous support to protect the diverse traditional indigenous goods was sought after at the Lok Sabha. Considering the fact that the Geographical Indications Bill would boost production, recognise manufacturers, protect the place of origin, promote the nation as a strong global power, it was passed. Thereby, it received the approbation of the President of India on 30th December, 1999. The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act came into force since 15th September, 2003 when the goods had to get registered at the Geographical Indications Registry, Chennai.

India as a nation has been widely known across the globe for its rich diversity in physical as well as non-physical aspects. It encouraged a plethora of goods which the author labels as "place goods". The author identifies these place goods as 'hailing from a specific place' each promising a different taste" (pg.20). Though rooted to a certain territorial extent, yet, the significance of the place goods can be felt wide across the length and breadth of the nation and in certain cases across the globe, recollecting memories of the place they belong. Explaining about the 'Bonding' the good shares with the place, the book in a way dilutes the dichotomy between physical and human geography by focussing on the fact that both are important for maintaining the identity of goods. Place goods help 'Place Branding' - "Even though branded as the most 'backward' of India, some tribes have spread the fame of place and goods far and wide" (pg.50). Place goods used in form of logos and stamps, goodwill, words and appreciation, awards and medals accentuate the level of 'Bonding'. Geographical Indications gives equal importance to the place goods irrespective of the bias promulgated by the nation's

¹ *Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act*. 1999. Act No. 48 of 1999. Ministry of Law, Justice and Company Affairs, New Delhi.

burning issues of caste, creed or religion. The time predating Islam evidenced the Hindu temple culture where goods offered to God or had some relation with the Divine were made with perfection. Such tradition accounts for place goods like Mysore Malligae, Nagercoil temple jewellery, Madhubani Paintings, Baluchari Sarees and many others still popular for its rich grandeur.

The Mughals with their bohemianism, passion to build and construct and enjoy every best possible thing provided the patronage to value and develop their own culture and nurture the same. They were mainly attracted to exquisite fabrics (Kashmiri Pashmina), embroidery (Lucknow Chikan), rocks (Makrana Marble), food (Hyderabad Haleem) and several others which still hold up its respective reputation in the GI registry.

The colonial influence at first promoted and popularised the place goods and almost took them to the zenith and when the selfish needs of the colonists got over, “plunged them into the worst of abysses” (p.96). The act of ‘Destruction’ of the place goods by the colonists was undertaken slowly by documenting and researching on all the unique place goods, organising exhibitions, displaying at museums in a way to steal the intellectual resource which helps in imitating the tangible resource. This posed a major threat to the place goods as they could not compete with the machine-made cheap substitutes thereby leading to falling wages. In due course of time, the withdrawal of royal patronage, loss of territory to neighbouring countries of Bangladesh and Pakistan, lack of awareness among common mass pacified the deteriorating situation. This paved way for the thought, that the Act on Geographical Indications could probably help rejuvenate the situation.

In the era of globalisation, with the growing sense of placelessness the desire to search for the special unique place good, and its place of origin needs to be protected. Protecting the individual skills and creativity in the age of mass forging heralded the way for Patents, Trademarks, Inventions and Design Act, Geographical Indications. Though the Europeans took the initiative to protect their place goods, especially wines and spirits, they were opposed by North America, Australia and New Zealand highlighting the fact that ‘similar’ places existed everywhere.

India supporting the Geographical Indications cause also looks for more such unique place goods. Beautifully crafted embroideries from North India; baskets and mats; dresses like *Pheran* (Kashmir), *Mundun Neriyaathum* (Kerala), *Mekhala Chador* (Assam) and many more; several delicious and distinctive foodstuffs; unique rocks (Black calcite marble, Mt.Abu) and many more can easily be added to the list of Geographical Indications Goods.

The goods *Made Only in India* are not without their problems. Threats like homonyms, generics, duplication and other trouble makers strictly affect the place-good bond. Trademarks too mislead people of place connection (the name ‘Ajanta’ relates to the historic caves of Maharashtra but the company itself belongs to Gujarat; similar cases of

Basmati Rice, Ganga Sagar, Aqua Pure-Dehradun and many others can be mentioned). For safeguarding the situation, the importance behind the livelihood of the rural people attached to the geographical abode needs to be understood at first. "Sensitive rearing, upholding of standards by producers of goods and effective marketing" (pg.154) are vital for the sustenance and growth of these goods. Awareness of the ones engaged with the Geographical Indications products can help better the situation. The extent to which the place takes a productive role can intensify its level of eminence before all. As with the changing times, place looks upon its own creations to survive, mature and endure.

The book '*Made Only In India*' therefore, deciphers that Geographical Indications can be the most suitable Intellectual Property Right to stimulate the 'Make In India' initiative. The book portrays the essence of the 199 Geographical Indications registered products of India beautifully inducing the deserving place goods to get registration as well strengthening the need for awareness and promotion of the same.

Use of simple, lucid language along with a strong foreword and preface builds up the mood for the book to take its own course. Each chapter carefully inter-relates with the other maintaining the flow of ideas. Depiction of facts through 43 figures and 13 tables, maps demarcating the Geographical Indications centres/areas adds up to the interesting quotient of the book. Intricate inter-relationship of geographical concepts of 'place', 'regional geography', 'physical, human, divine geography' is also discussed. It also informs about *oriGIn*, World International Symposium on Geographical Indications which is extremely essential for any researcher as it would give them a platform to learn and interact. Inclusion of certain photo-plates related to the unique production process of few products could pictorially enhance the distinctiveness of the place goods. Case examples of the present awareness status of the ones concerned with the Geographical Indications products, if added, would help know to what extent consciousness and promotion needs to be undertaken.

This work as it keeps all of its readers engrossed as turning each page, illustrates the life journey of the place goods and provides them with a spatial identity. The blend of varied disciplines makes the book a worthy read for a wider audience. Going by the trend of grasping the unique among the lot, this book stands out and paves way for being a trendsetter in the field of geography and academia at large.

