



GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS AND START-UP INDIA: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN CULTURAL HERITAGE, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Naina Chudasama¹

ABSTRACT

Geographical Indications (G.I.) as an IPR and startups are vital drivers of sustainable tourism, economic development, and cultural preservation. GIs provide startups with market access, product differentiation, and contribute to the success and sustainability of GI-protected industries. This research paper examines the symbiotic relationship between startups, GIs, and sustainable tourism, emphasizing their significant contributions to economic, social, and cultural value creation with creative ideas and entrepreneurial skills. Moreover GIs offer startups numerous economic benefits. They enable market access by leveraging the reputation and recognition associated with specific geographic regions. Startups that obtain GI status can differentiate their products, attract customers seeking authentic experiences, and stimulate demand for locally produced goods and services. This leads to increased production, employment, and income for local communities.

Furthermore, GIs play a crucial role in preserving and promoting cultural heritage. Startups collaborating with GI-protected products actively participate in preserving traditional knowledge, cultural practices, and craftsmanship. By working directly with local communities and artisans, startups contribute to revitalizing traditional industries and empowering communities to sustain their cultural practices. The Indian Basmati Rice GI & others in India exemplifies how GIs help preserve traditional cultivation and processing methods, ensuring the transmission of these practices to future generations. Sustainable tourism benefits from its association with GIs, as they contribute to the authenticity and uniqueness of destinations. GIs are closely linked to specific cultural traditions, culinary experiences, and sustainable practices. Tourists are increasingly drawn to destinations offering authentic, culturally immersive experiences aligned with sustainable values. The presence of GI-protected products enhances the attractiveness of a destination, promotes responsible travel choices, and supports local communities. The Darjeeling Tea GI and many more successfully promotes sustainable

¹ BA LLB (Hons), United World School Of Law (UWSL), Karnavati University.

tourism by attracting visitors interested in the region's history and tea production. Startups in sustainable tourism drive innovation, introduce sustainable business models, foster community engagement, leverage technology, promote collaboration, educate travelers, and employ data-driven decision-making. By incorporating sustainability into their core business models, startups align with the principles of responsible tourism and meet the growing demand for ethical travel experiences. Through collaboration with GI-protected industries, startups provide innovation, market reach, entrepreneurship, and new avenues for economic growth. This collaborative approach creates a mutually beneficial ecosystem that contributes to economic development, social empowerment, and cultural preservation. In addition to which in the year 2020 The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has reportedly planned to ask online retailers such as Amazon and Flipkart to focus on listing geographical indication (GI) items, to give a boost to local producers and manufacturers. A positive move towards synchronizing Startups, Entrepreneurship, and GI's & related forums. In conclusion, the combination of startups under Startup India, GIs, and sustainable tourism offers a promising pathway towards responsible and authentic travel experiences. The synergistic relationship between startups and GIs enables economic growth, cultural preservation, and market access, while sustainable tourism benefits from the authenticity, uniqueness, and responsible practices associated with GI-protected products. This research paper highlights the mutual benefits and potential for collaboration between startups, GIs, and sustainable tourism, underscoring their collective contribution to economic, social, and cultural value creation.

Keywords : Geographical Indication (GI's), Startup India, Sustainable Tourism, Cultural Heritage, Entrepreneurship, DPIIT, IPR, Human Capital Development

What is GI & it's International Reach?

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.

A geographical indication (GI) tag in India is a sign used on products that have a specific geographic origin and includes the qualities or reputation of that origin. A GI is given mainly to agricultural, natural, manufactured, handicraft arising from a certain geographical area.

Geographical Indications (GIs) are not confined to national borders; they hold significant value on the international stage as well. GIs have gained recognition and protection through various international agreements and treaties, contributing to the global promotion and preservation of unique regional products.

Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement²: GIs are recognized and protected under the TRIPS Agreement, a part of the World Trade Organization (WTO) framework. The TRIPS Agreement sets out minimum standards for intellectual property protection, including GIs. It mandates WTO member countries to provide legal mechanisms to prevent the use of misleading indications for products that do not originate from the indicated territory.

Lisbon Agreement for the Protection of Appellations of Origin and their International Registration³: This international treaty administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) focuses specifically on appellations of origin. It provides a system for the international registration and protection of appellations of origin, contributing to the global recognition and protection of GIs.

Bilateral and Regional Agreements: Many countries enter into bilateral and regional agreements to recognize and protect each other's GIs. These agreements facilitate international trade by ensuring that products with GIs are not subject to misuse or counterfeiting in foreign markets.

Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications⁴: The Geneva Act represents a contemporary enhancement of the Lisbon Agreement, broadening its purview to encompass all geographical indications (GIs) instead of just appellations of origin (AO). This expansion permits international organizations to participate as contracting parties as well. Beyond merely indicating product origin, GIs also highlight cultural contributions and acknowledge the creativity embedded in genuine expertise. A product name registered as a GI or AO — known as a protected geographical indication (PGI) or a protected designation of origin (PDO) within the EU — is exclusively usable by producers situated within the specified geographical area. Each contracting party assumes the responsibility of safeguarding AOs and GIs originating from other signatory countries,

² <https://wto.org/trips> (last visited on July 22, 2023)

³ <https://www.wipo.int/treaties/en/registration/lisbon/> (last visited on July 22, 2023)

⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/protection-of-geographical-indications-geneva-act-of-the-lisbon-agreement.html> (last visited on July 22, 2023)

respecting their own legal systems and practices.

In summation, the Geneva Act aims to establish an efficient mechanism for the protection of geographical indications, while the Lisbon Agreement has historically centered on appellations of origin. This shift in focus not only modernizes the framework but also extends its inclusivity to various forms of geographical indications. Furthermore, the EU's involvement in the Geneva Act adds a notable dimension to the international landscape of geographical indication protection.

European Union (EU) Regulations⁵: The EU has established a robust system for protecting GIs through regulations that grant exclusive rights to the products originating from specific regions. Well-known examples include products like Champagne, Roquefort cheese, and Parmigiano-Reggiano. These regulations ensure that products labeled with specific GIs meet defined quality and production standards.

Promotion of GI Products in International Markets: GIs often become ambassadors of the cultural and historical heritage of a region. Through targeted marketing and promotion efforts, GI products gain recognition in international markets. This can drive demand and enhance the reputation of products with a strong geographical identity.

The Laws and Policy governing GI in India

The legal and policy framework governing Geographical Indications (GI) in India is established to recognize, protect, and promote the unique identity and qualities of products originating from specific geographical regions. The primary legislation addressing GIs in India is the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.⁶

Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999: This Act provides the legal framework for the registration and protection of GIs in India. It outlines the process for registering GIs, the rights granted to register GI holders, and the enforcement mechanisms in case of infringement. The Act defines the criteria for determining whether a product qualifies for GI protection, including its link to a specific geographical area and the qualities, reputation, or characteristics attributed to that origin.

Geographical Indications Registry⁷: The Registry, under the Ministry of Commerce and

⁵ https://europa.eu/youreurope/business/running-business/intellectual-property/geographical-indications/index_en.htm#:~:text=Geographical%20indications%20protect%20your%20products,as%20certain%20requirements%20are%20met. (last visited on July 22, 2023)

⁶ https://www.indiacode.nic.in/handle/123456789/1981?sam_handle=123456789/1362 (last visited on August 5, 2023)

⁷ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/videos/toi-original/what-does-a-gi-tag-mean-for-a-product-who-gives-this-tagging-all-you-need-to->
IP BULLETIN (Vol. III, Issue I; 2022)

Industry, is responsible for administering the registration of GIs. It examines applications, maintains the GI register, and facilitates the protection and enforcement of GI rights.

Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB)⁸: IPAB is a quasi-judicial body that handles appeals against decisions of the Registrar of GIs. It provides a platform for resolving disputes related to the registration and protection of GIs.

Policy Initiatives: The Indian government, recognizing the importance of GIs, has implemented various policy initiatives to promote and protect them. Startup India Seed Fund Scheme, launched by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), includes provisions for supporting startups involved in the creation of GI-protected products. Additionally, policies like 'One District One Product' (ODOP)⁹ and various state-level initiatives aim to identify and promote specific GI products from different regions.

ODOP¹⁰: The "One District One Product" (ODOP) initiative is focused on achieving balanced regional development throughout India by highlighting and promoting a unique product from each district. The core aim is to drive comprehensive socioeconomic advancement across various regions. A total of 1102 products from 761 districts have been identified under this initiative. Products have been selected through a collaborative process involving States/UTs, considering factors like existing local ecosystems, Districts as Export Hubs (DEH), and products with Geographical Indications (GIs). Activities related to the initiative are carried out at the state and district levels, in coordination with the relevant departments of States/UTs.

Several notable activities under the ODOP initiative include:

- Facilitating the shipment of 30 tonnes of Lakadong Turmeric from Meghalaya.
- Organizing the Mango Festival of India in Japan, showcasing Indian mango varieties in convenience stores and wholesale markets.
- Import substitution of over 2000 KGs of walnuts from Kashmir to Karnataka.
- Buyer-seller meets for textile products in India-Russia and Jammu & Kashmir.
- Showcasing ODOP products at international events such as the World Economic Forum and International Day of Yoga celebrations in New York.
- Collaborations with Indian Embassies for promoting exports and public procurement of ODOP products.

Additionally, ODOP exhibitions have been held in various global locations like Croatia and

know/videoshow/99270827.cms#:~:text=In%20India%2C%20the%20Geographical%20Indication,Ministry%20of%20Commerce%20and%20Industry. (last visited on August 5,2023)

⁸ <https://www.india.gov.in/website-intellectual-property-appellate-board>(last visited on August 5,2023)

⁹ <https://www.india.gov.in/spotlight/one-district-one-product-odop>(last visited on August 5,2023)

¹⁰ <https://www.india.gov.in/spotlight/one-district-one-product-odop>(last visited on August 6,2023)

Canada to enhance the visibility and export potential of ODOP products. The initiative demonstrates a strategic effort to harness the distinct economic potential of each district, fostering growth and prosperity across the nation.

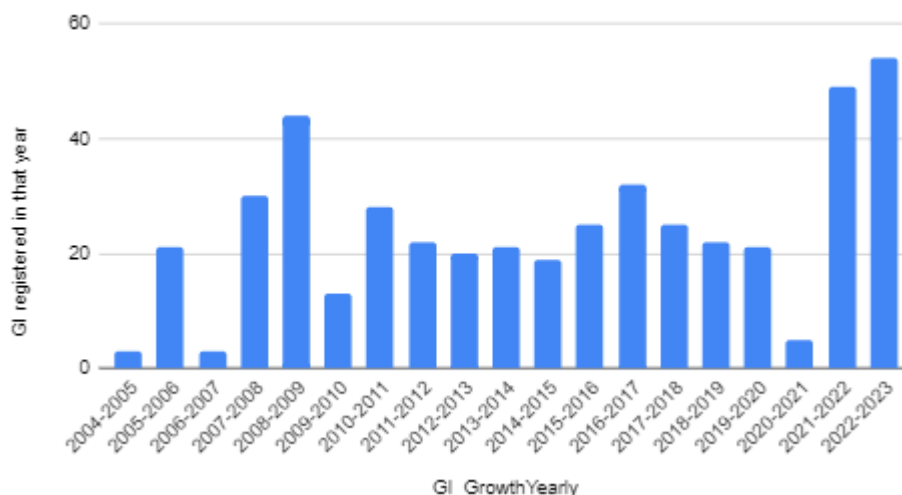
International Agreements: India's GI protection is also influenced by international agreements. The Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement, administered by the World Trade Organization (WTO), establishes standards for the protection of GIs globally. India's commitments under TRIPS influence its domestic GI framework.

In conclusion, the legal and policy landscape for GIs in India centers around the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. This legislation, along with supportive policies and institutions, aims to safeguard the unique identity of regional products, protect the rights of producers, and promote economic growth by preserving cultural heritage and promoting quality products with distinct geographical origins.

Growth of Geographical Indications (IPR)

There is an ever increasing growth of Geographical Indications, as People are getting more aware of Geographical Indications. The GI sector is growing rapidly, as consumers are increasingly demanding products that are authentic and have a unique story. The government is supporting the GI awareness so that people can tap this market

GI registered in that year vs. GI GrowthYearly



Challenges & Issues faced by GI in India

Geographical Indications (GI) in India have undoubtedly paved the way for the recognition and protection of the country's diverse cultural heritage and regional uniqueness. However, amidst their positive impact, certain challenges and issues, particularly pertaining to the absence of mandatory quality checks in existing laws, have emerged as notable concerns.

Geographical Indications (GI) in India have brought to light a range of challenges and issues that impact their successful implementation and protection. These challenges stem from various domains and warrant careful attention to ensure the longevity and effectiveness of the GI system.

Lack of Awareness: One of the primary challenges is the lack of awareness among producers and consumers about the concept of GI. Many local artisans and producers might not be familiar with the benefits and procedures associated with GI registration, hindering them from leveraging this intellectual property tool effectively.

Counterfeiting and Misuse: GI-protected products are often vulnerable to counterfeiting and misuse. Unauthorized producers might label their products with false GI claims, diluting the value and authenticity of genuine GI products.

Regulatory Framework: The existing regulatory framework for GIs might need further refinement to address emerging challenges. Ambiguities in legal definitions, procedures, and enforcement mechanisms can lead to disputes and delays in the GI registration process.

Inadequate Enforcement: Effective enforcement of GI rights is essential to prevent infringement and misuse. Insufficient enforcement mechanisms can lead to violations and erode the value of GI protection.

Geographical Extent: The geographical scope of certain GIs might be ambiguous, leading to conflicts over territorial jurisdiction and the actual boundaries of the protected area.

Documentation and Evidence: The process of gathering documentation and evidence to establish the link between the product and its geographical origin can be complex and time-consuming, particularly for traditional knowledge-based products.

Financial Constraints: Many local producers and artisans might face financial constraints in pursuing GI registration due to associated costs. This can limit the inclusivity of the GI system.

Slow Registration Process: The process of obtaining GI registration can be lengthy, often taking several years. Delays can hinder producers from fully realizing the benefits of GI protection.

Evolving Consumer Preferences: Changing consumer preferences and market dynamics pose challenges in terms of adapting traditional practices to meet contemporary demands while retaining the essence of the geographical origin.

Conflict Resolution: Disputes among stakeholders, including producers, regarding ownership and usage of GIs can arise, necessitating effective conflict resolution mechanisms.

International Protection: Ensuring the protection of Indian GIs in international markets can be challenging due to differing legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms.

Quality Control: The absence of a mandatory quality control mechanism for GI-protected

goods raises concerns about product consistency and adherence to defined standards. Inconsistent quality can erode consumer trust and undermine the credibility of GI products. One of the key challenges is the lack of a robust quality control mechanism for GI-protected goods. Unlike many other countries, India does not currently have a mandatory quality check requirement embedded in its GI laws. This omission has led to varying product standards and quality, which in turn compromises the authenticity and reputation of GI products. Consumers' trust in the distinctiveness of products associated with a specific geographical origin can erode when they encounter disparities in quality.

The absence of stringent quality control measures not only affects consumer trust but also hampers the competitiveness of GI products in both domestic and international markets. In an increasingly globalized world, maintaining consistent quality is pivotal for sustaining demand and ensuring the long-term success of GI products. The lack of mandatory quality checks can also expose genuine producers to unfair competition from substandard alternatives that falsely claim GI associations.

To address these challenges, it is imperative for India's GI framework to incorporate mandatory quality control measures. Such measures would involve standardized quality checks and adherence to specific production methods, guaranteeing that GI products consistently meet established standards. Integrating quality control requirements within the legal framework would enhance consumer confidence, preserve the reputation of GI products, and promote fair competition.

Start-ups and its Reach

Overview on Startup India, DPIIT and Startup Funding: India has the 3rd largest start up ecosystem in the world; expected to witness YoY growth of a consistent annual growth of 12-15%.¹¹ The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)¹² is a government agency under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in India. DPIIT plays a central role in implementing and coordinating policies related to industrial promotion, internal trade, investment promotion, and intellectual property rights. It is responsible for various initiatives to promote entrepreneurship, innovation, and industrial development, including the administration of Start-up India.

As per the last data available, India has about 50,000 start-ups in India in 2018; around 8,900 – 9,300 of these are technology led start-ups 1300 new tech start-ups were born in 2019 alone

¹¹ <https://www.startupindia.gov.in/content/sih/en/international/go-to-market-guide/indian-startup-ecosystem.html> (last visited on July 29, 2023)

¹² <https://dpiit.gov.in/> (last visited on July 29, 2023)

implying there are 2-3 tech start-ups born every day.¹³

The start-up ecosystem in India has witnessed significant growth, with the number of women entrepreneurs increasing from 10% to 14%. Start-ups have generated around 40,000 new jobs, bringing the total jobs in the ecosystem to 1.6-1.7 lakh.¹⁴ Notably, top deals accounted for 40% of the total deal value, indicating a focus on quality over quantity by investors. It is remarkable to note that under the Start-up India initiative of Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) have registered 72,993 start-ups that created 7.68 lakh jobs in past six years.¹⁵

As per the last data available, private equity transaction volume in India increased for the second consecutive year. While the average deal size experienced a minor decrease compared to the previous year, the total value amounted to \$26.3 billion in 2018, marking the second-highest value over the last ten years. Additionally, there was a rise in the number of deals surpassing the \$50 million threshold when compared to the preceding year.¹⁶

Start-ups Funding: Funding refers to the money required to start and run a business. It is a financial investment in a company for product development, manufacturing, expansion, sales and marketing, office spaces, and inventory. The announcement of The Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS), initiated by DPIIT, has been established with a budget of INR 945 Crore, was made by the Hon'ble Prime Minister during the Prarambh: Start-up India International Summit on January 16, 2021. Following the endorsement from the EFC (Expenditure Finance Committee) and the Hon'ble Finance Minister, the scheme was officially notified on January 21, 2021. This scheme aims to provide financial support to start-ups for various stages, including Proof of Concept, prototype development, product trials, market entry, and commercialization. Envisaged to span a period of four years, the initiative is expected to benefit approximately 3,600 entrepreneurs through the involvement of 300 incubators.¹⁷

¹³ <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/small-biz/sme-sector/how-tech-startups-are-boosting-the-growth-of-small-e-commerce-businesses-in-india/articleshow/91703404.cms?from=mdr> (last visited on July 29, 2023)

¹⁴ <https://www.iibs.edu.in/news/startups-in-india-an-overview-top-10-mba-colleges-in-bangalore-773> (last visited on August 1, 2023)

¹⁵ <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/startups/india-registered-72993-startups-that-created-7-68-lakh-jobs-in-past-six-years/articleshow/93008300.cms?from=mdr> (last visited on August 1, 2023)

¹⁶ <https://www.startupindia.gov.in/content/sih/en/international/go-to-market-guide/indian-startup-ecosystem.html#:~:text=Private%20equity%20deal%20volume%20in,increased%20from%20the%20previous%20year.> (last visited on July 29, 2023)

¹⁷ <https://seedfund.startupindia.gov.in/about#:~:text=DPIIT%20has%20created%20Startup%20India,incubators%20in%20the%20next%204> (last visited on August 1, 2023)



Entrepreneurship & GI

Social Entrepreneur: Social entrepreneurship is a rapidly evolving and dynamic concept that marries the principles of business entrepreneurship with a strong commitment to social and environmental impact. It represents a transformative approach to addressing complex societal challenges, where innovative solutions are harnessed to create sustainable positive change. It delves into the realm of social entrepreneurship¹⁸, exploring its origins, key characteristics, impact, challenges, and the role it plays in driving social innovation and progress.

Origins and Evolution of Social Entrepreneurship

The roots of social entrepreneurship can be traced back to historical figures who sought to address social issues through innovative means. Florence Nightingale, for example, is often considered one of the earliest social entrepreneurs, pioneering modern nursing practices and healthcare reforms. However, it wasn't until the latter half of the 20th century that the term "social entrepreneurship" gained prominence.

Scholars like Bill Drayton, who founded Ashoka in 1980, played a pivotal role in popularizing the concept. Ashoka, a global network of social entrepreneurs, was established to support individuals driving transformative change across various sectors. In recent decades, social entrepreneurship has gained momentum, driven by the increasing recognition of the limitations of traditional philanthropy and aid in addressing systemic issues.

Key Characteristics of Social Entrepreneurship:

- **Mission-Driven Approach:** Social entrepreneurs are deeply committed to addressing social or environmental challenges. Their primary goal is to create positive impact rather than solely generating profit.
- **Innovation:** Social entrepreneurs adopt innovative approaches to problem-solving. They often develop novel business models, products, or services that challenge the status quo and offer sustainable solutions.

¹⁸ N.R.Branschombe and R.A.Barohn, Social Psychology (Pearson, Fourteenth Edition)

- **Sustainability:** Unlike traditional charity, social entrepreneurship emphasizes sustainability. Entrepreneurs strive to create self-sustaining initiatives that can generate revenue to support their social mission.
- **Systemic Change:** Social entrepreneurs tackle root causes of societal problems, aiming for systemic change rather than short-term fixes. Their interventions often lead to broader societal transformation.
- **Measurable Impact:** Impact assessment is a hallmark of social entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs use metrics to track and demonstrate the effectiveness of their initiatives, ensuring accountability and transparency.

Impact and Examples of Social entrepreneurship having demonstrated its potential to drive positive change across various domains:

- **Education:** Teach For All, an organization founded by Wendy Kopp, recruits and trains young leaders to teach in underprivileged schools worldwide, addressing educational inequities.
- **Healthcare:** Arvind Eye Care System, established by Dr. G. Venkataswamy, offers high-quality, low-cost eye care to millions in India and other countries, combating blindness.
- **Clean Energy:** d.light, co-founded by Sam Goldman and Ned Tozun, provides affordable solar-powered solutions to off-grid communities, reducing reliance on polluting energy sources.
- **Microfinance:** Grameen Bank, founded by Muhammad Yunus, pioneered microcredit and microfinance, empowering impoverished individuals to start small businesses and improve their livelihoods.
- **Environmental Conservation:** The Ocean Clean-up, initiated by Boyan Slat, employs advanced technology to remove plastic waste from oceans, contributing to environmental preservation.

Similarly GI in India and Entrepreneurship correlating to the field of GI can bring a Social transformation and change in the Start-up India Ecosystem.

Challenges Faced by Social Entrepreneurs

While social entrepreneurship holds immense promise, it is not without challenges:

- **Resource Constraints:** Limited access to funding and resources can hinder the scalability and sustainability of social ventures.
- **Balancing Mission and Financial Viability:** Striking a balance between social impact and financial sustainability can be challenging, especially in resource-constrained

environments.

- Complexity of Social Issues: Addressing deeply rooted societal problems requires navigating complex ecosystems and overcoming resistance to change.
- Lack of Infrastructure: In some regions, inadequate infrastructure and regulatory barriers can impede the implementation of innovative solutions.
- Measuring Impact: Quantifying social impact and attributing it to specific interventions can be complex, affecting the ability to attract funding and partnerships.

Role in Driving Social Innovation

Social entrepreneurship plays a vital role in driving social innovation by fostering creativity, resilience, and collaboration. It encourages individuals and organizations to think beyond traditional approaches and explore new avenues for addressing pressing challenges. The emphasis on sustainable and scalable solutions encourages continuous experimentation and learning.

Furthermore, social entrepreneurship promotes cross-sector collaboration, bringing together stakeholders from business, government, and civil society to co-create solutions. This multi-stakeholder approach enhances the effectiveness of interventions and leverages diverse expertise and resources.

The Future of Social Entrepreneurship

As the world grapples with complex global challenges, the role of social entrepreneurship becomes increasingly critical. It holds the potential to transform the way society addresses issues such as poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, and healthcare disparities. Governments, corporations, and civil society are recognizing the value of social entrepreneurship and are forming partnerships to amplify its impact.

The digital age and technological advancements are further accelerating the reach and potential of social entrepreneurship. Platforms and networks enable entrepreneurs to access global markets, share best practices, and collaborate with like-minded innovators.

In an era marked by global challenges, social entrepreneurs have emerged as catalysts for change, pioneering innovative solutions to address pressing social, environmental, and economic issues. Concurrently, the concept of Geographical Indications (GIs) has gained prominence as a means to protect and promote unique products originating from specific regions, while contributing to local economies and cultural heritage. This essay explores the intersection of social entrepreneurship and GIs, highlighting their shared goals of sustainable development and cultural preservation, as well as the potential synergy between these two powerful mechanisms.

Social Entrepreneurship: Catalysts for Change

Social entrepreneurship transcends traditional business paradigms, with its focus on generating positive societal impact alongside financial returns. These change-makers, often driven by a passion for addressing societal inequities, leverage innovative business models to tackle diverse challenges such as poverty, education, healthcare, and environmental degradation.

Key Characteristics of Social Entrepreneurship:

- **Mission-Driven:** Social entrepreneurs are guided by a clear mission to create positive change and address societal challenges, placing impact at the heart of their endeavours.
- **Innovation:** They employ innovative approaches to develop solutions that disrupt established norms and deliver sustainable results.
- **Sustainability:** Unlike traditional philanthropy, social entrepreneurship emphasizes financial sustainability through business models that generate revenue to support their social objectives.
- **Collaboration:** Collaboration with stakeholders from various sectors is integral to their approach, fostering cross-sectoral partnerships to maximize impact.
- **Impact Measurement:** Measuring and quantifying impact is a central tenet, ensuring transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

It stands at the intersection of innovation, impact, and sustainability. It embodies the spirit of change-makers who are dedicated to reshaping the world by addressing its most pressing challenges. With its mission-driven approach, innovative thinking, and commitment to measurable impact, social entrepreneurship offers a transformative framework for building a more just, equitable, and sustainable future. As it continues to evolve, social entrepreneurship has the potential to inspire a wave of positive change that extends far beyond its individual initiatives.

Geographical Indications: Preserving Heritage and Empowering Communities

Geographical Indications are a form of intellectual property that identifies products as originating from a specific geographical region and possessing qualities, reputation, or characteristics attributable to that place of origin. GIs play a pivotal role in preserving traditional knowledge, promoting cultural heritage, and supporting local economies.

Key Aspects of Geographical Indications:

- **Origin Identity:** GIs link products to their specific geographic origin, safeguarding their distinct attributes and protecting local traditions.
- **Consumer Trust:** GIs enhance consumer confidence by guaranteeing the authenticity, quality, and unique attributes of products.
- **Economic Development:** GIs contribute to local economic growth by creating opportunities for producers, stimulating tourism, and fostering sustainable rural livelihoods.
- **Cultural Heritage:** They serve as custodians of cultural heritage, encouraging the continuation of traditional production methods and promoting intergenerational knowledge transfer.

Synergy between Social Entrepreneurship and GIs

- **Local Empowerment:** Social entrepreneurs often collaborate with marginalized communities to develop and market products that align with their cultural identity. GIs provide a legal framework for protecting and promoting these products, ensuring equitable benefits for local communities.
- **Economic Sustainability:** GIs can enhance the marketability of products created by social enterprises, creating sustainable revenue streams that support their social missions.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Both social entrepreneurship and GIs contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage. While social entrepreneurs empower communities through economic opportunities, GIs safeguard traditional knowledge and production methods.
- **Collaboration:** Social entrepreneurs and GI organizations can collaborate to amplify the impact of initiatives. By combining efforts, they can foster economic development, cultural preservation, and sustainable practices in tandem.

Case Study: Kumaon GIs and Social Entrepreneurship

The Kumaon region of Uttarakhand in India provides a compelling example of the interplay between social entrepreneurship and GIs. Here, organizations like the Kumaon Organic Producers Company (KOPC) and the Beejom Cooperative have leveraged social entrepreneurship principles to promote sustainable agriculture and rural development. Simultaneously, GIs such as the “Kumaon Chyura Oil” have been registered to protect traditional crops and indigenous knowledge.

By combining social entrepreneurship with GI protection, these initiatives empower local farmers, promote organic practices, enhance product quality, and preserve traditional agricultural methods. The collaboration between social entrepreneurs and GI organizations showcases the potential of a holistic approach that addresses economic, environmental, and cultural dimensions.

Challenges and Future Prospects

While the synergy between social entrepreneurship and GIs holds promise, several challenges must be navigated:

- **Awareness and Education:** Many communities may lack awareness of GIs and their potential benefits. Education is crucial to ensure that local producers understand the value of GI protection and how it aligns with their goals.
- **Legal Frameworks:** Developing and enforcing GI regulations can be complex, requiring strong legal frameworks and effective governance structures to prevent misuse and ensure equitable benefits.
- **Access to Markets:** GIs can face challenges in accessing global markets due to trade barriers, certification requirements, and competition. Social entrepreneurs can play a role in facilitating market access through innovative distribution and marketing strategies.
- **Sustainability:** Ensuring the long-term sustainability of both social enterprises and GIs requires careful planning, resource management, and continuous adaptation to changing circumstances.

Sustainable Tourism & Startup India

Sustainable Tourism refers to sustainable practices in and by the tourism industry. It is an aspiration to acknowledge all impacts of tourism, both positive and negative. It aims to minimize the negative impacts and maximize the positive ones.

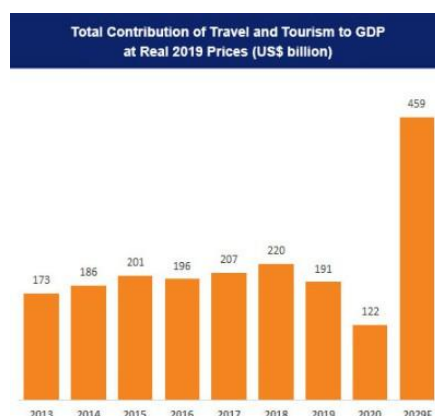
The World Tourism Organization defines sustainable tourism as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”.



161

Market Size of Tourism Start-ups

India's travel and tourism industry is a significant contributor to the country's GDP, with a total contribution of around US\$178 billion. The industry has seen technological advancements, with the adoption of cloud solutions and Software as a Service (SaaS) technologies. The country has approximately 1500 start-ups in the travel and tourism sector, providing platforms for planning and booking travel services.¹⁹



Start-ups and Tourism

India's diverse geographical landscape and rich cultural heritage make it a prominent player in the international tourism sector. The country's tourism industry has witnessed substantial growth, contributing significantly to its GDP. According to IBEF's Growth of Tourism and Hospitality Industry report, travel and tourism collectively contribute around US\$ 178 billion to India's GDP, with a projected travel market of US \$125 billion by the financial year 2027. Additionally, the sector anticipates an international tourist arrival of 30.5 million by 2028, further highlighting its potential.

The emergence of over 1500 start-ups in the travel and tourism industry underscores its dynamism and potential for innovation. These start-ups offer a range of platforms and services

¹⁹ <https://www.startupindia.gov.in/content/sih/en/bloglist/blogs/TourismSector.html#:~:text=As%20per%20the%20Startup%20India,service%20providers%20with%20technology%20solutions.> (last visited on July 27, 2023).

that facilitate travel planning and booking, enhancing the overall travel experience. Virtual technologies have gained traction within the industry, with the Ministry of Tourism conducting virtual tours and safaris to provide immersive experiences. Leveraging virtual technologies in collaboration with international institutions could enhance India's tourism offerings and accessibility.

Aggressive marketing strategies are essential to position India as a must-visit destination, involving campaigns like 'Incredible India' on a global scale. Additionally, fostering curated experiences rather than just sightseeing can enrich tourist engagement. Niche tourism areas, such as luxury spa sessions, animal sanctuaries, and religious pilgrimage tours, provide opportunities for customization and cater to diverse preferences.

Sustainability is a key consideration in the industry's evolution. Developing eco-friendly accommodations and conscious luxury options align with the growing trend of responsible tourism. While the sector faces challenges like infrastructure inadequacies, connectivity limitations, and regulatory hurdles, the Indian government's initiatives, like urging domestic tourism through Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to visit 15 destinations by 2022, underscore its commitment to transforming India into a global tourism hub. The Draft National Tourism Policy 2022 reinforces this commitment by prioritizing tourism and infrastructural enhancement.

Noteworthy start-ups in the sector demonstrate innovation and creativity. For instance, Param People Infotech Solutions developed 'Highway delite',²⁰ a road travel support platform, while Villotale Technologies²¹ promotes rural experiential tourism. Similarly, Upcurve Business Services operates udChalo²², a travel service for defence personnel.

In conclusion, India's travel and tourism sector is poised for growth, contributing significantly to the country's economy and providing avenues for innovation and employment. Collaborative efforts between the government, start-ups, and support institutions are vital to overcoming challenges, fostering sustainable practices, and realizing India's potential as a global tourism hub.

Neoliberalism - Startup & GI

The impact of neoliberalism on Geographical Indications (GIs) and start-ups is a multifaceted phenomenon that intertwines economic, social, and cultural dimensions. Neoliberalism, characterized by its emphasis on free markets, deregulation, and privatization, has shaped the landscape in which GIs and start-ups operate. This essay explores the complex consequences

²⁰ <https://highwaydelite.com/> (last visited on July 31, 2023)

²¹ <https://www.villotale.in/> (last visited on July 31, 2023)

²² <https://www.udchalo.com/> (last visited on July 31, 2023)

of neoliberalism on GIs and start-ups, shedding light on both the opportunities and challenges that have emerged as a result.

Impact on Geographical Indications (GIs):

Positive Impacts:

- **Market Access and Globalization:** Neoliberal policies have facilitated international trade and market access, allowing GIs to reach a broader consumer base. GIs, such as Champagne or Parmigiano-Reggiano, have benefited from expanded global markets, enhancing their recognition and economic potential.
- **Economic Growth and Innovation:** Neoliberalism's emphasis on competition and innovation has led to improvements in the quality and value addition of GI products. Producers have adopted modern technologies and efficient production methods to enhance competitiveness.
- **Intellectual Property Protection:** Neoliberal policies often strengthen intellectual property rights, which can be advantageous for GIs. Enhanced legal frameworks protect the unique identity and authenticity of GI products, reducing the risk of counterfeiting.
- **Private Sector Engagement:** Neoliberalism encourages private sector involvement in various industries, including those linked to GIs. This engagement can lead to investments in infrastructure, marketing, and distribution, benefiting local producers.
- **Tourism and Cultural Preservation:** GIs often embody cultural heritage and tradition. Neoliberalism's focus on economic growth has led to increased tourism around GIs, fostering cultural preservation and providing economic opportunities for local communities.

Negative Impacts:

- **Commodification and Standardization:** Neoliberal market forces can lead to the commodification and standardization of GIs. Traditional production methods and cultural nuances may be compromised to meet mass market demands, diluting the uniqueness of GIs.
- **Marginalization of Small Producers:** While neoliberalism can create opportunities, it may marginalize small-scale GI producers who lack resources to compete globally. Larger entities may dominate GIs, potentially eroding local cultural and economic identities.
- **Loss of Cultural Identity:** The pursuit of profit-driven production can prioritize economic gains over cultural preservation. This may lead to a loss of cultural identity and traditional knowledge associated with GIs.

- **Dependency on Market Forces:** Neoliberalism's reliance on market forces can expose GIs to economic volatility. Fluctuations in demand and consumer preferences can impact the livelihoods of local producers.
- **Imbalanced Power Dynamics:** Neoliberal policies can lead to imbalanced power dynamics between local communities and corporations. Larger entities may have greater bargaining power, potentially leading to exploitation of GI producers.

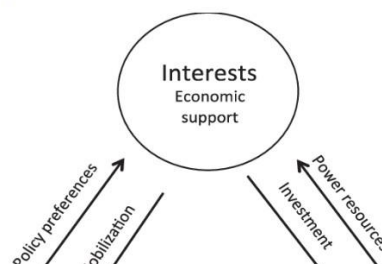
Impact on Start-ups:

Positive Impacts:

- **Entrepreneurial Culture:** Neoliberalism encourages entrepreneurial activity by reducing bureaucratic hurdles and fostering a culture of innovation. Start-ups thrive in environments where they can quickly adapt and respond to market opportunities.
- **Access to Capital:** Neoliberal policies often lead to increased access to capital, as financial markets are liberalized. Start-ups can secure funding from venture capitalists, angel investors, and crowdfunding platforms.
- **Technological Innovation:** Neoliberalism's emphasis on competition and deregulation has fuelled technological advancements. Start-ups can leverage new technologies to disrupt traditional industries and create innovative solutions.
- **Global Market Reach:** Neoliberalism promotes international trade, enabling start-ups to access global markets. E-commerce platforms and digital marketing tools allow start-ups to reach consumers worldwide.

Negative Impacts:

- **Inequality:** Neoliberalism's focus on market forces can exacerbate income inequality. While some start-ups thrive, others struggle to compete or face barriers to entry, leading to uneven distribution of wealth and opportunities.
- **Resource Concentration:** Neoliberal policies may lead to the concentration of resources and power in the hands of a few dominant start-ups or corporations, limiting competition and stifling innovation.
- **Labour Exploitation:** Start-ups may adopt cost-cutting measures, including precarious employment practices, to remain competitive. This can lead to labor exploitation and reduced job security.
- **Short-Term Focus:** Neoliberalism's emphasis on profit maximization can incentivize start-ups to prioritize short-term gains over long-term sustainability or social impact.



THE BRIDGE

Sustainable Tourism & GI

GI-TRIPS²³ is India's and perhaps the world's first travel company which ideated to connect geographical indication to tourism. 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.²⁴ In order to function as a GI, a sign must identify a product as originating in a given place. GI-TRIPS is hosting a virtual tour to showcase culture tourism linked with Geographical Indication and highlighting how GI tagged Bidriware, a metalcraft linked to the heritage and culture of Bidar city in the Indian state of Karnataka.²⁵



Geographical Indications, Sustainable Tourism and Startup India
Geographical Indications, Sustainable Tourism and Startup India

²³ <https://www.gi-trips.com/> (last visited on August 2, 2023)

²⁴ https://www.wipo.int/geo_indications/en/ (last visited on August 2, 2023)

²⁵ <https://www.unwto.org/node/12341> (last visited on August 2, 2023)



The concept of "The Bridge of The Connection and Pathway to Growth through Cultural Heritage, Entrepreneurship, and Sustainable Tourism" underscores the pivotal role that cultural heritage, entrepreneurship, and sustainable tourism play in fostering a harmonious and prosperous society. This bridge not only connects the past with the present but also acts as a conduit for future growth and development. Cultural heritage forms the foundation of a society's identity, reflecting its traditions, values, and history. Integrating entrepreneurship into the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage creates a dynamic synergy. Entrepreneurs, driven by innovation and creativity, not only help conserve traditions but also breathe new life into them. This symbiotic relationship contributes to economic growth, employment generation, and the rejuvenation of cultural practices that might otherwise fade away.

Quality control is a vital aspect in ensuring that Geographical Indication (GI)-protected goods maintain their authenticity and excellence. However, the absence of a mandatory quality control system for such goods poses challenges to their credibility. Introducing rigorous quality control mechanisms can enhance consumer trust, thereby strengthening the significance of GIs and safeguarding the distinct characteristics of regional products.

Sustainable tourism, characterized by responsible practices that protect the environment and support local communities, aligns seamlessly with the promotion of geographical indications. By encouraging sustainable tourism practices through GI products, a cycle of mutual benefit emerges. Tourists are attracted by the authenticity of GI products, fostering demand, while local communities benefit economically. This synergy promotes the conservation of cultural heritage, protects the environment, and ensures the long-term prosperity of the region.

In conclusion, the bridge between cultural heritage, entrepreneurship, and sustainable tourism is a multifaceted pathway to growth. By leveraging the entrepreneurial spirit to preserve and promote cultural heritage, addressing quality control issues, and fostering sustainable tourism practices, societies can embrace a holistic approach to development. This approach not only contributes to economic prosperity but also ensures the continuity of traditions, the authenticity of regional products, and the well-being of both present and future generations.

Conclusion

Hence we can conclude that through Start-up India Initiative and Geographical Indications we can Preserve Cultural Heritage, Empower Entrepreneurs, and Promoting Sustainable Tourism. The convergence of social entrepreneurship and Geographical Indications holds transformative potential, offering a holistic approach to address complex challenges while preserving cultural heritage. Social entrepreneurs can leverage the power of GIs to enhance the impact of their initiatives, while GI protection can empower local communities and contribute to sustainable economic growth. As we navigate an increasingly interconnected and globalized world, the synergy between these two mechanisms provides a promising avenue for fostering sustainable development, cultural preservation, and positive change.

The impact of neoliberalism on Geographical Indications and start-ups is a complex interplay between economic liberalization, cultural preservation, innovation, and inequalities. While neoliberal policies have opened new avenues for market access and entrepreneurial activity, they have also posed challenges to cultural identity, marginalized small producers, and contributed to income disparities. Striking a balance between economic growth, cultural preservation, and social well-being is crucial to ensure that both GIs and start-ups contribute positively to sustainable development and societal progress.

Geographical Indications in India have demonstrated immense potential in preserving cultural heritage and promoting regional products, the absence of mandatory quality checks poses a significant challenge. Addressing this issue through legal amendments that enforce stringent quality control measures would not only safeguard the integrity of GI products but also contribute to sustaining consumer trust, fostering economic growth, and upholding the authenticity of India's rich cultural heritage.

Henceforth it can be concluded that Geographical Indications and Startup India together form a powerful bridge that spans the realms of cultural heritage, entrepreneurship, and sustainable tourism. This bridge not only connects the dots between tradition and innovation but also serves as a pathway to inclusive growth. By integrating the protection and promotion of geographical indications with the entrepreneurial spirit of Startup India, we bridge the gap between preserving cultural heritage and fostering economic advancement. This synergy creates a dynamic environment where traditional practices are revitalized through innovative approaches, thereby attracting sustainable tourism that not only benefits local communities but also safeguards the environment. In this nexus, Geographical Indications and Startup India emerge as catalysts, ensuring a harmonious blend of the past, present, and future.
