



# REPORT ON

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## WORKSHOP ON

# SAMRIDDHI- VOCAL FOR LOCAL

SOCIAL ASSET MANAGEMENT FOR RESOURCES OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S  
DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT FOR HERITAGE OF INDIA

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*Organised by*

**CENTRE FOR REGULATORY STUDIES,  
GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC POLICY**

**AND**

**DPIIT IPR CHAIR**

**THE WB NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF JURIDICAL  
SCIENCES, KOLKATA**

***17th AUGUST 2023***

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Geographical Indications are equally crucial in IPR that have been proven effective for the economic development of rural economies. GIs, owing to their nature of collective brands that a community of individual producers can use, the success of geographical indication products will depend primarily on effective governance and quality control structures. What could be the probable structure of developing countries like India to effectively use its administrative system to regulate the GIs' quality and global outreach? Further, understanding the non-availability of a system like TSG to protect India's traditional knowledge, what sort of actions the Indian government should take? While it is noted that, if the EU institutions, policymakers, and civil society are really interested in and serious about making progress on GIs at the multilateral and bilateral levels, it is imperative to enlarge the vision and strategy beyond promoting and protecting European GIs as "living cultural and gastronomic heritage.

It has to be recognized that such "living cultural and gastronomic heritage" also exists, albeit at different levels and in different forms, in developing countries and LDCs. This is the only way possible to generate the notion that GIs as much as traditional knowledge are part of IPRs and not a peripheral agricultural trade issue. Furthermore, LDCs exceptionally lacks in exportations and other forms of IPRs, however, GIs and TM provides these countries substantial potential to become an active participant of the TRIPS agreement owing to their invaluable array of products linked to their culture, tradition, and biodiversity belonging to rural communities.

## CONCEPT NOTE

The world has acknowledged the importance of Social-Cultural Heritage not just in the individual's social development but for the whole community's economic development. In today's technologically advanced age, the cultural heritage of developing and least developing countries provides them with a unique position at global economic platforms. In the global market, IPRs are an essential mechanism for IP owners against exploitation and survival in competitive markets.



Also, the EU is one of the most important Aid for Trade (AfT) donors and the most vocal proponent of GIs, but it is also contested that much negotiating EU capital has been invested in inserting GI protection into EU FTAs with developing countries, including LDCs, with no corresponding efforts in assisting these countries in developing their GIs. Where some progress has been recorded, it has been late and isolated. In that scenario, what sort of collaborative efforts can India and EU take to mitigate this lacunae and design effective GI strategies for developing countries and LDCs.

There must be a substantial scaling-up of aid policies to promote the use of GIs as rural development tools, and to this effect, significant coordination efforts by the European Commission among its different directorates – DG TRADE, DG AGRI and DG DEVCO – should be undertaken. Therefore, this workshop will discuss effectively managing India's indigenous cultural heritage, which can apply to other developing and least developing countries.



## ABOUT THE EVENT

The workshop on SAMRIDDHI- Vocal for Local was a collaborative effort of the Centre for Regulatory Studies, Governance and Public Policy (CRSGPP) and the DPIIT IPR Chair of the West Bengal University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata (WBNUJS). Organized on 17th August, 2023, under the flagship of the National GI Mission, the workshop was blessed with eminent speakers from varied fields of work along with our Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Prof Dr Nirmal Kanti Chakrabarti, Mr. Raja Chakraborty, Registrar, WBNUJS, and Dr. Pinaki Ghosh, IPR Chair Professor, DPIIT IPR Chair, with a common aim towards developing GI awareness among local producers thereby promoting traditional knowledge to see the light of the day.

Professor Dev S. Gangjee, Professor of Intellectual Property Law, Director, Oxford IP Research Centre, University of Oxford being the keynote speaker of the event, helped the audience delve into the scenario of GI products in the European Union, focusing majorly on the possible adaption EU has made towards a sustainable future for the same. Highlighting on the aspect that the basic recognition of geographical indication is lacking majorly among the population there, Professor Gangjee explored the layers in a GI product settling on the statement that “GI is not a story of no change at all”. While he pointed out that many different inventions are involved in making a GI product, the workshop beamed with delight when it came to know that GI products are sold at double the price of a general product. This 2:1 ratio although appears positive, falls flat when Professor Gangjee talked about the reality. Higher cost of product not necessarily reflects producers benefit when it comes to GI products. On a lighter note, he also focused on a robust enforcement mechanism, making rooms for environmentally sustainable move by GI, regulating GI products thereby making people worthwhile to invest in the structure.



While talking about European Union, Professor Gangjee made a hint towards the fact that generally, people fail to understand what GI actually signifies. They often relate GI tagged products to be either traditionally designed or to be those having healthy benefits. Recognising the logo of GI is the prime issue that consumers frequently face according to him. On a positive note, Professor Gangjee did appreciate the awareness surrounding GI stands in majority in places such as France and Italy. This differences in awareness among people in general belonging to the same place, EU, reflects on the fact that there is an issue in the enforcement mechanism or as can be rightly put, administrative mishandling, when it comes to promoting GI among people at large.





It was interesting when Professor Gangjee related climate change with traditional knowledge and adaptation by indigenous communities. The question he posed to the audience was “how do you reconcile tradition with change”. He supported his answer with the impact climate change is having on wine production. The impact results in change in the taste of wine for the alcohol level spikes owing to early ripening of grapes. Relating the previous para with the current ones made the workshop believe that GI is never static and therefore the incremental evolution it brings about has to be safeguarded.

The audience were provided an insight on whether determining authors of product specification an instrument for guaranteeing authenticity or not. During the same, it was stated that the registry blindly follows what is provided by the applicant group. Thus, those who are excluded from being granted the registration face legal challenges under administrative law. As have been discussed before, GI is never to be termed as static instead it keeps on evolving with time, people and physical changes. This contributes towards the difficulties involved in specification filing in GI cases which many of the applicant faces thereby ultimately coming face-to-face with legal hurdles.

The battle between tradition and innovation when it comes to GI, which are signs for traditional products, was brought to light by Professor Gangjee in his address as well. This battle can be settled by stating that although at the heart of the scheme is a specification of the traditional methods, ingredients and output qualities that must be employed in order for the produce to qualify for protection and the use of the protected name, the protecting mechanism becomes somewhat of a restraint on innovation in the production process.

As Professor Gangjee had said “GI is more like trademark as it protects brand value of the product”, he concluded his pragmatic speech by stating that till the time government produces GI, the producers won’t get noticeable benefit from the latter. Instead, producers should play the fulcrum role in getting their products GI recognised on the basis of the quality, so that the concept of GI does not remain paper-based.

Followed by this, Dr. S. N. Ghosh, Senior Research Officer West Bengal Biodiversity Board, Government of West Bengal, spoke about the role of the Biodiversity Board in facilitating and safeguarding access to traditional knowledge. Referring to the concept of Biodiversity Management Group, a statutory establishment under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, Dr. Ghosh threw light on documentation of traditional variety of crops such as rice thereby registering farmer's variety. This documentation will help the farmers gain ownership on their variety which are traditionally cultivating. Dr. Ghosh also brought People Biodiversity Register into discussion as the same helps in recording traditional knowledge and practices which protects traditional knowledge of communities. Digitalisation of documentation of traditional knowledge was the concluding remarking of Dr. Ghosh, which he proposed to be responsible for increased accessibility among public backed by code for avoiding authorized access and misuse in the long-run.



“From cooperation we can get development” were the words of Mr. Jayanta Kumar Aikat, I.A.S., Commissioner, FPI&H Department, Director, Food Processing Industries and Director Horticulture (Technical), Government of West Bengal who described SAMRIDDHI as an expansion of development practices. Highlighting the issue of division of profit among stakeholders, middlemen and producers of GI products, Mr. Jayanta gave insight to his experiences in the Handloom industry. He concluded with the hope that traditional artisans will have a good place in the market.



Prof. Somen Sahu, Professor & Head of Fishery Economics and Statistics, West Bengal University of Animal & Fishery, made a statistical approach towards SAMRIDDHI-Vocal for Local. He discussed how price of the GI products vary from one place to another using the concept of spatial variation. Prof Sahu described GI as the vector of temporal, economic, statistical, social and managerial aspects thereby highlighting the relevance GI tag carries with it.



Need for sensitization of awareness surrounding GI was discussed by Dipankar Dasgupta. While stating that producers in general lacks skills in building necessary cooperation, he applauded the West Bengal University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata for playing a positive role in increasing registration of GI. On similar grounds, former IG of the West Bengal state police, Pankaj Dutta also considered the University to pioneer of GI. With such encouragement, the workshop warmly welcomed Partha Chakraborty, Vice President, Copyright Society, who considered lack of awareness to be a graver concern in comparison to registration of GI. Considering the significance of the role of both the local population and the administrative wings of the state governments, Mr Chakraborty found problem sharing by the producers a positive step towards building GI awareness which will contribute to economic growth, social upliftment and increased GDP of the nation as a whole.





As the workshop neared to the end, Dr. Pinaki Ghosh, IPR Chair Professor, DPIIT IPR Chair, voiced for “Local to Global” from “Vocal to Local”, encouraging the attendees of the workshop to realise the value they are adding to the society. The range of speakers that the workshop witnessed alongside the discussion that took place with the fundamental highlight upon traditional knowledge and importance the indigenous people are eligible to receive, help us conclude that the workshop was indeed fruitful.

Dr. Jayanta Ghosh, Head and Research Fellow, CRSGPP, WBNUJS delivered the vote of thanks at the end of the workshop.







CENTRE FOR REGULATORY STUDIES  
GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC POLICY, THE  
WEST BENGAL NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF  
JURIDICAL SCIENCES, KOLKATA, 12, LB  
BLOCK, SECTOR III, BIDHANNAGAR,  
KOLKATA, WEST BENGAL 700106, EMAIL:  
CRSGPP@NUJS.EDU

