

Monitoring Geographical Indications

Why in news?

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Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM) recently launched a social media campaign to promote Geographical Indications (GIs).

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What is GI?

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- 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.

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- e.g Nagpur Orange, Toda Embroidery, Chanderi Fabric of MP, Kangra Tea of HP etc

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- Goods branded as GIs can be made indigenously by local communities independently and in a self-sustaining manner.

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- GIs are an integral part of India's rich culture and collective intellectual heritage.

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- It can potentially promote rural development in a significant manner.

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What was the purpose of the campaign?

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- The ministry considers that their promotion is in line with the Government's 'Make in India' campaign.

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- It adds that "GI tag" has accorded protection to several handmade and manufactured products, especially in the informal sector.

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- It plans to promote by sharing interesting facts and stories of on social media.

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What are the shortcomings of the move?

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- Campaign is a wonderful idea to promote awareness.
- But there is more work that is required at the legislative level.
- A GI is supposed to convey to a consumer the assurance of a certain quality.
- European Community Regulation states that the added value of GIs is based on consumer trust and that it is only credible if accompanied by effective verification and controls.
- Further, GIs should be subject to a monitoring system that includes a system of checks at all stages of production, processing and distribution.
- In the Indian scenario, the word 'quality' itself appears in the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act only in two instances.
- GI Act does not provide for monitoring mechanisms at multiple levels.
- Currently, there is a proliferation of GI registrations in India without any legal provisions for quality control.
- This is detrimental because prolonged failure to meet consumer expectations would dilute the premium and credibility of GI-branded goods.
- A customer would not pay a premium to a GI branded product if there is no difference in quality.

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Quick Fact

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Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM)

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- It has been created as a professional body under the the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- The purpose of it is to take forward the implementation of the National IPR Policy.
- It is also working towards creating public awareness about IPRs, promoting the filing of IPRs through facilitation and providing inventors with a platform to commercialize their IP assets.

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Source: The Hindu

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