




Geographical indications (GIs) protection in Pakistan: assessing the role of new legislation in sustainable development

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the potential of Pakistani Geographical Indication (GI) products and compares the old and new legal frameworks for GI protection. It also explores GI Laws in Asian countries and compares them with Pakistan's newly enacted GI Law i.e. Geographical Indications (Registration and Protection) Act, 2020 (GIRPA'20). Additionally, this article explores challenges after Pakistan's recent enactment of sui generis GI legislation. Based on an extensive review of the GI literature and policy documents, this qualitative study utilises secondary data to identify numerous potential GIs in Pakistan, collectively representing significant economic value. This study finds that inadequacies in the previous legal system, institutional weaknesses, and delays in enacting sui generis GI legislation caused considerable damage to Pakistani economy, including the usurpation of GIs, market losses, and declining exports among others. The new legislation addresses previous lacunas, providing greater protection to GIs and significantly contributing to Pakistan's sustainable development. However, comparing Pakistan's GI law with those of India, Malaysia, China, Indonesia, and Thailand reveals similarities and differences in terms of the registration process, scope of protection, legal framework, protection of traditional knowledge, and enforcement mechanisms. This study also discusses important post-GI legislation issues and proposes unique solutions for Pakistan's sustainable development.

KEYWORDS

Sustainable development; Geographical Indications (GIs); Pakistan; GIRPA'20; post GI challenges

1. Introduction

Geographical Indications (GIs) have emerged as powerful tools for promoting economic development, cultural preservation, and market competitiveness for region-specific products (Riccardo et al., 2022; Shafi, 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). The concept of GIs is rooted in the idea of protecting products' unique qualities and reputations that are intrinsically

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