



Effective Utilization of GI for Socio-Economic Benefits and Export Diversification

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Executive Summary

This report, *“Effective Utilization of Geographical Indication (GI) for Socio-Economic Benefits and Export Diversification in Bangladesh,”* presented to the SME Development Working Committee (SMEDWC) of Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD), explores how Bangladesh can leverage its rich heritage of origin-based products through a robust Geographical Indication framework. It examines the current institutional, legal, and market realities of GI protection in Bangladesh and offers policy directions for maximizing economic, social, and cultural gains, particularly in the context of the country’s post-LDC transition.

Background and Context

Bangladesh has registered 60 products under the Geographical Indication (GI) system since the enactment of the Geographical Indications (Registration and Protection) Act, 2013. However, the country still lacks a strategic approach to link GI registration with commercialization, export diversification, and rural development. The Department of Patents, Designs, and Trademarks (DPDT) serves as the implementing agency, but coordination gaps among ministries, producer associations, and export promotion bodies have slowed progress.

Global and Comparative Insights

Drawing lessons from the European Union, India, and Vietnam, the report highlights how GIs can generate premium market value, enhance rural livelihoods, and strengthen international branding. The EU model demonstrates that GI products contribute significantly to agricultural income, while India’s experience shows that a sui generis GI regime—supported by strong producer organizations—helps achieve market recognition. These comparative insights emphasize the need for Bangladesh to move beyond registration toward value-chain integration and brand development.

Current Status in Bangladesh

Bangladesh’s GI system remains at a foundational stage. Although several iconic products—such as Jamdani, Hilsa, Tangail Saree, and Nakshi Kantha—have been registered, the commercialization and export utilization of these products remain minimal. Producers often lack awareness, certification mechanisms, and access to domestic or global GI markets. Shared GIs with India, including Jamdani and Tangail Saree, also present diplomatic and trade challenges that call for clear bilateral coordination and legal frameworks.

Economic and Social Potential

GIs hold immense potential to contribute to export diversification, rural income generation, and cultural preservation. If strategically implemented, GIs can promote sustainable livelihoods among small-scale producers, artisans, and rural women, while reinforcing Bangladesh’s soft power in global markets. The Hilsa fishery exemplifies how well-managed GI protection can strengthen value chains and enhance resource sustainability, while the Jamdani industry illustrates the missed opportunities caused by weak institutional support and lack of market linkage.

Challenges Identified

- Limited institutional coordination and absence of a national GI policy
- Weak producer organizations and lack of post-registration commercialization
- Absence of marketing, branding, and export promotion strategies
- Limited international recognition and registration of Bangladeshi GIs
- Shared GI disputes and absence of mutual recognition agreements

Policy Recommendations

- **Develop a Comprehensive National GI Policy:** Establish long-term goals and institutional coordination mechanisms under the Ministry of Industries, integrating trade, agriculture, and SME linkages.
- **Introduce a GI Tag User Policy:** Ensure the regulated and traceable use of GI tags by authentic producers and cooperatives.
- **Strengthen Institutional Capacity:** Equip the DPDT with dedicated human resources, digital infrastructure, and training support for producers.
- **Promote Cross-Border Cooperation:** Engage in bilateral and regional dialogues to protect shared GIs and resolve conflicts with neighboring countries.
- **Create Market Linkages:** Integrate GIs into export promotion strategies through trade fairs, branding campaigns, and e-commerce platforms.
- **Empower Local Producers:** Facilitate access to finance, certification, and capacity-building programs for rural artisans and farmer groups.

Conclusion

Bangladesh's journey toward effective GI utilization requires a paradigm shift—from a legalistic focus on registration to a market-driven, community-centered, and institutionally coordinated approach. With the right policy interventions and institutional commitment, GIs can serve as a strategic instrument for export diversification, rural transformation, and cultural branding—driving inclusive economic growth in the post-LDC era.

1. Introduction and Background

Geographical Indications (GIs) represent a distinctive form of intellectual property that associates products with their geographical origins, reflecting the unique qualities, reputations, or characteristics attributable to that specific region. More than a tool of identification, GIs are vital instruments for preserving cultural heritage, enhancing rural incomes, and promoting export diversification. They protect traditional knowledge, strengthen producer identity, and ensure authenticity in both domestic and global markets.

Bangladesh, endowed with a wide range of traditional products—from textiles like Jamdani and Muslin to agricultural treasures such as Hilsa fish and Khirsapat mango—has taken significant steps to safeguard these resources through the Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 2013, and the GI Rules, 2015, under the Department of Patents, Designs, and Trademarks (DPDT). Since the registration of Jamdani in 2016, 60 products have received GI certification. Despite this progress, the economic and social benefits of GIs remain largely untapped, hindered by limited producer awareness, weak enforcement, and inadequate commercialization.

A coordinated legal, institutional, and market-oriented strategy—complemented by international engagement and producer empowerment—is essential for Bangladesh to realize the full potential of its GI system.

1.1 Challenges and Problem Statement

Although Bangladesh has 60 registered GIs, most remain underutilized commercially. Producers have little understanding of GI value addition, and local communities rarely benefit from higher incomes. Weak institutional coordination, insufficient quality assurance, and the absence of a comprehensive marketing and export strategy have prevented GIs from becoming drivers of rural transformation.

Other challenges include:

- Low producer awareness and engagement, resulting in poor ownership of GI initiatives
- Overlap and disputes with neighboring countries—eight major GIs, such as Jamdani, Tangail Saree, and Sundarbans Honey, are registered both in Bangladesh and India
- Gaps in the GI Act, 2013, which does not incorporate collective or certification marks to support producer associations
- Lack of international protection, as Bangladesh is not a member of the Lisbon or Geneva Acts—requiring costly, separate registrations abroad
- Limited institutional capacity within the DPDT and the absence of a specialized GI Unit or National Advisory Council

1.2 Rationale and Objectives

GIs offer Bangladesh a strategic opportunity to integrate intellectual property into economic policy. Properly implemented, GIs can:

- Safeguard traditional craftsmanship and knowledge
- Encourage sustainable rural industries
- Promote export diversification beyond ready-made garments
- Enhance global recognition of Bangladeshi heritage products

The study's objectives are:

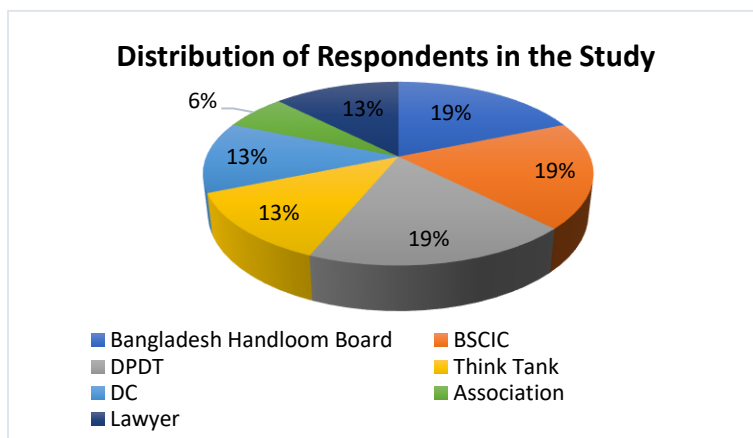
- Assess the effectiveness of Bangladesh's current GI legal and institutional framework.
- Identify gaps in producer engagement, technical capacity, and market utilization.
- Analyze international GI systems to draw lessons for domestic improvement.

- Propose strategies for improving registration processes, enforcement mechanisms, and market promotion.
- Explore pathways for securing broader international protection and trade benefits.

2. Methodology

Comprehensive desk-based research using multiple analytical steps:

- **Literature Review** – Academic papers, national and international reports, and news articles were reviewed to understand GI concepts, global frameworks, and country-specific experiences.
- **Legal Analysis** – Examination of the Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 2013, to assess the provisions, strengths, and weaknesses of Bangladesh's GI protection system.
- **Qualitative Synthesis** – Integrated insights from consultations with 20 organizations, including government agencies, producer associations, and industry stakeholders, and reviewed published analyses on the challenges, opportunities, and current practices related to GI registration, commercialization, and enforcement.
- **Outcome:** A well-rounded assessment of Bangladesh's GI landscape to guide evidence-based policy recommendations.



3. Global Frameworks for GI Protection

3.1 Sui Generis vs. Trademark Systems¹

Globally, GIs are protected through two primary systems: **sui generis systems** and **trademark systems**.

Sui Generis Systems: Sui generis systems are dedicated legal frameworks specifically designed for GI protection, typically encompassing registration, usage, quality control, and enforcement mechanisms. The EU model—covering Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI)—offers robust protection, often enforced ex officio. Many developing countries have adopted such systems to support rural development, preserve cultural heritage, and enhance market recognition.

Trademark Systems: Where sui generis laws are absent, GIs are typically protected under trademark law, often as collective marks (used by associations representing shared standards) or certification marks (indicating compliance with origin or production standards). While trademarks offer some level of recognition, they are generally less comprehensive than sui generis systems in terms of enforcement and the safeguarding of cultural identity.

3.2 WTO TRIPs Agreement²

The TRIPs Agreement provides a global framework for GI protection, requiring member states to safeguard goods linked to geographical origin. Article 22(1) defines GIs, while Article 22(2) mandates the prevention of misleading use and unfair competition. Article 23 offers enhanced protection for wines and spirits,

¹ https://www.origin-gi.com/web_articles/legal-systems-to-protect-geographical-indications-en-gb-4/

² https://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/31bis_trips_04b_e.htm#3

though debates continue over extending this standard to other culturally and economically significant products. TRIPS also allows flexibility under Article 1.1, enabling countries to adopt sui generis, trademark-based, or hybrid systems.

3.3 Lisbon Agreement ³

The Lisbon Agreement (1958) and its Geneva Act (2015), administered by WIPO, provide international protection for Appellations of Origin (AOs) and Geographical Indications (GIs). The system enables producers to secure protection across multiple contracting parties through a single application, thereby reducing costs and administrative burdens. Lisbon offers strong safeguards against misuse, imitation, and misleading practices, making it a valuable framework for the international recognition and enforcement of origin-based products.

4. Current Status of GIs in Bangladesh

4.1 Institutional and Legal Framework in Bangladesh

The Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 2013 provides the legal foundation for GI registration and protection under the DPDT. However, the DPDT operates without a specialized GI Unit, limiting its enforcement and monitoring capacity. Eighteen organizations—mostly government bodies such as Deputy Commissioners, BSCIC, and the Handloom Board—account for nearly 90% of GI applications, indicating a top-down approach.

No.	GI Applicant	Number of GIs
1.	Deputy Commissioner	27
2.	Bangladesh Handloom Board	9
3.	Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC)	3
4.	Upazila Nirbahi Officer	2
5.	Bangladesh Agar and Ator Manufacturers and Exporters Association	2
6.	Regional Horticulture and Research Center, Chapainawabganj	2
7.	Department of Fisheries	2
8.	Bangladesh Rice Research Institute, Gazipur	2
9.	Alhaj Abdus Salam Sarkar, Haribhanga Mango Farmers School	1
10.	Department of Livestock Services	1
11.	Bangladesh Restaurant Owners Association, Bogra District Branch	1
12.	1. Fruit Research Center, Binodpur, Rajshahi, 2. Chapainawabganj Agricultural Association, Chapainawabganj.	1
13.	Bangladesh Sericulture Development Board, Rajshahi	1
14.	Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI)	1
15.	President, Badalgachhi Upazila Nak Fazli Mango Growers Cooperative Society	1
16.	Department of Agricultural Extension, Meherpur	2
17.	Upazila Administration, Fulbaria, Mymensingh	1
18.	Director General, Bangladesh Jute Research Institute	1
	Total: 18 applicant organizations (including 5 producer associations)	60

This over-reliance on public administration, rather than producer associations, has created “paper GIs” with limited market traction. A stronger producer-driven structure, supported by inter-ministerial coordination and a National GI Council, is necessary for sustainable governance.

³ <https://www.wipo.int/publications/en/details.jsp?id=3983>

4.2 Shared GIs

Bangladesh and India share eight key GIs, including Jamdani, Tangail Saree, and Sundarban Honey. Disputes over these products reveal institutional weaknesses and a reactive posture in Bangladesh's GI governance.

Bangladesh and India Share a number of GIs as follows:

No	Name of GIs Registered in Bangladesh	Name of GI Registered in India
1.	Jamalpur Nakshi Katha	Nakshi Katha of West Bengal
2.	Chapainawabgong Khirshapat Mango	Maldah Khirshapati Mango
3.	Rajshahi Chapainawabgong Fazli mango	Maldah Fazli Mango
4.	Dhakai Muslin	Bengal Muslin
5.	Jamdani saree	Upadha Jamdani
6.	Gopalgong's Rosogollah	Banglar Rosogollah
7.	Tangail Saree	Tangail Saree of Bengal
8.	Sundarban Honey	Sundarban Honey

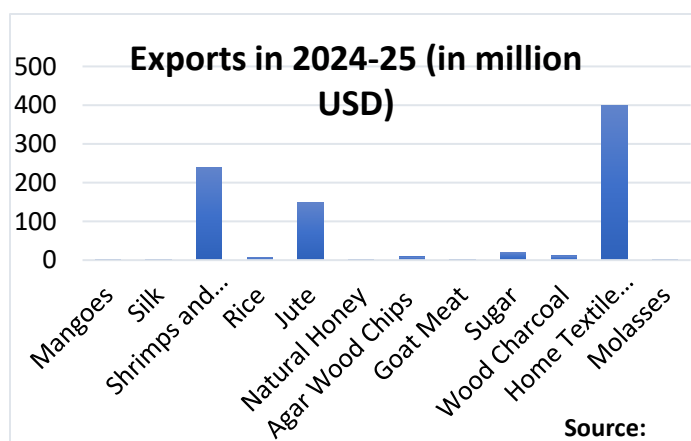
For example, India's registration of the Tangail Saree of Bengal in January 2024—prior to Bangladesh's own application—enabled India to monopolize international branding. Similarly, delays in processing Sundarbans Honey allowed India to secure the GI in early 2024, despite Bangladesh's earlier application. These incidents underscore the urgent need for proactive cross-border monitoring, legal preparedness, and accession to the Lisbon Agreement for collective protection.

4.3 Export Performance and Upcoming GI Tag System

In FY 2024–25, GI-related products contributed an estimated **USD 840.42 million** in exports, including Hilsa fish (USD 5.37 million), mangoes (USD 0.37 million), agarwood (USD 8.32 million), and silk (USD 0.07 million). However, these figures include non-GI items under similar HS codes, meaning the true GI contribution is much smaller.

Bangladesh plans to introduce a national GI Tag system, enabling producers to use official marks that authenticate origin and quality—similar to EU or ASEAN practices. It is preparing to introduce an official country-specific GI Tag, a move that represents a critical step toward protecting and commercializing the nation's distinctive products. Under the current framework, a country-specific GI Tag must be registered in each country individually and remains valid only within that jurisdiction. Exporters are therefore required to undertake separate re-registration processes in foreign markets to ensure international protection. Bangladesh's Jamdani Saree and India's Darjeeling Tea are examples of products protected under this system. In contrast, product-specific GI Tags, such as France's Champagne, Italy's Parma Ham, or Cambodia's Kampot Pepper, apply to individual products tied to defined regions and emphasize the safeguarding of authenticity, uniqueness, and reputation at a product level.

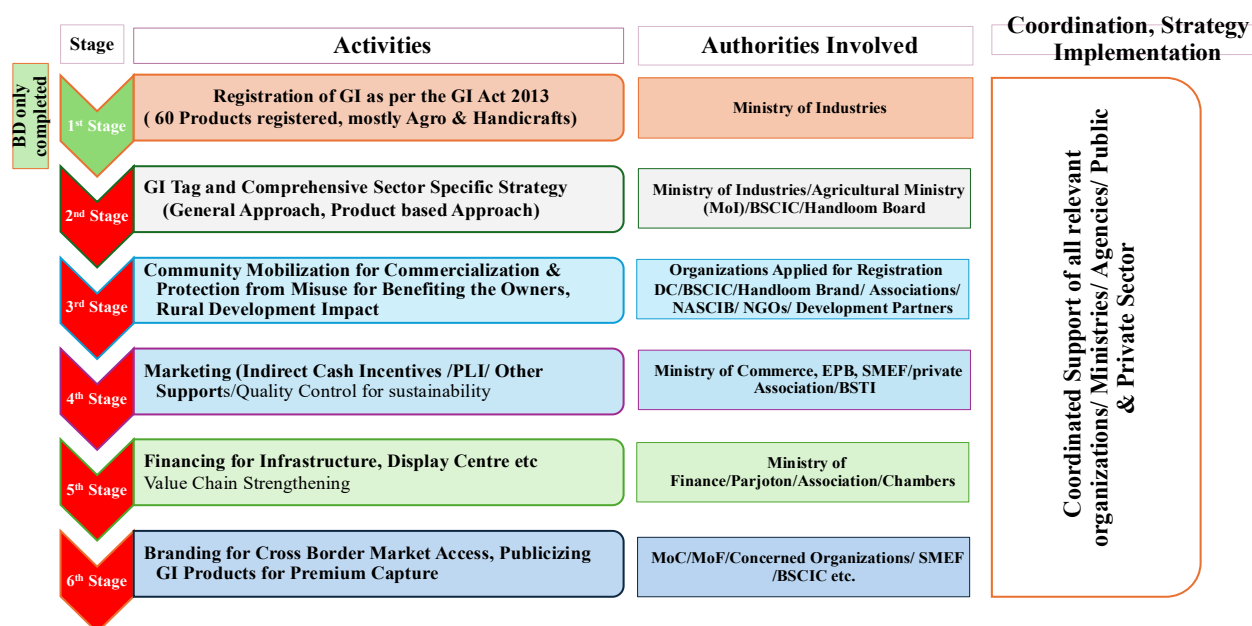
Global evidence suggests GI-labeled products earn 2.2 times higher prices than non-GI goods. Yet, the approval process for the tag remains pending, preventing exporters from capitalizing on premium pricing and branding opportunities.



4.4 Life Cycle of GI Benefits in Bangladesh – Stage-wise Progress

Bangladesh has initiated the use of GIs to protect and promote its unique products, but progress is limited to the first stage of the multi-stage GI life cycle. This highlights both the potential and gaps in the current system.

Around 60 products, mainly agro-based goods and handicrafts like Jamdani Sarees and Ilish (Hilsa fish), have been legally registered under the Geographical Indications (Registration and Protection) Act 2013. This establishes a foundation for commercialization, branding, and market differentiation.



The remaining stages of the GI life cycle, however, are yet to be implemented. The second stage involves assigning the official GI tag and developing a comprehensive sector-specific strategy—both at a general level and at the product-specific level. The third stage focuses on mobilizing communities for commercialization, ensuring legal protection against misuse, and achieving rural development impacts.

The fourth to sixth stages include: marketing support (such as indirect cash incentives, production-linked assistance, and quality control measures); financing infrastructure, including display centres and value chain development; and international branding to capture premium prices in cross-border markets.

These stages require coordinated action across multiple authorities, including the Ministry of Commerce, Export Promotion Bureau, SME Foundation, BSTI, Ministry of Finance, chambers of commerce, private associations, and relevant sectoral ministries.

Currently, the completion of only the first stage limits Bangladesh’s ability to capture the full benefits of GI protection. Without operationalizing the subsequent stages—particularly commercialization, market access, and branding—GI products remain underutilized in both domestic and international markets. Accelerating these remaining stages through strategic planning, stakeholder coordination, and targeted policy support will be critical to transforming Bangladesh’s GI ecosystem into a driver of rural development, export diversification, and premium market growth.

4.5 Comparative Lessons from Other Countries

Country	Policy & Legal Framework	International Engagement	Key GI Products & Economic Impact	Lessons for Bangladesh
India ⁴	Sui generis GI system under 1999 Act & 2002 Rules; covers multiple sectors	TRIPS; bilateral recognition; not Lisbon Agreement; trans-border disputes (e.g., Tangail Saree)	605+ GIs; Darjeeling Tea, Basmati Rice, Mysore Silk; Darjeeling Tea employs 51,000	Prioritize domestic registration, manage shared GIs, strengthen producer awareness, quality control, and promotion
Italy ⁵	EU PDO/PGI/TSG system with national laws	TRIPS, EU trade deals, Lisbon/Geneva Act	6,300+ GIs; Parmigiano Reggiano, Chianti wine, Modena Balsamic Vinegar; contributes \$19.79B (2019), exports \$11.23B; 890,000 employed	Build strong producer groups, enforce strict quality standards, leverage trade deals, expand GI portfolio
China ⁶	Multi-layered: sui generis + GI trademarks + customs enforcement	TRIPS; EU-China GI agreement; not Lisbon	2,500+ GIs, 7,300+ trademarks; Pingyao beef, Fenghuang Dancong tea; \$134.54B output; ~20M employed	Use GIs for rural development, combine legal tools, pursue bilateral deals, ensure quality control
Switzerland and ⁷	Hybrid: sui generis + collective/certification marks; specific agricultural ordinances	Lisbon Agreement, TRIPS; bilateral agreements	4,954 GIs; Swiss watches, Gruyère, Emmentaler; 60% of exports; ~17,000 employed	Flexible hybrid system; strong branding (“Swiss Made”) and producer associations are key
Vietnam ⁸	Broader IP law; top-down state-led approach	WTO/TRIPS; FTAs (EVFTA, CPTPP)	1,869 GIs, mostly agricultural; Phu Quoc fish sauce, Luc Ngan lychee; 12% of GDP; 33% workforce employed	Top-down approach works initially; FTAs aid recognition; strengthen producer participation and value chain
Japan ⁹	Sui generis GI Act (2014); quality control by producer groups; MAFF oversight	WTO/TRIPS; EPAs and bilateral agreements	169 GIs; Kobe Beef, Yubari Melon, Kyoto Matcha; \$321M contribution; ~47,000 employed	Clear legal framework + government monitoring; leverage trade agreements; producer-led quality control; periodic system review

⁴ <https://ipindia.gov.in/Home/AboutUs>

⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/eambrosia/geographical-indications-register/>

⁶ <https://english.cnipa.gov.cn/>

⁷ <https://www.ige.ch/en/protecting-your-ip/indications-of-source-and-geographical-indications>

⁸ <https://www.ipvietnam.gov.vn/web/english/geographical-indications>

⁹ <https://pd.jgic.jp/en/outline.html>

Key Takeaways:

- Countries with mature GI systems maintain strong producer associations, enforce rigorous quality control, and implement targeted marketing strategies.
- Leveraging bilateral and regional trade agreements helps secure international recognition and unlock economic benefits.
- Flexible legal frameworks—combining sui generis systems, trademarks, and broader IP laws—enhance compliance and scalability.
- Bangladesh can benefit by prioritizing domestic GI registration, managing shared GIs, promoting producer engagement, and expanding its GI portfolio to drive rural development and export growth.

5. Economic Potential of GIs in Bangladesh

5.1 Value Creation and Brand Enhancement

GIs provide a legal guarantee of origin and quality, allowing products to command prices that are 20–30% higher. For SMEs and rural producers, this can translate into increased revenue, improved market positioning, and stronger community livelihoods. However, Bangladesh’s current GI system lacks effective commercialization, branding, and strategic market entry, which limits its economic potential.

5.2 GI as a Post-LDC Export Strategy

As Bangladesh prepares for graduation from the Least Developed Country (LDC) category, Geographical Indications (GIs) offer a strategic tool to enhance export competitiveness and promote sustainable economic growth. By providing formal recognition and a marketing framework for indigenous products, GIs can help diversify Bangladesh’s export portfolio beyond the ready-made garment sector and strengthen its position in structured global markets.

Currently, however, a significant gap exists: none of the registered GI products are exported with the official GI tag—indicating that the system functions more as a legal formality than as an instrument for economic gain. The absence of a clear operational framework, exporter guidance, and targeted incentives has limited the ability of businesses to capitalize on GI recognition for premium pricing and international market access.

Sector	FY 2023-24	Jul–Dec 2025	% Decrease
Agar Attar	20%	8%	60%
Rice	10%	3%	70%
Agro & Agro-processed	20%	10%	50%
Handicrafts	20%	10%	50%
Halal Meat & Processed	20%	10%	50%
Source: Bangladesh Bank			

A significant challenge emerges as Bangladesh transitions to post-LDC status. Of the 60 registered GIs, 60–70% are agro-based, a sector that has relied on direct cash incentives (CI) to support production and exports. Following LDC graduation, direct CI will no longer be permitted, leading to substantial reductions in export support. For example, CI for agar attar fell by 60%, CI for rice declined by 70%, and handicrafts, halal meat, and processed agro products experienced an overall 50% reduction in CI between July and December 2025 compared with FY 2023–24. Without alternative support mechanisms, exporters caution that official exports may continue to shrink, and opportunities for consumer awareness, branding, and premium pricing will remain largely untapped.

To address these challenges, the government should shift from direct cash incentives to indirect support mechanisms, including:

- Low-cost financing for producers and exporters

- Access to R&D and laboratory facilities for quality enhancement
- Production-linked incentives (PLI) to reward performance and innovation
- Compliance support and environmental sustainability assistance

A proactive, strategic approach is also needed for selecting GI products for export. Priority should be given to products with strong local demand, proven international market potential, and clear linkages to community livelihoods. Once GI products are identified for export, the government must strengthen the full value chain—supporting producers, ensuring quality control, improving supply chains, and investing in marketing and branding. This comprehensive approach will enable GI products to achieve premium pricing, access to international markets, and generate tangible economic benefits for local communities, while also safeguarding Bangladesh’s traditional knowledge and cultural heritage.

5.3 Case Study: The Hilsa Fishery — A Model for Success¹⁰¹¹

The Hilsa fishery—the largest single-species fishery in Bangladesh—provides a compelling case study of how a GI can be most effective when it is part of a broader, well-managed strategy. The fishery generates over USD 3 billion annually and contributes 1.15% to national GDP and 12% to total fish production. It provides livelihoods for around 450,000 people directly involved in catching the fish, and an estimated 2.5 million people indirectly involved in the value chain.

While Hilsa was registered as a GI in 2017, its resurgence predates this registration. The revival of Hilsa stocks was driven by effective government-imposed conservation measures—such as fishing bans during the breeding season—which led to a significant increase in catch volumes and, consequently, improvements in the livelihoods of fishermen. Production rose from 299,000 metric tons in 2008–09 to 571,000 metric tons in 2023–24—an overall increase of 92%.

The GI recognition did not cause the economic success of the Hilsa fishery; rather, it formalized and protected a success already underway. This success was the result of a multi-pronged approach that included conservation, livelihood diversification, and coordinated government action. For instance, an evaluation of the ECOFISH-BD project found that the intervention group experienced an average annual income increase of BDT 24,397.43 (USD 290), representing a 22.40% rise in aggregate income. The project's strong economic viability—demonstrated by an internal rate of return (IRR) of 32.8%—further highlights the potential for investment in well-managed small-scale fisheries.

The GI tag serves as a testament to the product's value and origin, but it is the broader value chain strategy that has enabled the industry to thrive.

6. Rural Development and Livelihoods: GIs as a Tool for Local Empowerment

6.1 Fostering Economic Opportunities for Artisans and Communities

The collective nature of GI ownership empowers marginalized communities, including women, indigenous people, and rural artisans. Recognition of products like Nakshi Kantha revitalizes traditional crafts, provides economic opportunities, and ensures fair returns for local communities. GI status validates artisans’ skills, fosters pride, and inspires younger generations to continue ancestral crafts. For example,

¹⁰ <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/marine-science/articles/10.3389/fmars.2024.1437783/full>

¹¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilish>

bronze ornaments from Gopalganj have sparked innovation among local artisans, though economic benefits remain limited.

A critical disconnect exists, however, as many GIs are registered by government entities such as District Commissioner (DC) offices, highlighting a top-down approach. Consequently, producers often fail to benefit fully. Tangail's Porabari Chamcham illustrates this gap: while a government-affiliated association registered the GI, the local community still requires guidance on quality maintenance and compliance to gain practical benefits.

6.2 Poverty Alleviation and the GI-enabled Rural Economy

Recent data from the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC, mid-2025) indicates a national poverty rate of 27.93%, up from 18.7% in 2022, with extreme poverty nearly doubling to 9.35%. Rising inflation and economic uncertainty have exacerbated rural hardships, although rural households continue to maintain modest surpluses compared to urban deficits.

In this context, GIs offer a strategic tool for localized poverty alleviation. By commercializing traditional knowledge and cultural heritage, GIs can generate employment, sustain local production, and reduce rural-to-urban migration. A well-implemented GI system ensures fair economic returns, strengthens livelihoods, and empowers marginalized groups, including female artisans.

6.3 Case Study: The Jamdani Weaving Industry — A Tale of Unfulfilled Potential¹²¹³¹⁴

As Bangladesh's first GI, Jamdani is a flagship product and a cultural ambassador for the nation. The handloom industry is a vital part of the socio-economic landscape, providing livelihoods for thousands of weavers. The market within the Jamdani Industrial Estate earns approximately BDT 30–32 crore per year, with an additional BDT 5–6 crore coming from markets outside the estate. For example, in the lead-up to Eid, traders at the BSCIC Jamdani Industrial Estate—with 1,665 looms and around 3,500 employees—anticipated sales of BDT 150–160 crore. However, the Jamdani industry presents a stark example of what happens when legal recognition is not followed by a comprehensive commercialization strategy.

Despite its GI status, the industry has experienced a decline in exports in recent years, and currently, there is no official record of export volume. Weavers who received GI certificates were not given guidance, training, or instructions on how to use them in production and marketing, and as a result, have reported no additional benefits. Many weavers report earning only around BDT 1,500 per week—or BDT 5,000–7,000 per month—which is insufficient to support their families. Due to lack of capital, some have been forced to sell their looms.

The local market is now flooded with cheaper, machine-made Indian Jamdani due to weak enforcement and low consumer awareness. Evidence shows cash incentives work: in 1997, a 25% incentive raised exports to USD 19.694 million, which fell when the incentive was reduced. Jamdani illustrates Bangladesh's broader GI challenges—while legally registered, it has become a “paper GI” with little commercial impact, reflecting coordination gaps and a lack of post-registration strategy.

¹² https://www.researchgate.net/publication/394515516_Analyzing_the_Competitive_Business_Position_of_Dhakai_Jamdani_and_Investigating_the_Export_Decline_Reasons_of_it_in_the_Recent_Years

¹³ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/387947022_NATION_BRANDING_THROUGH_JAMDANI

¹⁴ <https://www.observerbd.com/news/466879>

7. Cultural Preservation: Safeguarding Traditional Knowledge and Heritage

7.1 GI as a Guardian of Intangible Cultural Heritage

GIs are vital for protecting and promoting traditional knowledge, serving as a counterbalance to globalization. They institutionalize the reputation and uniqueness of local traditions, preserving skills and customs passed down through generations. The commercial incentive embedded in GIs encourages the continuity of cultural practices, linking heritage with economic viability. UNESCO's recognition of Jamdani as an "Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity" (2013) strengthened its GI claim, highlighting the synergy between cultural and intellectual property protection.

7.2 Case Study in Conflict: Tangail Saree ¹⁵¹⁶

The controversy surrounding the Tangail Saree highlights critical vulnerabilities in Bangladesh's current GI protection framework and the risks of limited international engagement. On January 4, 2024, India registered the "Tangail Saree of Bengal" as a GI, triggering widespread concern in Bangladesh. In response, the Tangail District Administration submitted an application to the DPDT on February 6, 2024, and Bangladesh officially registered the GI on April 25, 2024; however, by this time, India had already secured registration, enabling it to market the product internationally under its claim. The Indian application cited the migration of the Basak weaver family during partition but simultaneously acknowledged Tangail, Bangladesh, as the product's place of origin, which provides Bangladesh a valid legal ground under international law. This dispute is closely tied to the WTO TRIPs Agreement, particularly Articles 22.2, 22.3, and 22.4, which mandate the prevention of misleading indications of origin, prohibit trademarks misrepresenting origin, and address deceptive GIs.

From an economic perspective, the implications are substantial. Bangladesh exports approximately 50,000 Tangail Sarees weekly to India, with strong demand in South Asian and diaspora markets. If India retains the GI, it risks monopolizing the branding, limiting Bangladesh's ability to leverage the saree for export diversification and cultural promotion. Such an outcome would negatively impact producers and weavers in Tangail while undermining Bangladesh's claims to its cultural heritage internationally. The case underscores three major weaknesses in Bangladesh's GI governance: a reactive legal approach that only responds after foreign registrations, insufficient institutional capacity within the DPDT, which lacks a specialized and empowered GI unit, and limited coordination with trade bodies and diplomatic missions, leaving Bangladesh ill-equipped to defend its claims abroad.

Moving forward, Bangladesh must adopt a proactive approach, including constant monitoring of foreign GI journals—especially in countries with shared cultural resources—and accession to the Lisbon Agreement and Geneva Act under WIPO to secure stronger and more cost-effective international protection. Strengthening DPDT's GI unit and integrating producer associations into cross-border defense strategies are also critical. The Tangail Saree case demonstrates that without strategic protection, cultural assets can be claimed and commercialized by others, making GI governance not only a legal and economic concern but also an essential measure for safeguarding national identity and heritage in the global marketplace.

8. Key Findings of the Study

- Bangladesh's key GI products—including Hilsa fish, Jamdani Sarees, mangoes, silk, jute, and shrimp—currently generate an export value of approximately USD 1 billion. Despite this, there is substantial

¹⁵ <https://cpd.org.bd/resources/2024/09/Bangladeshs-Shared-Geographical-Indications-GIs-with-India.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://www.tbsnews.net/analysis/tangail-saree-gi-conundrum-sketching-way-forward-798034>

potential to double this value through improved commercialization, branding, enforcement, and market linkages. The current economic contribution of GIs is limited compared with countries with mature systems, indicating an untapped opportunity to enhance rural livelihoods and export diversification.

- Compared with global benchmarks, Bangladesh's GI system remains relatively underdeveloped. While countries like India (605 GIs), Vietnam (1,869 GIs), Italy (6,330 GIs), and China (over 9,000 GIs) have leveraged GIs to support millions of jobs, boost exports, and contribute significantly to GDP, Bangladesh, with only 60 registered GIs, employs about huge number of people but captures limited economic benefits, indicating a gap in operational scale and commercialization effectiveness.
- Bangladesh faces challenges with trans-border conflicts over at least eight GIs, including Jamdani, Muslin, Tangail Saree, and Sundarbans Honey, with India. These disputes risk products being classified as "semi-generic," reducing their value and inviting unfair competition. The country's sui generis system for national protection is limited in resolving disputes over homonymous or shared GIs, leaving several products vulnerable to international contention.
- On the domestic front, multiple institutional and producer-related constraints hinder the full utilization of GIs. The existing GI Act lacks strong enforcement mechanisms, specialized units within the Department of Patents, Designs and Trademarks (DPDT) are absent, and inter-ministerial coordination remains weak. A comprehensive national survey of potential GI products has not been conducted, limiting strategic planning. Producers face substantial barriers, including limited access to laboratories and testing facilities for quality standardization, over-reliance on cash incentives (e.g., Agar and Attar sector incentives reduced from 20% to 8%), and insufficient support for compliance with international market standards. Without alternative support, reductions in incentives may depress official exports while informal channels expand.
- From a sustainability and market perspective, the GI ecosystem in Bangladesh suffers from limited producer ownership, with 90% of registrations handled by government organizations and only 10% involving private-sector participation. This top-down approach undermines long-term sustainability and reduces market impact. Weak producer associations and low engagement with the private sector further constrain the ability of GIs to influence consumer markets, command premium pricing, and translate legal recognition into tangible economic benefits. Strengthening producer involvement, building lab infrastructure, and promoting coordinated value-chain support will be critical to ensure that GIs deliver sustainable economic, social, and cultural gains for Bangladesh.

9. Recommendations

To fully leverage the economic, social, and cultural potential of GI products, Bangladesh requires a multi-pronged strategy addressing policy, marketing, export diversification, cross-border management, research and development, financing, and awareness. The following recommendations provide a detailed roadmap for enhancing the GI ecosystem and ensuring sustainable benefits for producers and the national economy.

1. Policy and Institutional Framework

- **National GI Policy:** Formulate a comprehensive National GI Policy that outlines long-term objectives, strategic priorities, and clear targets for GI product promotion, commercialization, and international market access.
- **Advisory Council:** Establish an official advisory council comprising representatives from government agencies, producer associations, private sector stakeholders, and intellectual property experts to provide guidance, monitor implementation, and ensure inter-ministerial coordination.
- **Integration with Trademarks:** Incorporate Collective Trademarks and Certification Marks into the Trademark Act to strengthen legal protection, enforceability, and commercial utilization of GI products.

- **GI Tag Implementation:** Approve the GI Tag system urgently and launch a GI Tag User Policy, providing clear guidelines on use, enforcement, and branding. This should be complemented by a sector-specific strategy for key products to maximize market recognition, quality assurance, and economic benefits.

2. Marketing and Commercialization

- **National Strategy:** Develop a National Commercialization and Marketing Strategy that prioritizes high-potential GI products, identifies target domestic and international markets, and establishes brand positioning for each product.
- **Regional GI Fairs:** Organize regional GI fairs, exhibitions, and roadshows to promote local products, facilitate networking, and provide a platform for producers to directly engage with buyers.
- **Support Infrastructure:** Strengthen lab and testing facilities, ensure robust quality control mechanisms, and promote R&D to improve product consistency and enhance unique product characteristics.
- **Branding Initiatives:** Launch comprehensive branding campaigns, including packaging improvements, digital marketing, and international promotion, to establish GI labels as a mark of authenticity and premium value.

3. Export Diversification

- **Product Selection:** Strategically select 5–10 GI products with the highest export potential based on market demand, community livelihood impact, and feasibility of value addition.
- **Export Targets:** Establish specific export targets for each product and integrate monitoring mechanisms to track performance.
- **Certification and Traceability:** Implement robust certification systems and traceability protocols to ensure compliance with international standards, facilitate market entry, and enhance consumer trust.
- **Value-Added Processing:** Encourage value-added processing (e.g., packaged mangoes, dried fruits, specialty handicrafts) to capture higher export revenues and improve competitiveness in global markets.

4. Cross-Border GI Management

- **Diplomatic Engagement:** Proactively engage in bilateral and multilateral negotiations to secure GI protection agreements with neighboring countries and key trading partners.
- **Legal Framework:** Establish a legal mechanism, such as bilateral agreements, FTAs, or PTAs, for managing trans-border GIs to prevent disputes, avoid the "semi-generic" classification of shared products, and protect market value.
- **Dispute Resolution:** Develop institutional protocols for the resolution of homonymous or contested GIs and provide clear guidance to producers on international intellectual property enforcement.

5. Research and Development

- **National Survey:** Conduct a comprehensive national survey to identify and prioritize potential GI products across all sectors, including agro-based goods, handicrafts, textiles, and specialty foods.
- **Product Improvement:** Allocate R&D resources to improve product quality, uniqueness, and processing methods, ensuring that GI products meet international standards and are competitive in global markets.
- **Innovation Incentives:** Provide incentives for innovation, including the development of new product variants, packaging designs, and environmentally sustainable production techniques.

6. Financing and Incentives

- **Low-Cost Financing:** Extend schemes such as the CMSME Refinancing Scheme 2025 of Bangladesh Bank to support agro-based and craft-based GI producers, particularly targeting women entrepreneurs and small-scale producers.

- **Indirect Incentives:** Introduce indirect incentives such as production-linked incentives (PLI), R&D grants, and compliance support, especially important in the post-LDC phase where direct cash incentives are no longer allowed.
- **Infrastructure Investment:** Provide funding for display centres, value-chain infrastructure, and logistics support, enabling producers to scale operations and reach domestic and international markets efficiently.

7. Awareness, Capacity Building, and Producer Engagement

- **Awareness Campaigns:** Launch nationwide campaigns to educate producers, consumers, and officials about the economic and cultural benefits of GI registration, branding, and export potential.
- **Training and Capacity Building:** Provide training programs on quality control, packaging, compliance, and marketing to strengthen producer capabilities and ensure sustainable participation in GI initiatives.
- **Producer Ownership:** Encourage greater private-sector involvement and stronger producer associations to enhance ownership, accountability, and market-driven decision-making.
- **GI Tag Enforcement:** Enforce mandatory use of the official GI tag and incorporate improved packaging standards to establish credibility and signal authenticity to consumers in domestic and international markets.

By implementing these recommendations, Bangladesh can create a sustainable and commercially viable GI ecosystem, unlock premium export opportunities, strengthen rural livelihoods, preserve cultural heritage, and position GI products as a strategic tool for post-LDC economic growth.

10. Conclusion

Bangladesh's Geographical Indications (GIs) hold significant potential to promote rural development, preserve cultural heritage, and enhance export competitiveness. Despite legal recognition and a growing portfolio of registered products, challenges related to producer engagement, quality control, enforcement, and international protection limit their full economic and social impact. Addressing these gaps through targeted awareness campaigns, institutional strengthening, robust documentation, market promotion, and international collaboration can unlock the true value of GIs. A coordinated strategy will help ensure that Bangladesh's unique products gain global recognition, deliver premium returns to producers, and contribute to sustainable economic growth.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Registered GI Products of Bangladesh

No.	Application No.	Application Date	Product Name	Applicant	Product Category	Registration No.
60	GI-95	01.08.2024	Faridpur Jute	Director General, Bangladesh Jute Research Institute	31	60
59	GI-90	14.07.2024	Meherpur Himsagar Mango	Deputy Director, Department of Agricultural Extension, Meherpur	31	59
58	GI-88	11.07.2024	Fulbaria Red Sugar	Upazila Administration, Fulbaria, Mymensingh	30	58
57	GI-94	24.07.2024	Netrokona Balish Mishti	District Commissioner, Netrokona	29 & 30	57
56	GI-89	14.07.2024	Meherpur Mehersagar Banana	Department of Agricultural Extension, Meherpur	31	56
55	GI-64	01.12.2021	Dhakai Phuti Carpets Cotton Seeds & Plants	Chairman, Bangladesh Handloom Board	31	55
54	GI-74	01.04.2024	Tangail Mirzapur Jamurki Sandesh	District Commissioner, Tangail	29 & 30	54
53	GI-24	04.06.2017	Naogaon Nak Fazli Mango	President, Badalgachhi Upazila Nak Fazli Mango Farmers' Cooperative Society	31	53
52	GI-64	27.02.2024	Munshiganj Patkhira	District Commissioner, Munshiganj	29 & 30	52
51	GI-59	12.02.2024	Dinajpur Bedana Litchi	District Commissioner, Dinajpur	31	51
50	GI-87	23.05.2024	Kumar Khali Bed Sheet	Bangladesh Handloom Board	24	50
49	GI-63	25.02.2024	Barishal Amra	District Commissioner, Barishal	31	49

48	GI-86	21.05.2024	Astagram Paneer	District Commissioner, Kishoreganj	29 & 30	48
47	GI-85	21.05.2024	Kishoreganj Rata Boro Rice	District Commissioner, Kishoreganj	30	47
46	GI-71	20.03.2024	Gazipur Jackfruit	District Commissioner, Gazipur	31	46
45	GI-66	06.03.2024	Sirajganj Lungi	Bangladesh Handloom Board	24	45
44	GI-56	15.01.2024	Sherpur Chanar Payesh	District Commissioner, Sherpur	29 & 30	44
43	GI-25	09.08.2017	Sundarbans Honey	District Commissioner, Bagerhat	30	43
42	GI-67	14.03.2024	Gopalganj Bronze Jewelry	District Commissioner, Gopalganj	14	42
41	GI-75	08.04.2024	Brahmanbaria Chanamukhi Mishti	District Commissioner, Brahmanbaria	29 & 30	41
40	GI-61	19.02.2024	Comilla Khadi	Bangladesh Handloom Board	24 & 25	40
39	GI-38	02.11.2021	Dhakai Phuti Cotton	Bangladesh Handloom Board	22	39
38	GI-60	19.02.2024	Mirpur Katan Saree	Bangladesh Handloom Board	24 & 25	38
37	GI-46	21.06.2023	Sylhet Manipuri Saree	Bangladesh Handloom Board	24 & 25	37
36	GI-65	06.03.2024	Sirajganj Gamcha	Bangladesh Handloom Board	24	36
35	GI-48	23.08.2023	Magura Hajrapuri Litchi	District Commissioner, Magura	31	35
34	GI-55	19.12.2023	Bhola Buffalo Milk Curd	District Commissioner, Bhola	29	34
33	GI-52	07.11.2023	Madhupur Pineapple	District Commissioner, Tangail	31	33
32	GI-50	29.08.2023	Narsingdi Lotkon	District Commissioner, Narsingdi	31	32
31	GI-57	06.02.2024	Tangail Saree	District Administration, Tangail	24 & 25	31

30	GI-35	17.07.2019	Jamalpur Nakshi Kantha	District Administration, Jamalpur	24 & 26	30
29	GI-47	22.08.2023	Gopalganj Rosogolla	District Administration, Gopalganj	29 & 30	29
28	GI-51	31.08.2023	Rajshahi Mishti Pan	District Administration, Rajshahi	31	28
27	GI-49	29.08.2023	Narsingdi Amrit Sagar Banana	District Administration, Narsingdi	31	27
26	GI-45	23.05.2023	Jessore Date Molasses	Upazila Executive Officer, Chougachha, Jessore	30	26
25	GI-44	02.05.2023	Muktagacha Monda	Upazila Administration, Muktagacha, Mymensingh	29 & 30	25
24	GI-33	11.07.2019	Moulvibazar Agar Attar	Bangladesh Agar & Attar Manufacturers & Exporters Association	3	24
23	GI-19	12.04.2017	Moulvibazar Agar	Bangladesh Agar & Attar Manufacturers & Exporters Association	31	23
22	GI-4	15.02.2017	Rangpur Haribhanga Mango	Alhaj Abdus Salam Government, Haribhanga Mango Farmer School	31	22
21	GI-43	17.04.2023	Kushtia Til Khaja	District Administration, Kushtia	30	21
20	GI-42	16.04.2023	Comilla Rosomalai	District Administration, Comilla	29 & 30	20
19	GI-41	30.03.2023	Tangail Porabari Chamcham	District Administration, Tangail	30	19
18	GI-28	25.10.2017	Black Bengal Goat	Department of Livestock	31	18
17	GI-40	30.03.2023	Natore Kacha Golla	District Administration, Natore	29 & 30	17

16	GI-11	19.02.2017	Chapai Nawabganj Amrapali Mango	Regional Horticulture Research Centre, Chapai Nawabganj	31	16
15	GI-10	19.02.2017	Chapai Nawabganj Langra Mango	Regional Horticulture Research Centre, Chapai Nawabganj	31	15
14	GI-31	11.04.2018	Sherpur Tulshimala Rice	District Administration, Sherpur	30	14
13	GI-29	01.01.2018	Bogura Curd	Bangladesh Restaurant Owners Association, Bogura	29	13
12	GI-37	16.03.2021	Bangladesh Sheetal Pati	Bangladesh Small & Cottage Industry Corporation (BSCIC)	27	12
11	GI-32	04.07.2019	Bangladesh Bagda Shrimp	Department of Fisheries, Bangladesh	29 & 31	11
10	GI-15	09.03.2017	Rajshahi-Chapai Nawabganj Fazli Mango	1. Fruit Research Centre, Binodpur, Rajshahi; 2. Chapai Nawabganj Agricultural Association, Chapai Nawabganj	31	10
9	GI-30	02.01.2018	Dhakai Muslin	Bangladesh Handloom Board, Dhaka	24 & 25	9
8	GI-27	24.09.2017	Rajshahi Silk	Bangladesh Sericulture Development Board, Rajshahi	25	8
7	GI-34	11.07.2019	Rangpur Shatranji	Bangladesh Small & Cottage Industry Corporation (BSCIC)	27	7
6	GI-07	07.02.2017	Bangladesh Kalizira	Bangladesh Rice Research Institute, Gazipur	30	6
5	GI-06	06.02.2017	Dinajpur Katari Bhat	Bangladesh Rice Research Institute, Gazipur	30	5
4	GI-05	06.02.2017	Bijoypur White Soil	District Commissioner's Office, Netrokona	1	4
3	GI-03	02.02.2017	Chapai Nawabganj	Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute	31	3

			Khirsapat Mango			
2	GI-02	13.11.2016	Bangladesh Hilsa	Department of Fisheries, Bangladesh	29 & 31	2
1	GI-01	01.09.2015	Jamdani Saree	Bangladesh Small & Cottage Industry Corporation (BSCIC)	25	1

Annex 2: The Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 2013 of Bangladesh Overview

The **Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 2013** enacted by the Government of Bangladesh, is a landmark piece of legislation aimed at providing a legal framework for the registration and protection GIs within the country. This Act is crucial for safeguarding Bangladesh's unique traditional products and leveraging their potential in both domestic and international markets.

Key provisions of the Act:

1. Purpose and Application (Chapter I, Sections 1 & 3):

The Act's primary purpose is to make provisions for the registration and protection of GIs. It applies equally to GIs already in existence before its commencement and those developed thereafter. Significantly, Section 3 establishes that this Act shall prevail over any other conflicting law in force, underscoring its importance in the intellectual property landscape of Bangladesh.

2. Definitions (Chapter I, Section 2):

The Act provides comprehensive definitions for key terms:

- **"Geographical indication of goods" (Section 2(9)):** This is a crucial definition, aligning largely with international standards. It refers to agricultural, natural, or manufactured goods that identify their originating country, territory, region, or locality, where any specific quality, reputation, or other characteristic is *essentially attributable to its geographical origin*. For manufactured goods, it specifies that at least one activity of production, processing, or preparation must take place in that identified geographical area.
- **"Authorized user" (Section 2(1)):** Defines who can use a registered GI, including associations, societies, producers, or organizations involved in the product within the specified geographical area.
- **"Producer" (Section 2(3)):** Broadly defines producers to include those involved in agricultural, natural, handicraft, or industrial products, as well as traders dealing in such goods.
- **"Generic name or indication" (Section 2(4)):** Clearly distinguishes GIs from generic terms that have become common names for goods, regardless of origin.
- **"Homonymous geographical indication" (Section 2(16)):** Recognizes and allows for the registration of GIs that bear similar names but originate from different places, ensuring equitable treatment.

3. Geographical Indication Unit (Chapter II, Sections 4 & 5):

- The Act establishes a dedicated **Geographical Indication Unit** within the Department of Patents, Designs and Trademarks. This unit is responsible for all functions related to GIs under the Act.
- The Registrar appointed in the Department of Patents, Designs and Trademarks serves as the *ex-officio* Registrar of Geographical Indication, overseeing and controlling the unit's activities. This centralized authority is vital for effective implementation.

4. Protection of Geographical Indication of Goods (Chapter III, Sections 6-8):

- **Protection Scope (Section 6(1)):** A GI, whether registered or not, is protected against uses that falsely represent goods as originating from a different geographical area, even if the literal truth of the goods' origin is stated.
- **Classification (Section 6(2)):** GIs are to be classified according to the international classification of goods, promoting harmonization with global standards.
- **Homonymous GIs (Section 7):** Explicitly allows for the registration of homonymous GIs, ensuring fair treatment and protection for producers of such goods.

- **Prohibitions (Section 8):** Outlines specific grounds for refusing GI registration, including GIs that don't conform to the Act's definition, are deceptive, contrary to law, public order, or morality, hurt religious susceptibilities, are generic, or falsely represent origin.

5. Registration Process (Chapter IV, Sections 9-15):

- **Application (Section 9):** Any association, institution, or government body representing GI producers can apply for registration to the Registrar in a prescribed manner and form.
- **Authorized User Registration (Section 10):** Producers, exploiters, manufacturers, or processors of registered GIs can apply to be registered as authorized users, enabling them to use the GI.
- **Refusal and Advertisement (Sections 11 & 12):** The Registrar can refuse an application under certain conditions (e.g., erroneous application, not requiring registration) after a hearing. Satisfied applications are advertised in a prescribed manner.
- **Objection and Counter-statement (Sections 13 & 14):** Allows for objections to registration within two months of advertisement (or later with government approval). The applicant can submit a counter-statement, and the Registrar hears both parties before making a decision.
- **Registration and Certificate (Section 15):** If no objection is raised or the application is approved, the GI is registered, effective from the application date, and a certificate of registration is issued.

6. Duration, Renewal, and Register (Chapter IV, Sections 16 & 17):

- **Duration (Section 16(1)):** The registration of a GI remains valid until cancelled or invalidated under the Act, indicating indefinite protection for the GI itself as long as its conditions are met.
- **Authorized User Registration Duration (Section 16(2) & (3)):** Registration for an *authorized user* is valid for five years and can be renewed for subsequent three-year periods upon payment of prescribed fees.
- **Register (Section 17):** A "Geographical Indication of Goods Register" is maintained by the Registrar to preserve all registration information, which is admissible as an official record.

7. Rights and Restrictions (Chapter IV, Sections 18 & 19):

- **Rights Conferred (Section 18):** Registered authorized users gain the right to seek relief for infringement and the right to use the registered GI.
- **Prohibition on Assignment/Transfer (Section 19):** A significant provision, this section prohibits the assignment, transfer, licensing, pledging, or mortgaging of any right to a registered GI. This ensures the GI remains tied to its geographical origin and collective ownership. Rights can, however, devolve upon a legitimate successor of an authorized user.

8. Special Provisions Relating to Trademarks (Chapter V, Sections 21 & 22):

- **Restrictions on Trademark Registration (Section 21):** Empowers the Registrar to refuse or invalidate trademarks that contain or consist of a GI if such use is misleading as to the true place of origin. **This is a crucial safeguard against unauthorized use of GIs as trademarks.**
- **Protection for Existing Trademarks (Section 22):** Provides safeguards for trademarks containing GIs that were applied for or registered in good faith before the Act's commencement or before a GI application, ensuring their continued validity.

9. Offenses and Penalties (Chapter IX, Sections 28-35):

The Act defines various offenses related to GI infringement, falsification, deceptive use, marketing without renewal, and breach of registration conditions. It prescribes severe penalties, including imprisonment (ranging from 6 months to 3 years, and up to 5 years for subsequent offenses) and significant fines

(ranging from BDT 50,000 to BDT 2 lakh, and up to BDT 4 lakh for subsequent offenses). This robust punitive framework is designed to deter infringement and ensure compliance.

10. Miscellaneous Provisions (Chapter X):

This chapter covers various other aspects, including implied warranty on sale (Section 40), inclusion of authorized users in certain proceedings (Section 41), government power to require origin indication (Section 42), admission of customary business practices as evidence (Section 43), and the power to make rules for the Act's implementation (Section 45).

In summary, the Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 2013, establishes a **sui generis legal framework for GI protection in Bangladesh**. It defines GIs broadly, sets up a dedicated registration unit, outlines a clear application and objection process, grants specific rights to authorized users, and provides strong enforcement mechanisms. Its prohibition on the transferability of GI rights is particularly notable, emphasizing the collective nature and origin-based essence of GIs. The Act serves as a vital legal instrument for Bangladesh to protect its valuable traditional products and harness their socio-economic potential.