

**GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS
AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SRI LANKA:
A LEGAL PERSPECTIVE**

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The fact that the European Union recognized Ceylon cinnamon as a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) raises the issue of whether the Sri Lankan legal framework regarding Geographical Indications (GIs) can help achieve sustainable development in the country. A GI is an intellectual property right conferred to a product with characteristics that can be ascribed to its geographic origin. A PGI is a European Union scheme that provides legal protection to its GI products. The objective of this research is to analyze whether the Sri Lankan law regarding GIs has the potential to contribute towards achieving sustainable development in the country. The research questions are: what is the local and international legal context in which GI protection is granted to Sri Lankan products; how is the connection made between GI law and sustainable development; is the GI law in Sri Lanka equipped to promote sustainable development in the country? This research adopted the qualitative research method, where a range of primary and secondary materials were referred to. Primary materials such as statutes and judicial decisions from Sri Lanka and other jurisdictions and secondary materials from Sri Lanka and overseas jurisdictions were used in this research. The research results revealed that the protection of GIs at the domestic level is important for its protection at the international level. It was also revealed that the local legal framework regarding GIs in Sri Lanka has some potential to contribute towards achieving sustainable development in Sri Lanka. It is because of the features in the Sri Lankan intellectual property law, such as the definition of GIs in the Intellectual Property (Amendment) Act No 8 of 2022 and the collective nature of entitlements conferred under the certification marks regime. These features also indicate the potential of the Sri Lankan GI law to empower producers, such as by protecting producers who meet the standards stated in the GI specification. The connection between GI law and sustainable development also emerges from the fact that GIs help to achieve rights-based sustainable development. In conclusion, it was identified that paying more attention to the interconnection between GI law and sustainable development in Sri Lanka is necessary.

Keywords: Geographical Indications, sustainable development, intellectual property law, Sri Lanka