

The Protection of Geographical Indications in Sri Lanka: Need of a Registration System

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In the era of knowledge based economy, the protection of industrial property rights plays an important role under the intellectual property law agenda. Among them, geographical indications (GIs) have been subjected to vigorous scholarly debate across the world in last two decades. GI as a distinctive sign, permits the identification of products on the market and protects the quality, reputation or other character of goods essentially attributable to their geographical origin. As a developing country Sri Lanka has varieties of natural resources with great economic value. Geographical Indications like Ceylon Tea, Ceylon Cinnamon, Ceylon sapphires are some of the major earners of foreign exchange in the country. Despite this GIs receive less attention when compared with other intellectual property rights. This has become a major issue in the development of law relating to GIs.

Therefore, this paper discusses the problem of protecting products of geographical origin by exploring the laws available in Sri Lanka in terms of both domestic and international obligations. The present study expects to explore a domestic registration system of Geographical Indications as an option. It also expects to propose ways for strengthening the legal framework of the country in order to accord better protection for GI in Sri Lanka. This is a qualitative research based on literature review and mainly carried out by the reference of primary and secondary data such as statutes, International treaties, academic writings, journal articles and e-sources. The comparative analysis of successful legal position in selected jurisdictions such as, India have been followed in reaching the conclusion.

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