

Protecting ‘Ceylon Golden Pineapple’ as a geographical indication: prospects, challenges and way forward

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The purpose of this paper is to explore the potential of protecting ‘Ceylon Golden Pineapple’ as a unique geographical indication (GI) of Sri Lanka. The research employs critical review of literature method by following black-letter legal research approach. This research outcome shows that there is a paucity of helpful literature and inadequate treatment on the topic in Sri Lanka, which fact motivated the researcher to undertake this study. From a legal standpoint, a GI is an intellectual property (IP) right recognized over 160 countries in the world. Except for Ceylon Tea and Ceylon Cinnamon, other potential GIs of Sri Lanka have remained by and large an untapped potential up until today. Most importantly, geographical indications (GI) refer to origin-linked products with a name and reputation associated to its origin. From an economic standpoint, a GI is a valuable marketing tool that can be used to obtain premium price for products, facilitate market access and contribute to enhance economic prosperity. Sri Lanka is a country with many origin-linked products which include the Ceylon Golden Pineapple. The story of Ceylon Golden Pineapple is unique for Sri Lanka as it emanates from the fruit of the Mauritius and Kew varieties of the species of *Ananas comosus* and both varieties are indigenous. The physical, organoleptic and chemical characteristics of the product are essentially linked to the environment and the conditions in which the product is grown, as well as production practices applied during the growth stages. The Ceylon Golden Pineapple is easily recognizable due to high content of juice and its remarkable sweet flavour and grown in the low country wet zone. It is a matter of great concern that, in the absence of a standalone specific GI protection regime in the country, Sri Lankan GIs face enormous challenges from other pineapple producers in the global market. This research offers new insights to policy makers on the effective use of IP regime to protect Ceylon Golden Pineapple and facilitate Sri Lanka achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations; namely: sustainable food production and consumption patterns to eliminate hunger and improve nutrition (SDGs, 2 and 12). In terms of originality, to the best of the author’s knowledge, this is the first research that explores the use of the GI protection system to promote the Ceylon Golden Pineapple for competitive advantage in the princely competitive global marketplace.

Keywords: Ceylon golden pineapple, geographical indication, socio-economic development.

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