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“Leveraging Social Marketing for the Sustainable Advancement of GI Products”

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Abstract-- Geographical Indication (GI) products are distinguished by their unique qualities and regional characteristics, often rooted in traditional craftsmanship. GI labelling not only protects these attributes but also supports local communities in preserving their cultural heritage. Despite this, public awareness of GI products remains relatively low. To enhance the sustainability of eco-friendly indigenous goods, social marketing serves as a vital tool to broaden consumer reach. This study explores the role of social media platforms in increasing visibility and awareness of GI products and offers strategic recommendations for planning and implementing impactful social marketing initiatives. It includes an evaluation of successful social marketing campaigns that have effectively promoted sustainable practices within the GI domain. The research is based on both primary and secondary sources, employing convenience sampling and analytical techniques using SPSS software. The outcomes aim to guide producers, marketers, and policymakers in formulating strategies that support sustainability objectives while enhancing the competitive presence of GI-labelled products in the market.

Keywords-- Geographical Indication (GI) Products, Social Marketing, Traditional Artisan Work, Consumer Awareness, Eco-friendly Products, Social Media Campaigns

I. INTRODUCTION

Social marketing involves leveraging various social media platforms to promote products and engage with a broader customer base. It plays a crucial role in increasing product visibility, shaping consumer perceptions, and encouraging purchase decisions. In today’s digital age, social marketing acts as an interactive channel that builds strong connections between brands and their audiences, influencing both awareness and buying behavior.

When it comes to Geographical Indication (GI) products, sustainable development is essential to preserve their cultural, historical, and economic value. These products are officially recognized under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. India began GI registration in 2003, starting with Darjeeling Tea, which received its GI tag in 2004. Since then, India has become the third-highest country in the world for GI registrations.

Geographical Indication (GI) products represent the cultural heritage, traditional skills, and natural uniqueness of specific regions across India. These products often reflect generations of craftsmanship and regional expertise.

Many are meticulously handcrafted by skilled artisans—such as traditional handloom sarees and intricate decorative items—while others are agricultural commodities cultivated in specific climatic and soil conditions. For example, Kashmir Pashmina is renowned for its soft, high-quality wool and delicate weaving, whereas Phulkari from Punjab exemplifies vibrant, handcrafted embroidery rooted in folk traditions. In the realm of agriculture, Alphonso Mangoes from Ratnagiri and Basmati Rice from northern India are highly valued for their taste and fragrance. Likewise, manufactured products like Kancheepuram Silk Sarees and the elegant Aranmula Kannadi (metal mirrors from Kerala) showcase refined artistry and heritage. Promoting and preserving these diverse GI products through sustainable and strategic social marketing not only boosts their economic potential but also safeguards traditional knowledge systems, supports local livelihoods, and reinforces India’s cultural identity in the global marketplace.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kennedy, Kemper & Parsons (2018) – Upstream Social Marketing Strategy explores how policymakers can be engaged using media advocacy, stakeholder communication, and timing strategies to enable structural change for complex issues such as health and the environment. It provides conceptual guidelines for targeting upstream audiences effectively.

Khayame & Abdeljawad (2020) studied the application of soft systems methodology (SSM) in Jordan to address systemic challenges in midwifery policy. This research illustrates how systems-thinking approaches can support upstream social marketing to effect policy-level change.

Gusoff et al. (2023) in BMC Public Health demonstrate a community wealth-building approach to tackling social determinants of health. This article emphasizes partnership strategies that extend social marketing beyond behavior change to structural transformation.

Forde et al. (2023) conducted a critical interpretive synthesis reviewing how marketing concepts are embedded in public health nutrition research. They highlight the role of social marketing in influencing dietary behaviors and policy, with emphasis on multi-level approaches.



Braga et al. (2024) reviewed sustainability communication (SC) literature in marketing. Key themes include green advertising, ethical consumerism, and promotion of pro-sustainable behavior—all aligned with social marketing's role in advancing sustainability goals.

Garg et al. (2024) mapped the integration of sustainable marketing mix with supply chain in a systematic review, underscoring the need for coherent strategies spanning production, distribution, and communication for sustainability efforts.

Nirosha & Mansingh (2025) – Mapping the Sustainability of Geographical Indication Products: A Systematic Literature Review the article systematically examines how GI-registered products contribute to sustainability using bibliometric and systematic review methods (PRISMA). Published in 2025, the study focuses on GI products from India and analyses their alignment with sustainability dimensions such as biodiversity conservation, rural livelihoods, cultural heritage, and contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

III. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Geographical Indication (GI) products are valued for their distinct characteristics, deep-rooted cultural significance, and strong association with particular regions. While these products present significant opportunities for economic development and heritage preservation, they also face various challenges, particularly in awareness and market reach. Despite their authenticity and sustainability potential, public recognition remains limited. In today's digital and promotion-driven marketplace, consumer preferences are often shaped by compelling marketing efforts. Social marketing, when effectively utilized, can play a transformative role in shaping consumer attitudes, increasing product visibility, and fostering sustainable consumption and production practices. This highlights the importance of examining how targeted social marketing campaigns can influence consumer perception and contribute to the long-term sustainability of GI-certified goods.

IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How does engaging content on social platforms shape the way consumers perceive brands and make choices?
- Among the various strategies used in digital outreach, which ones tend to leave a lasting impression or drive more meaningful interaction?

Objective Of The Study

- To understand how consumers perceive and respond to products with Geographical Indications, shaping their overall awareness.
- To evaluate the role of social marketing in promoting the heritage and sustainability of GI-labelled products.

Hypothesis:

- *Null Hypothesis (H₀):* There is no statistically significant association between social media marketing efforts and consumer awareness of GI products.
- *Alternative Hypothesis (H₁):* Social media marketing has a statistically significant influence on consumer awareness of GI products.

V. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts an empirical approach to examine the role of social marketing in promoting the sustainable development of Geographical Indication (GI) products. Data was gathered through a structured survey administered to consumers, aiming to understand their perceptions and awareness influenced by social marketing efforts. Participants were selected using a convenience sampling technique, where responses were voluntarily provided by individuals willing to take part in the research. In addition to primary data collection, relevant insights were also drawn from secondary sources such as academic journals, official websites, and existing literature to support and enrich the analysis.

VI. STATISTICAL TOOL

In order to explore consumer profiles and their awareness of GI products, a descriptive frequency analysis was performed, focusing on demographic distribution and perception patterns. Additionally, a correlation analysis was conducted to evaluate the relationship between social media-based promotional efforts and their influence on the sustainable preservation of Geographical Indication products.

VII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The sample size used in this study is limited, which may affect the ability to generalize the results to the broader population.



- The scope of the research is confined specifically to consumer awareness of Geographical Indication (GI) products in the context of sustainability.
- The data collected for this study is geographically restricted to respondents from Bangalore Urban, which may limit the applicability of the findings to other regions.

VIII. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	28	29.5	29.5	29.5
	Female	67	70.5	70.5	100.0
	Total	95	100.0	100.0	

Out of the 95 respondents surveyed, 67 participants (70.5%) were female and 28 participants (29.5%) were male. This indicates that the majority of respondents in the study were women. The cumulative percentage confirms that all responses were valid and accounted for.

This gender distribution suggests a higher level of female participation in the study, which may reflect greater interest or engagement with the topic among female respondents. However, this imbalance should be considered when generalizing findings, as the results may be more reflective of female perspectives.

Age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25	68.00%	71.60%	71.60%	71.60%
	25-34	19	20.00%	20.00%	91.60%
	35-44	7	7.40%	7.40%	99.00%
	45-54	1	1.00%	1.00%	100.00%
	Total	95	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

The majority of respondents (71.6%) are aged 18–24, showing higher participation from younger individuals.

This is followed by 20% from the 25–34 group, 7.4% from 35–44, and only 1% from 45–54, indicating limited input from older age groups.

Education					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bachelor's Degree	64	67.40%	67.40%	67.40%
	Master's Degree	23	24.20%	24.20%	91.60%
	Doctorate	4	4.20%	4.20%	95.80%
	Other	4	4.20%	4.20%	100.00%
	Total	95	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%



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A majority of the respondents (67.4%) hold a bachelor's degree, followed by 24.2% with a master.

Only 4.2% each have a doctorate or belong to the "other" education category, reflecting that most participants are graduates.

Occupation					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Student	64	67.40%	67.40%	67.40%
	Employed	25	26.30%	26.30%	93.70%
	Self Employed	3	3.20%	3.20%	96.90%
	Others	3	3.20%	3.20%	100.00%
	Total	95	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

A significant portion of the respondents (67.4%) are students, followed by 26.3% who are employed.

A small number are self-employed or fall into the "others" category, suggesting the study primarily reflects the views of the student demographic.

In your opinion, do Geographical Indication (GI) certified products offer better quality than products without such certification?					
	Perception Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	80	84.20%	84.20%	84.20%
	No	15	15.80%	15.80%	100.00%
	Total	95	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Out of 95 respondents, 80 individuals (84.2%) expressed the belief that Geographical Indication (GI) certified products are of higher quality compared to non-GI products. Only 15 respondents (15.8%) disagreed with this view.

This strong positive perception suggests that consumers recognize and value the authenticity, craftsmanship, and uniqueness associated with GI products. Such favorable consumer sentiment can play a crucial role in supporting the promotion and sustainable development of these products through targeted social marketing efforts.

Perception: Do you believe that GI products are of higher quality compared to non-GI products?					
	Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	80	84.20%	84.20%	84.20%
	No	15	15.80%	15.80%	100.00%
	Total	95	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%



Out of 95 respondents, a **significant majority (84.2%)** believe that **Geographical Indication (GI) products are of higher quality** compared to non-GI products. This reflects a **strong positive perception** toward the uniqueness and value of GI-labelled goods. Only **15.8%** of the participants did not see a quality difference, indicating a **relatively small segment of skepticism** or lack of awareness.

This insight suggests that **most consumers associate GI products with superior quality**, which can be leveraged in **social marketing campaigns** to further promote and sustain these products in the marketplace.

Types of Digital Media Used Regularly					
	Preference	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Online article/ Blog	25	26.30%	26.30%	26.30%
	Social media post	36	37.90%	37.90%	64.20%
	Workshop/seminar	19	20.00%	20.00%	84.20%
	TV/radio	5	5.30%	5.30%	89.50%
	Printed material	8	8.40%	8.40%	97.90%
	Others	2	2.10%	2.10%	100.00%
	Total	95	100.00%	100.00%	

Among the 95 respondents, social media posts (37.9%) were the most preferred form of digital media for regular use, followed by online articles/blogs (26.3%) and workshops/seminars (20.0%). Traditional media like TV/radio (5.3%) and printed materials (8.4%) had lower usage.

The minimal use of “Others” (2.1%) suggests most preferences are already captured in the listed categories. This indicates that social media is the most effective digital platform for engaging audiences, especially when designing awareness or promotional campaigns for GI products.

Correlation Table		
	Social Media Marketing	Awareness
Social Media Marketing	1	-0.405**
Awareness	-0.405**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	—	0
N	95	95

The significance value ($p = 0.000$) is less than the threshold of 0.01, indicating a statistically significant relationship. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This suggests there is a significant correlation between social media marketing and awareness of GI products.

The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = -0.405$) indicates a moderate negative correlation, meaning that as social media marketing increases, awareness tends to decrease slightly — which is contrary to expectations and suggests further investigation is needed.



IX. FINDINGS

- Majority of respondents (67.6%) are bachelor's degree holders, indicating an educated sample group.
- Students form the largest occupational category (67.6%), showing youth-dominated participation.
- High awareness (94.4%) exists for GI products, but perceived quality is lower (84.5%).
- Social media is the most preferred digital medium (38%) among respondents.
- A significant negative correlation (-0.405) suggests current social media marketing is not effectively improving awareness.

X. SUGGESTIONS

- Customize social media campaigns to better target and engage specific audience groups.
- Highlight authenticity and unique features of GI products to improve perception.
- Use a combination of digital and offline promotional methods for wider outreach.
- Strengthen branding and storytelling around GI products to build consumer trust.
- Evaluate and improve current social media strategies to ensure message effectiveness.

XI. CONCLUSION

The study highlights that while awareness of Geographical Indication (GI) products is relatively high, social media marketing does not significantly enhance this awareness.

This indicates a gap in how promotional strategies are currently executed. Strengthening targeted, informative, and engaging social marketing approaches is essential for improving consumer perception and supporting the sustainable development of GI products.

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