

## Book Review

**Made only in India: Goods with Geographical Indications.** Anu Kapur. New Delhi: Routledge, 2016. xxi and 228 pp. maps, diagrams, tables, appendices, bibliography, and index. Rupees 895 cloth (ISBN: 978-1-138-66805-8).

In a world of scholarship, it is path-breakers who produce seminal works to open up new vistas of knowledge. In this context *Made Only in India* is the first book of its kind which deals with the theme of Geographical Indications within literature produced by geographers the world over. Confirming this fact are the lines in the Foreword of the book penned by Gopal Krishan, Professor Emeritus at Panjab University: “Challenging the conventional and bypassing the stereotype at every turn, Anu invariably manages to evoke a unique theme to work on with an ingeniously devised methodology” (p. ix). Undoubtedly, this new work in the world of scholarship by Anu is outstanding on two accounts: first, its deep intellectual contribution to the vexed geographic concept of place; and secondly for presenting in an ingenious way a new geography of India on the basis of goods bearing Geographical Indications.

Place like soul of the human, though invisible in the title, forms the heart of the *Made Only in India*. A place or a person, we often experience, attains an outstanding status due to one or more distinctive features and acquires visibility and fame: place in space and person in society. In this book Anu passionately utilises the distinctive goods originating, produced or manufactured in specific geographic locations help us in understanding how the totality of environment embodying natural and human

elements and their complex interplay shape captivating distinctive goods. This context elevates the role of place to new heights. The author notes that this dynamics of elements “creates an inexplicable yet intangible energy or force” which constitutes the “atma of the place” (p.xiii).

Beginning with an overview of the of the Geographical Indications (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 in the opening chapter, the author presents a detailed spatial and temporal pattern of the 199 goods which have earned the tag of Geographical Indications in India. Skilfully using illustrative maps, tables and three exhaustive appendices, the author masterly presents a spatio-temporal analysis of 199 goods registered at Chennai. In the last section of this introductory chapter, the author displays her creative genius with her concept ‘place goods’ a new phrase which expands the list of nomenclature used across the world for the goods originating in a geographic area with some distinctive properties. Justifying the new term, the author believes, “the phrase ‘place goods’ imparts a direct allegiance, meaningful association and strong affinity with place” (p15).

Creation, sustenance and dissolution a core and pervasive idea of Indian spiritual heritage clearly finds echo in author’s framing of the ideas of bonding, nurturing and destroying of place goods. Bonding and Nurturing, the two key chapters of

the book captivate the essence of author's unusual intellectual skill to explore the place in India. Together, they claim close to 50 per cent of the space of this eight chapter treatise. Spread over seventy eight pages and interspersed with twenty three simple maps, one encounters a new approach of producing spatial knowledge of a region. By using the vehicle of places goods like basmati rice, fruits, beverages, textiles, and handicrafts among others, the author takes you on an intellectually enriching and refreshing journey across the length and breadth of India. In the chapter bonding, one may find a compelling description of how bond develops between place and good and how place merges into the good and how good pays back to the place. Anu believes "geography literally moves into the good and flags place in myriad and tangible ways" (p.20). This chapter continues with the analysis of the ways triangular intersections among place, goods, and name evolves and gets spatially manifested.

In the subsequent chapter, the author analyses three historical periods on the basis of the origin of 199 goods and explains how different situations and demands nurtured the place goods. For instance, temples and traditions in ancient era, kings and court in the Mughal period and military and commercial demands in the British period were the varied forces which nourished place goods. The author often frames the interpretation in the timeless and fathomless ancient Indian spiritual philosophy, for example, elevating places to transcendental state in the temple era, bringing them down to terrestrial realm in the Mughal period, and treating them lifeless entities in the colonial period.

The fate of the place must be understood in the wider spatial and historical context is an important insight one gets from the next two chapters dealing with the issues of destruction and resurrection of the place goods. In "Destroying: place goods" the author observes that "by the nineteenth century the heyday of the place goods in India was nearing an end" (p.97). Supported by the historical material this chapter explains how British in a systematic way ruined India's traditional place goods of international repute. Resurrection chronicles the odyssey of law associated with place goods. Tracing the history from the Treaty of Paris in 1883 to the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIP) 1995, the author gives an interdisciplinary perspective on how global efforts originating in European world for intellectual property act slowly embraced Geographical Indications. Here the book makes a potent argument that globalization has in fact promoted place goods and awareness of local identity and has helped in the revival of place goods.

The main goal of Searching states the author" is not to take a magnifying glass and look out to list the place good, but the intention is to provide a clue into the enormity of diversity of all kinds that is India" (p. 153). Here, a relevant question raised is: why India with her astonishingly rich diversity has a meagre number of registered goods while European Union, not as large as India and with a less environmental diversity has 6000 protected Geographical Indications. She introduces few goods belonging to different ecologies across India with a potential to acquire the label of Geographical Indications. Notably,

this can be new fertile area of research for geographers in India.

The closing chapter is devoted to the challenges surrounding place goods and the author remarks “the concerns for India clearly are many and complex” (p.197) and explains with examples how homonyms, generics, imitations, ecological degradation are posing threat to place goods . The book concludes with a succinct summary of what has been conveyed in exuberant detail in the preceding seven chapters.

Overall, Made Only in India is a well researched book, with maps which are new and neat and it also carries a rich bibliography. The author succeeds in synchronising her conceptual and empirical universe. In addition, her superb ability to knit her thoughts like a rosary and gifted rhythmic expression make the reading delicious and enjoyable. A line from her rhythmic description of India reads,” in the north, the Himalayas string and stitch like a sweeping arc, while a long indented coastline is what binds India’s southern half” (p.142).

In spite of all the strengths, there is one thing I found missing especially while reading the two core chapters of the book. One wonders, what has gone into the decision not to include few images in the volume. Indeed, they would have added more power to her textual view of designs of the textiles and handicrafts or exotic places of India. Having said this, and above all, the book stands as an outstanding milepost in geographic literature.

Reading Made Only in India has left me with two profound influences. First, it has filled me with a strong urge to personally experience the richness and diversity of India. Secondly, it has stirred up my own thoughts and given me much stimulation for my own quest to demystify the aura surrounding a place. Crafted by creative geographer, this book will be insightful for scholars in social sciences, development studies, law, trade and history. To quote from the book’s foreword, “to appreciate the power of place, this book is the right place to start” (xii).

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