



Hybrid Gamosas

Why in the News?

Recently, the **Bangla Sahitya Sabha, Assam (BSSA)** felicitated guests at a function with “**hybrid gamosas**” made up of **Assamese Gamocha and Bengali Gamchas** cut in half and sewn together. The organization issued an apology after a controversy erupted.

- The BSSA is a newly formed **literary and cultural society** with the aim of serving as a **meeting point for Bengalis of Assam**.

What is Assamese Gamocha?

▪ About:

- Assamese Gamocha is a traditional handwoven cotton towel, which is an integral part of Assamese culture and tradition.
- It is a **rectangular piece of cloth**. The towel comes in various colors and designs, and the **most popular among them are the red and white ones with a Phulam known as the 'Gamocha design'**.
- The word 'Gamocha' is derived from the Assamese word '**Ga**' (**body**) and '**Mocha**' (**wipe**), which means a towel to wipe the body. The weavers use a traditional loom called the '**Taat Xaal**' to weave the towel.

▪ Recognition:

- The Assamese Gamocha has gained national and international recognition for its unique design and cultural significance. It was granted the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**, which is a recognition of its origin and unique characteristics.
- The GI tag ensures that the Gamocha is protected from imitations and helps to promote the local weavers and their traditional weaving techniques.

▪ Cultural Significance:

- The Assamese Gamocha is a **symbol of Assamese culture and tradition**. The towel is used in various ways in daily life, and each use has a specific cultural significance.
 - It is used as a **headscarf by women during traditional ceremonies and functions**, and it is a **sign of respect and honor when it is presented to someone as a gift**.
 - The Gamocha is also used during the **Bihu festival**, which is the most important festival of Assam. It is **draped around the neck of the Bihu dancers**, and it is an essential part of their costume. The towel is also used as a symbol of unity and brotherhood during the Bihu festival.



What is Bengali Gamcha?

- Bengali Gamcha traditional handwoven cotton towel, which is an integral part of Assamese culture and tradition. It is a **rectangular piece of cloth**. It comes in a **red-and-white chequered pattern**.



Q1. India enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 to comply with the obligations to (2018)

- (a) ILO
- (b) IMF
- (c) UNCTAD
- (d) WTO

Ans: (d)

- Geographical indications (GIs) are a type of intellectual property (IP).
- The World Trade Organisation (WTO) recognises intellectual property rights under TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) Agreement.
- Under Article 22(1) of the TRIPS Agreement, the GIs are defined as “indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a member, or a region or locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or other characteristics of the good is essentially attributable to its geographic origin”.
- The GIs act as source identifiers as well as quality indicators. GIs let consumers know that the goods come from an area where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the goods is essentially attributable to their geographic origin.
- Further, GIs as intellectual property rights enable relief from the acts of infringement and/or unfair competition. z Following TRIPS Agreement, the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 was passed by the GoI. The Act aims to provide protection by granting GI tags to agricultural goods, natural goods or manufactured goods or any goods of handicraft or goods of industry including food stuff.
- **Therefore, option (d) is the correct answer.**

Q2. Which of the following has/have been accorded ‘Geographical Indication’ status? (2015)

1. Banaras Brocades and Sarees
2. Rajasthani Daal-Bati-Churma
3. Tirupathi Laddu

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (c)

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