

Indian Traditional Textiles & Geographical Indications



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India, the country has the rich heritage of culture, tradition, art, music, literature, sculpture and exhibits 'Unity in Diversity' through variegated charms of festivals, rituals, art, music, costume and languages. Clothing plays an important role in the life of every individual since it is symbolic. It is a symbol to identify the groups of people region wise, culture wise and designates ranks, role, occupation, status, standard of living of a community at large. Clothing is not only the article used by people to cover but also a part and parcel of decoration that encircles, includes, painting, dyeing, printing, embroidery, hair dress, footwear and other accessories.

Indians are world famous for their magnificent workmanship and produce the most beautiful hand spun and hand woven textiles, yet preserved and exhibited in many of the known Indian as well as western museums.

Whilst the vast majority of the art is old and it has been handed down through the generations, it is continually refined and new knowledge developed over a period of time. These "traditional art" are an important part of our cultural identities. Traditional textile has played, and still plays, a vital role in the daily lives of the vast majority of people. This kind of Traditional art is essential to the food security and health of millions of people in the developing world, like India.

Need for Protection

But now these crafted items face a new challenge: the machine made imitation product. Cheaper and almost indistinguishable to end customer, imported machine made imitations are quickly becoming more successful than the originals because of cost advantage.

For example, if we take a case of Chinese silk, this is gradually flooding Indian markets giving the country's centuries-old hand loom industry a run for money. Cheap imitations and lack of government support have forced hundreds of artisans to abandon their traditional profession. India has several centers associated with silk weaving, but nowhere is the threat felt more than in this holy city on the banks of the Ganges River, where for centuries artisans have woven the intricate, multi-hued Banarsi sari that is an essential part of every Hindu bride's trousseau.

Rajnikant, director of the Human Welfare Association, a voluntary organization working with weavers in Varanasi, explains that until a decade ago the silk weaving industry provided livelihoods for about 700,000 people in this city. This has now been reduced to less than 250,000 people struggling on with vastly reduced incomes.

Customer preferences for the fine but vastly cheaper, machine-woven Chinese crepes that started flooding the Indian market sounded the death knell of the traditional handloom Banarasi sari. Only a handful of discerning buyers could tell the difference or were prepared to pay high prices for the genuine item.

It is a need of the day to protect these traditional arts in India from these kinds of

duplication in order to keep it alive.

Now this is exactly where the need of Geographical Indication (GI) arises.

Geographical Indication

Geographical Indication is an indication that is used to identify agricultural, natural or manufactured goods originating from a definite territory in India. It should have a special quality or characteristics or reputation based on climatic or production characteristics unique to the geographical location.

GI is a part of the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement signed under the WTO framework. Geographical Indications of Goods are defined as that aspect of industrial property which refers to the geographical indication referring to a country or to a place situated therein as being the country or place of origin of that product. Such a name conveys an assurance of quality and distinctiveness which is essentially attributable to the fact of its origin in that defined geographical locality, region or country. India geographically is having a rich heritage of products that could identify the origin of each such product, which are unique to each place, so much so that a similar product cannot be obtained from any other region. The absence of such a right being given can lead to a situation where in the commercial benefits which should have vested in a country is being "hijacked" by some other country, even within the country itself.

But, the most important thing is that the exploitation of a geographical indication needs to be accompanied by appropriate marketing strategies to guide and develop consumer perception of the good-place quality link attached to the geographical indication and securing consumer's loyalty. Many people belonging to traditional art supply chain tend to be more products oriented than market oriented. Pride of the product and loyalty to the traditional production technique may generate highly valuable product qualities, but it is definitely not a guarantee for a sound and successful sale strategy. Therefore, appropriate marketing strategies taking into account the tangible features of the final product as well as communication, pricing and distribution strategies are essential to the successful exploitation of a geographical indication.

Benefits of Geographical Indication

- a) It help producers to differentiate their products from competing products in the market
- b) It helps to build goodwill of products in market
- c) It can fetches a premium price for the protected product
- d) It boosts exports of Indian geographical indications by providing legal protection
- e) It promotes economic prosperity of producers
- f) It enables seeking legal protection in other WTO member countries
- g) For consumers, GIs act as a Signaling device, which helps them to identify genuine quality-products
- h) It also protects consumers against counterfeit products

Most products bearing a geographical indication enjoy a higher retail price than that of similar products as consumers are ready to pay premium price for origin guaranteed

products. The premium then pays for the process and production commitments and the quality signal to consumers. It also pays for the renown of the product. Geographical indications create value, which is expressed in a variety of ways. For example, the registration of a geographical indication has been shown to increase production output. Also, the certainty afforded by legal protection creates opportunities for investment in a product and region.

Traditional Textile and Geographical Indication

India is very rich in case of traditional textile and we have innumerable techniques of making fabric along with fabric value addition techniques like painting, dyeing, printing, and embroidery. Below Table shows the status of GI registration of Traditional Textile of India. Though good numbers of GI certificates are issued to textile products, but still large numbers of products are not having the GI protections. Most producers and artisans of traditional and unique products in India lack the resources for seeking GI registration. Left to themselves, the artisans and farmers would not be able to take advantage of legal protection under GI framework. In order to save all those National Heritage along with interest of younger generations, it very important to create the awareness of GI amongst the producers of this incomparable art. Pochampally Sarees, Kota Doria, Chanderi Sarees, Banarasi Sarees, Sanganeri Hand Block Printing are the few examples of traditional textile which got benefited from GI registration.

Status of GI of Traditional Textiles

Sr.	Product Category	Status of GI
1	Chinai	Application not filed
2	Mochi	Application not filed
3	Saurashtra style a. Kathipa b. Figurative work of Kanbi c. Ganesh Hangings	Application not filed
4	Kasuti	Registered
5	Banjara	Application not filed
6	Katab	Application not filed
7	Pipli	Registered
8	Ajrakh	Application not filed
9	Sanganeri	Registered
10	Leheria	Application not filed
11	Mata- Ni- Pachedi	Application not filed
12	RoghanWork	Application not filed
13	Bandhani	Application not filed
14	Mashruwork	Application not filed
15	Patola Sarees	Application not filed
16	AgraSarees	Study & Documentation in process
17	Arani Sarees	Registered
18	Balarampuram Sarees	Registered
19	Banarasi Sarees	Registered
20	Bhagalpur Silk	Study & Documentation completed; Application filed
21	Bhavani Jamakkalam	Registered

22	Bihuan	Application not filed
23	Chumba Rumals	Registered
24	Chanderi Fabric	Registered
25	Chikan Work	Registered
26	Chindamangalam Handlooms	Study & Documentation in Process
27	Dharmavaram Silks	Application filed
28	Farukhabad Cotton Prints	Study & Documentation in Process
29	Gadwal Sarees	Registered
30	Guledkadh Khan	Study & Documentation Completed; Application Filed
31	Ilkal Sarees	Registered
32	Kancheepuram Sarees	Registered
33	Kani Shawl	Registered
34	Kannur Handlooms	Study & Documentation in Process
35	Kanthas	Application not filed
36	Kasargod Sarees	Study & Documentation Completed; Application Filed
37	Kashmir Sozani Craft	Registered
38	Kinkhab Brocade	Application not filed
39	Kota Doria	Registered
40	Kotpad Handloom Fabric	Registered
41	Kovai Cora Cotton	Registered
42	Kullu Shawls	Registered
43	Kuthampully Sarees	Registered
44	Lucknow Zardosi	Study & Documentation in Process
45	Machilipatnam Kalamkari	Registered
46	Madurai Sungudi	Registered
47	Maunath Banjam Sarees	Study & Documentation in Process
48	Molakalmuru Sarees	Registered
49	Muga Silk	Registered
50	Mysore Silk	Registered
51	Nakshi Kantha	Registered
52	Navalgundi Sarees	Registered
53	Orissa Ikat	Registered
54	Paithani Sarees	Registered
55	Pashmina Sahwls	Registered
56	Phulkari	Registered
57	Pochampalli Sarees	Registered
58	Saktapar Sarees	Application not Filed
59	Salem Fabric	Registered
60	Salem Silk	Registered
61	Solapur Chaddar	Registered
62	Solapur Terry Towels	Registered
63	Srikalahasti Kalamkari	Registered
64	Udupi Sarees	Study & Documentation in Process
65	Uppada Jamdani Sarees	Registered
66	Tangaliya Shawl	Registered
67	Santipore Saree	Registered
68	Cannanore Home Furnishings	Registered

69	Balaramapuram Sarees and Fine Cotton Fabrics	Registered
70	Kinnauri Shawl	Registered
71	Kasaragod Sarees	Registered
72	Sandur Lambani Embroidery	Registered
73	Handmade Carpet of Bhadohi	Registered
74	Champa Silk Saree and Fabrics	Registered
75	Surat Zari Craft	Registered
76	Khandua Saree and Fabrics	Registered
77	Venkatagiri Sarees	Registered
78	Kachchh Shawls	Registered
79	Baluchari Saree	Registered
80	Dhaniakhali Saree	Registered
81	Chendamangalam Dhoties & Set Mundu	Registered
82	Gopalpur Tussar Fabrics	Registered
83	Maheshwar Sarees & Fabrics	Registered
84	Dhalapathar Parda & Fabrics	Registered
85	Sambalpuri Bandha Saree & Fabrics	Registered
86	Bomkai Saree & Fabrics	Registered
87	Habaspuri Saree & Fabrics	Registered
88	Berhampur Patta (Phoda Kumbha) Saree & Joda	Registered

Case Study on Pochampally Sarees

Pochampally, located near the capital city of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, is probably 'one of the most flourishing center of modern handloom industry and producing ikat saris on a large scale. Pochampally Ikat tie-and-dye sari is the first traditional Indian craft to won protection in the Geographical Indications category. This will protect the



Picture 1: Pochampally Sari

Pochampally handloom sari from unfair competition and counterfeit. An estimated one hundred thousand weavers in Andhra Pradesh are getting benefited from the granting of Intellectual Property Rights to the traditional tie-and-dye fabric, which had seen falling demand due to competition from cheaper fabrics copying from their design.

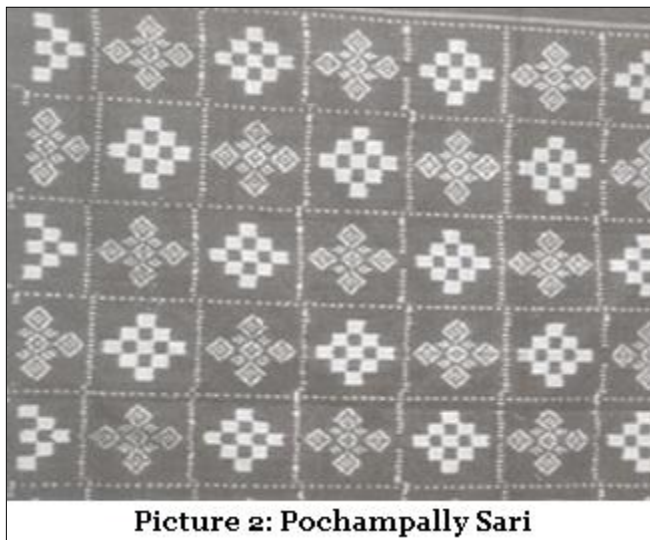
Large mills were widely copying the Pochampally Ikat, producing at lower cost. As it affected weavers' economic interests, they approached Govt. of Andhra Pradesh for a possible solution.

Pochampally Handloom Weavers' Co Op. Society Ltd' and "Pochampally Handloom Tie & Dye Silk Saris Manufactures Association" had applied together for G.I Registration under G.I Act, 1999 on 15th December, 2003. The Registration certificate was issued on 31st December, 2004. Presently, about 40,000 small household units weave the hand

loom with traditional design.

Post Registration Impact

The preliminary trend shows that the Pochampally cluster has been able to receive the benefits in terms of rise in productivity, disposable income, output and employment. The earnings of the cotton weavers increased 54 per cent and that of the silk weavers increased 27 per cent over the two years that GI protection was in force, according to a study by the Textiles Committee, a body comprising government officials and private sector representatives. This was at a time when incomes of artisans in other clusters were declining.



Picture 2: Pochampally Sari

Following the grant of GI to Pochampally, the weavers have formed an association and a group of seven weavers have registered a company called Pochampally Ikat Weavers Pvt Ltd. They have a brand name called Chikat which means a Pochampally weave and Ikat as the north identifies it. Each weaver is provided with a distinctive weaver code (DWC) for monitoring the quality of the product. Chikat will be available in premier retail outlets. Moreover, the entire range of products will be available after a thorough grading and product tag.

Customer awareness is increased due to media publicity and discussions on the G.I Registration: increase in the customer base. There has been a 20% increase in Customer base.

For example, the upside of the Pochampally Ikat came from increased awareness after an order from Air India, which bought Pochampally saris for its air crew.

Case Study on Kota Doria

The recognizing characteristic of Kota Doria is the square-check pattern, locally known as the 'khat' that is present in the base fabric besides any other type of value addition by weaving or any other process such as embroidery, printing, painting, dyeing etc. The Khats are made in the fabric so skillfully that the fabric becomes transparent.

Kota Doria fabric being produced in the region is produced on very traditional and age-old pit looms with a throw shuttle technique. All the processes involved from yarn to fabric stage are also carried out manually.

For Kota Doria, dyeing of both cotton and silk yarn is carried out for the readied warp as well as the hanks for the weft. The dyeing process is completely manual presently.

Post Registration Impact



Picture 3: Kota Doria

The extent to which a GI stamp helps a producer is evident from a study done by the Rajasthan Chamber of Commerce on Kota Doria. The study found that the GI label tripled earnings of weavers in the area. About 70 per cent weavers knew the benefits of being GI-registered and were enthusiastically weaving in the Kota Doria GI logo on the clothes made by them. Fake Doria sellers are now forced to sell under names like Kota Cotton. Traditional weavers were now back in business after more than a decade of migration. The study found that Kota Doria was

being sourced out through top designers and big market chains like Fab India. Weavers said they did not have enough manpower to meet the demand as Kota Doria was now being used for not just saris but all kinds of clothes, mostly in jari and tussar, and priced between Rs 7,000 and 40,000.

Case Study on Chanderi Sarees

Chanderi, 230 km from Bhopal, is famous for its brocades and muslins made by the traditional weavers. At present, there are about 11,000 weavers. The dexterity of the weavers, showcased in both hand-woven silk and cotton saris is hard to match. The delicacy, artistry and sheer majesty of the Chanderi saris is a secret passed down from generation to generation. Chanderi sari colours always show a preference for harmony between the border and the body of the saris.



Picture 4: Kota Doria

The motifs of the saris are mainly drawn from nature and human beings.

The weaving was on a drastic decline for quite some time due to financial constraints until the government took certain steps. The intervention was mainly through the Directorate of Handlooms and efforts did check the decline. The weavers have formed cooperative societies which provide assistance to them in terms of working capital, raw material and marketing.

Post Registration Impact

Chanderi saris have now joined the elite club of Geographical Indications Registry which gives exclusive rights to the weavers of Chanderi to use the coveted title. Major apparel companies are making a beeline to place orders for Chanderi saris.



Picture 5: Chanderi Sari

- Fab India, which had placed orders for 50 lakh pieces of these saris last year, is planning to double the orders.
- Akea, a trading company, has also expressed its intention to tie up with these weavers and is evaluating the samples.

Chanderi saris are on the verge of becoming a brand. The crisp, transparent nature of the fabric and hand-woven buttis will be projected as its unique selling proposition.

It is also in the process of creating a logo. In order to protect the products from imitation the website will publish the detailed data of the products manufactured from Chanderi. This will prevent cheap imitation by copycats. Apart from the brand building exercise, the Chanderi cooperatives have developed certain quality norms which should be followed by the weavers. These will be reviewed from time to time. The cooperatives will also hold exhibitions and

workshops in different parts of the country to create awareness about the product.

Case Study on Banarasi Sarees

The Banarasi Brocades and Saris are known for their intricate designs. The skilful hands of the Banarasi weavers not only produce Brocades and Saris, they also create amazing products of dress materials, bed linens and home textiles. These traditional treasures of the country have always been subjected to infringement by the domestic producers as well as from imports.

Banarasi Saris: Present Tense, Future?

The first jolt to the Banarasi saris came when power looms started replacing handlooms.

Earlier, artists used to have designs with original gold and silver thread and depending upon the design and intricate work involved, a normal sari took 15 days to one month. The advent of power looms changed the scene. Today, almost all the designs of hand loom are copied onto the powerloom.



Picture 6: Banarasi Sari

Prices also fell if the real silk or gold and silver thread was replaced by cheaper duplicate varieties. As a result, the Chinese and Korean silk flooded the market. This also led to the closure of many hand looms and large-scale unemployment. During the last three years about 50% of weavers have left the trade.

Post Registration Impact

The GI protection provided through the registration has not only recognized its uniqueness and distinctive style of its own, but also cherishes the growth of production in Indian as well as export market. GI registration of Banarasi silk was used to help save 250,000 jobs.

Case Study on Sangneri Hand Block Printing

Sanganeri Hand Block Printed textile products will now be protected as a geographical indication under Geographical Indication



Picture 7: Sangneri Hand Block Printing

of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. Almost 500 year old, Sangneri hand block printed textiles, are characterized by delicate floral motifs in multiple colours. The Geographical Indication (GI) certificate allows the producers of the Sangner region to take legal action against the infringement of the name of their unique product. No other hand block and screen printed textiles produced in other regions or countries can now be sold in India under the tag of Sangneri print.



Picture 8: Sangneri Hand Block Printing

The application seeking GI registration of Sangneri printed textiles was filed in December 2008. Subsequently the GI Registry undertook a rigorous process of scrutiny to ascertain the unique properties and reputation of Sangneri hand block printed textiles and their link with the area of production in Rajasthan. GI certificate for Sangneri hand block printed textiles was granted on 19 March 2010. The GI certificate has not only recognized uniqueness and distinct identity of Sangneri hand block prints in dress material, but also in related products such as home furnishing manufactured in the traditional manner by the community of Chhipas.

DFID-supported UNCTAD's India project through its partners - Indian Merchants' Chamber Mumbai, Rajasthan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (RCCI) and Rural Non-Farm Development Agency (RUDA) of Government of Rajasthan - worked closely with the artisan community in Sanganer for seeking the GI certificate.

With suitable marketing initiatives, the GI tag can commercially benefit thousands of artisans, traders and exporters of Sanganeri print textiles. It increases the visibility of the product, both domestic as well as international. Traditionally, the genius of the Sanganeri artisans and their print designs lay in their understanding of patterning fabric surfaces and the use of space. The traditional Jaipur buti, usually a floral or animal motif, was carved on to a small square wooden block. The carved block was pressed on to a piece of padded fabric dipped into a vegetable dye and the motif was then printed on to the cloth at carefully measured intervals. The same process was repeated with different blocks and colours, resulting in beautiful patterns of astonishing regularity. The traditional process of hand block printing has changed only marginally over the years.

GI certificate combined with brand building and appropriate marketing initiatives can improve incomes of the producers. Increase in visibility may lead to increase in both demand and price of Sanganeri printed textiles, which provides direct and indirect employment to about six thousand persons.

Challenges Faced

Most potential products are in rural areas which results in limited awareness. In addition there are stakeholders with little or knowledge. In many cases the producers are either socially or economically backward. These above factors result in lack of capacity to understand the importance of GI protection and seek GI registration.

Ways to Overcome the Challenges

- Awareness creation
- Producer mobilization
- Involvement of multiple agencies
- Facilitating consortium formation
- Documenting nexus between uniqueness and geography reliance on experts and their interaction with producers
- Assistance in preparing, filing the legal documents and in the registration process

Conclusion

Handicrafts play an important role in preserving the rich heritage of any country. Consumers buy handicrafts because they like to feel connected with indigenous traditions and cultures in a global and increasingly commoditized world. Artisans and craftsmen indulge in this trade not just because of the lure of money, they do it as it connects them with their past, their tradition and helps them preserve their identity in today's rapidly changing world. Across the globe, handicraft industries give an additional employment and raise the level of living for both, the rural and urban population.

Indian Handicraft industry serves an important role in the development of economy of the rural masses and earns substantial foreign exchange.

It is undisputed that successful geographical indications could bring a number of economic and social benefits to developing countries. However, the value and benefits of a geographical indication will depend on the way it is exploited, marketed and policed.

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