



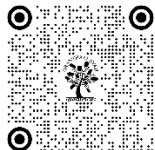


CRAFTING IDENTITY: GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS AND THE LEGACY OF INDIAN ARTISANAL CRAFTS

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ABSTRACT

India's art and craft, which represent its culture, customs, and social ideals, are its greatest attributes. One of India's largest and oldest sectors is the handicraft sector which includes handicrafts and handloom. About 7 million artisans are employed by it, and it is a significant provider of artisanal crafts to international markets. A significant portion of our economy's decentralised/unorganised sector is made up of handicrafts. Due to strong market demand throughout time, what began as a part-time hobby in rural areas has now developed into a thriving commercial sector. Handicrafts and handloom have enormous potential since they are essential to the continued existence of millions of current artisans dispersed throughout the nation as well as an ever-growing number of new participants in the craft industry. Handicrafts and handloom currently provide a significant contribution to export and job creation. Geographical indication (GI) has become a significant type of intellectual property rights in the Indian environment in recent times. It is an effective tool for protecting and valuing both the traditional knowledge that goes along with exclusive items and their commercial potential. The handicraft business may benefit greatly from GI, but its interests are compromised if it is only viewed as intellectual property. In India, handicrafts make up more than half of 542 GI-registered products, with agricultural products coming in second followed by manufactured products and foodstuffs. The present study throws light on the current status of diverse GI Tagged Handicrafts and handloom of the Indian states.

In the context of Indian handicrafts, this research article examines the complex interrelationships among tradition, identity, and the preservation of cultural heritage via the lens of Geographical Indications (GIs). With an emphasis on the rich tapestry of India's varied cultural landscape, the paper explores how Geographical Indications (GIs) function as a vital mechanism for preserving traditional craftsmanship associated with certain geographical locations.

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Keywords: Handicraft, Geographical Indications, Unorganized, Trips, Cultural Identity

1. INTRODUCTION

Items crafted by artisans, whether solely by hand or with the assistance of hand-tools or machinery, as long as the artisan's manual effort remains the primary element in the final product, encompassing handicraft and handloom creations. (According to UNESCO and International Trade Centre (ITC), Final report of the International Symposium on Crafts and the International Market: Trade and Customs Codification, 1997)

India has an extensive and diverse heritage of handicrafts spanning numerous millennia. Elaborate sculptures, intricate jewellery, handloom, and everyday use objects are representations of the rich cultural history and artistic ingenuity of the country. The art of handicraft has been practised from ancient times by craftsmen across the Indian continent from generation to generation. The history of Indian

handicrafts is as old as 5000 years, evolving and changing with time and the needs of the society.

The artisanal products are famous worldwide for their beauty, quality, artistic excellence and cultural significance. The Indian handicrafts and handlooms are unique in their making playing a significant role in the country's society and history. During antiquity, these artisanal products were transported along the Silk Road to regions such as Europe, Africa, and West Asia. Presently, they continue to enjoy significant popularity among international tourists. The traditional handicrafts of India have demonstrated longevity and continue to be esteemed as highly complicated artistic expressions within global historical contexts. A multitude of artists within the local community diligently dedicate their time and effort to produce exceptional works of craftsmanship. The Indian crafts extensively contribute to the nation's economy, preservation of cultural heritage, employing rural and semi-urban artisans and earning foreign exchange. There is a dire need to preserve and protect Indian handicrafts against the machine-made goods and cheap replicas which have flooded the market creating unfavourable conditions for artisans who put in their sweat and labour in creating exquisite pieces of art.

The practise of creating handicrafts serves as a means of narrative expression. Craftspeople integrate several components of cultural heritage, including concepts, structures, materials, and manufacturing techniques, alongside their personal convictions, values, aesthetic preferences, and individual essence, when creating their final artefacts. Craftspeople, commonly known as local craftsmen, possess specialised expertise in the selection and use of materials, as well as the many techniques employed in the production process. These individuals possess a high level of expertise and have undergone extensive training in a specialised subject that necessitates the use of fine motor skills. They mostly utilise their manual dexterity and labour-intensive approaches. The quantity of implicit information included throughout needlework exhibits an annual growth trajectory, concomitant with the development of associated proficiencies.

Indian handicrafts represent the manifestation of the nation's opulent heritage and multifaceted cultural tapestry. Indian painters demonstrate a rich heritage rooted in their land, culture, and mythology, as they create unique artworks that embody intricate designs, ensuring its transmission to future generations employing their skills. In contemporary times, the Indian handicraft industry has assumed a pivotal role in the economic landscape, exerting a profound influence on the livelihoods of a substantial populace across the nation. As conscientious and patriotic individuals residing in an exceptional country, it is incumbent upon us to acquire knowledge, save, disseminate, and commemorate a wide array of artistic techniques and traditions.

The artistic traditions of each state in India are indicative of the diverse influences exerted by several empires. Crafts have been deeply ingrained as cultural and traditional practices within rural communities for generations. Throughout history, several handicrafts originating from India, such as Madhubani Paintings of Bihar, Rajasthan Blue Pottery, Uttar Pradesh Brass Artwork, and Paper mache of Jammu and Kashmir, have consistently preserved their unique and distinctive qualities. Indian handicrafts possess a captivating allure that embodies the distinctiveness, aesthetic charm, prestige, and sophistication of Indian culture.

Presented below is a comprehensive map showcasing the diverse array of Indian handicrafts, which intricately capture the craftsmanship and artistic traditions prevalent across several states and regions.

Figure 1

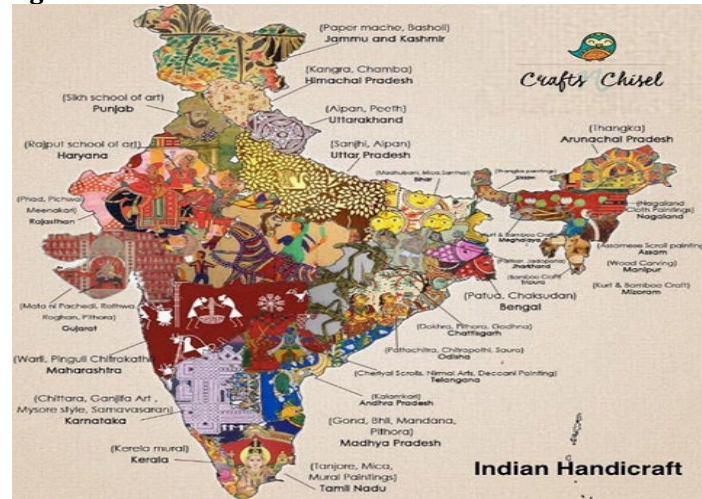


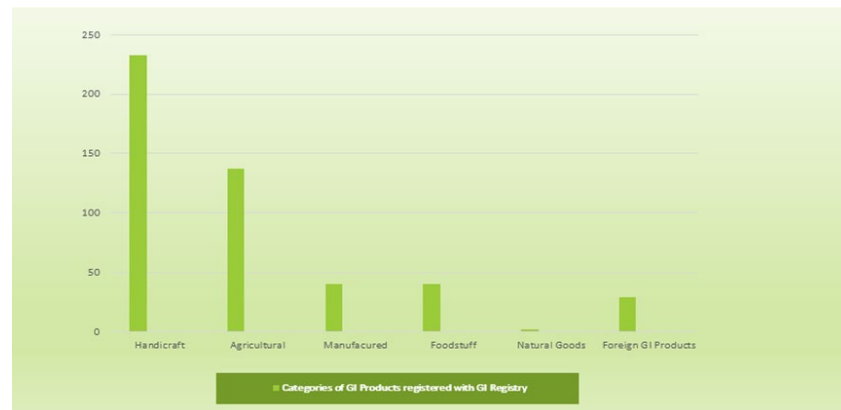
Figure 1 Source Agrawal, 2019

These exclusive handicrafts and handlooms need legal protection to preserve the cultural identity of the products, to recognise the hard work of artisans and to protect the integrity of the artisanal products. This calls for laws in the form of Geographical Indications to strengthen the position of artisans and safeguard their economic interests.

Geographical Indications and Handicrafts:

A geographical indication (GI) refers to a distinctive symbol employed on items that originate from a particular geographical location and exhibit distinct attributes or a reputation attributable to that specific origin. For a geographical indication (GI) to fulfil its intended purpose, it is imperative that a sign effectively denotes the origin of a certain product.

Furthermore, it is imperative that the attributes, traits, or standing of the product are primarily attributed to its geographical origin. The attributes of a product are contingent upon the geographical location of its manufacture, hence establishing a discernible correlation between the product and its specific origin. As of 2023, there are 542 Geographical Indications which cover a variety of products ranging from agricultural products, foodstuffs, wine and spirit drinks, handicrafts, and manufactured products.



According to Art 22(1) of the TRIPS Agreement, GI means, “An indication that a good originated in a WTO member country, or in a region or locality within that

country where the good's quality, reputation, or other attributes are primarily due to its geographic origin”.

As per Sec 2(1) (e) of the Geographical Indications of Goods(Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 states “Geographical Indication” as follows: An indication regarding goods that designates them as agricultural, natural, manufactured, or originating in a county, region, or locality within that territory, where a particular quality, reputation, or other characteristic of the goods is primarily attributed to its geographical origin, or, in the case of manufactured goods, where one of the activities of either the production or of processing or preparations of the goods concerned takes place in such territory, region, or locality, as the case may be.”

Any product registered under the GI Act, 1999 is protected against infringement and the producer or the authorized user is given a right to seek the remedies given under the Act. There are 19187 authorised users as of July 2023 according to the GI Registry, Chennai.



Handicraft and Handlooms are given GI Tag or Status by the Geographical Indications Registry which has its office in Chennai and falls under Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, a central government agency in India responsible for promoting and regulating industrial growth, trade, and investment in the country. DPIIT operates under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Handicrafts and Handlooms given GI Tag:

Geographical Indication (GI) tags are essential for safeguarding the distinctive cultural identity of handicrafts and handlooms, ensuring their validity, and fostering the economic growth of weavers and craftsmen. Traditional crafts like handicrafts and handlooms sometimes have unique features and attributes unique to their particular geographic origins. Out of the 542 registered Geographical Indications in India, the majority falls in the handicraft and handloom category which gives a clear indication of the importance of the craft in our culturally enriched country.

Granting GI Status to Artisanal Crafts has certain benefits such as listed below:

1) Financial Empowerment

By designating handicrafts and handlooms as authentic goods from certain areas recognised for their excellence and artistry, the GI tag raises their market worth. With greater access to local and international markets made possible by this recognition, artists and weavers may earn more money and raise their level of living.

2) Encouragement of Eco-Friendly Methods

A large number of handicrafts and handlooms are made with natural materials and sustainable methods, satisfying the demands of contemporary consumers for environmentally friendly goods. The GI badge draws attention to these sustainable features, appealing to eco-aware customers and supporting the objectives of sustainable development.

3) Tourism and Cultural Exchange

Handicrafts and handlooms with GI tags serve as cultural ambassadors for their respective regions, drawing travellers eager to learn about and experience regional customs and handicrafts firsthand.

4) Safeguarding Cultural Legacy

Handlooms and other handicrafts are integral parts of the cultural legacy of the areas in which they are produced, embodying generations' worth of artisanry and customs dating back hundreds of years. By guaranteeing that these crafts are acknowledged and appreciated for their distinctive methods, patterns, and materials, the GI badge protects their cultural value.

5) Defence Against Copying and Abuse

GI classification provides legal protection against unauthorised imitation and exploitation of handicrafts and handlooms. By preventing lower-quality goods from appearing on the market under the same label, this protection helps to preserve the integrity and reputation of real artisans and weavers.

The GI tag for handicrafts and handlooms is an effective instrument for sustainable development, economic empowerment, and cultural preservation. It honours the variety of India's rich cultural legacy while making sure that the talented weavers and artisans who preserve these customs receive just compensation.

State Wise List of Handicraft and Handloom GI Tags in India:

A list of Geographical Indication Tags in different states and Union Territories of India are given below:

S.No.	Geographical Indication
List of GI Tags in Andhra Pradesh	
1	Srikalahasti Kalamkari
2	Kondapalli Bommalu
3	Machilipatnam Kalamkari
4	Budiiti Bell & Brass Craft
5	Andhra Pradesh Leather Puppetry
6	Uppada Jamdani Sarees
7	Venkatagiri Sarees
8	Bobbili Veena
9	Mangalagiri Sarees and Fabrics
10	Udayagiri Wooden Cutlery
11	Durgi Stone Carvings
12	Etikoppaka Toys
13	Allagadda Stone Carvings
14	Dharmavaram Handloom Pattu Sarees and Paavadas
List of GI Tags in Arunachal Pradesh	
1	Idu Mishmi Textile

List Of GI Tags in Assam	
1	Muga Silk of Assam (Logo)
2	Muga Silk
3	Gamosa
List Of GI Tags in Bihar	
1	Madhubani paintings Handicraft
2	Applique – Khatwa Patch Work of Bihar
3	Sujini Embroidery Work of Bihar Handicraft
4	Bhagalpur Silk Handicraft
5	Sikki Grass Products
6	Khatwa Patch Work Logo
7	Sikki Grass Products Logo
8	Sujini Embroidery Logo
9	Bhagalpuri Zardalu
List Of GI Tags in Chattisgarh	
1	Bastar Dhokra
2	Bastar Wooden Craft
3	Bastar Iron Craft
4	Bastar Dhokra (Logo)
5	Champa Silk Saree and Fabrics
List Of GI Tags in Gujarat	
1	Agates of Cambay
2	Agates of Cambay – Logo
3	Jamnagari Bandhani
4	Kachchh shawls
5	Kutch embroidery
6	Kutch embroidery – Logo
7	Patan patola
8	Rajkot patola
9	Sankheda furniture
10	Sankheda furniture – Logo
11	Surat zari craft

12	Tangaliya shawl
List Of GI Tags in Haryana	
1	Phulkari
List Of GI Tags in Himachal Pradesh	
1	Kullu ShawL (Logo)
2	Chamba Rumal
3	Kinnauri Shawl
4	Kullu Shawl
5	Kangra Paintings
List Of GI Tags in Jammu and Kashmir	
1	Kani shawl
2	Kashmiri hand-knotted carpet
3	Kashmir paper mache
4	Kashmir Pashmina
5	Kashmir sozani craft
6	Kashmir walnut wood carving
7	Khatamband
List Of GI Tags in Jharkhand	
1	Sohrai – Khovar paintings
List Of GI Tags in Karnataka	
1	Kinnal Toys
2	Mysore silk
3	Bidriware
4	Channapatna Toys & Dolls
5	Mysore Rosewood Inlay
6	Kasuti Embroidery
7	Mysore Traditional Paintings
8	Ilkal saree
9	Navalgund Durries
10	Karnataka Bronze Ware
11	Molakalmuru Sarees

12	Ganjifa Cards of Mysore
13	Karnataka Bronzeware Logo
14	Ganjifa Cards of Mysore Logo
15	Navalgund Durries Logo
16	Guledgudd Khana
17	Udupi Sarees
18	Mysore Silk Logo
19	Kolhapuri Chappal
20	Sandur Lambani Embroidery
List Of GI Tags in Kerala	
1	Chanderi Fabric
2	Leather Toys of Indore
3	Bagh Prints of Madhya Pradesh
List Of GI Tags in Madhya Pradesh	
4	Bell Metal Ware of Datia and Tikamgarh (Logo)
5	Bell Metal Ware of Datia and Tikamgarh
6	Chanderi Sarees
7	Leather Toys of Indore Logo
8	Maheshwar Sarees & Fabrics
List Of GI Tags in Madhya Pradesh	
1	Bagh prints of Madhya Pradesh
2	Bagh prints of Madhya Pradesh – Logo
3	Bell metal wares of Datia and Tikamgarh
4	Bell metal wares of Datia and Tikamgarh – Logo
5	Chanderi fabric
6	Leather toys of Indore
7	Leather toys of Indore – Logo
8	Maheshwar sarees and fabrics
List Of GI Tags in Maharashtra	
1	Solapuri Chaddar
2	Solapur Terry Towel
3	Puneri Pagadi
4	Paithani Sarees and Fabrics

5	Warli Paintings
6	Karvath Kati Sarees and Fabrics
7	Kolhapuri Chappal
List Of GI Tags in Manipur	
1	Shaphee Lanphee
2	Wangkhei Phee
3	Moirang Phee
List Of GI Tags in Meghalya	
	None
List Of GI Tags in Maharashtra	
1	Solapuri Chaddar
2	Solapur Terry Towel
3	Puneri Pagadi
4	Paithani Sarees and Fabrics
5	Warli Paintings
6	Karvath Kati Sarees and Fabrics
7	Kolhapuri Chappal
List Of GI Tags in Manipur	
1	Shaphee Lanphee
2	Wangkhei Phee
3	Moirang Phee
List Of GI Tags in Meghalya	
	None
List Of GI Tags in Mizoram	
1	Hmaram
2	Mizo Puanchei
3	Ngotekherh
4	Pawndum
5	Tawla Lohan
List Of GI Tags in Nagaland	

List Of GI Tags in Nagaland	
1	Chakhesang shawl
List Of GI Tags in Odisha	
1	Kotpad Handloom fabric
2	Orissa Ikat
3	Konark Stone Carving
4	Pattachitra
5	Pipili Applique Work
6	Khandua Saree and Fabrics
7	Gopalpur Tussar Fabrics
8	Dhalapathar Parda & Fabrics
9	Sambalpuri Bandha Saree & Fabrics
10	Bomkai Saree & Fabrics
11	Habaspuri Saree & Fabrics
12	Berhampur Patta (Phoda Kumbha) Saree & Joda
13	Odisha Pattachitra (Logo)
14	Araku Valley Arabica Coffee
List Of GI Tags in Pudicherry	
1	Tirukanur Papier Mache craft
2	Villianur terracotta works
List Of GI Tags in Rajasthan	
1	Kota Doria
2	Blue Pottery of Jaipur
3	Molela Clay Work
4	Kathputlis of Rajasthan
5	Sanganeri Hand Block Printing
6	Kota Doria (Logo)
7	Phulkari*
8	Bagru Hand Block Print
9	Thewa Art Work
10	Molela Clay Work of Rajasthan Logo

11	Blue Pottery of Jaipur Logo
12	Kathputlis of Rajasthan Logo
13	Pokaran Pottery
List Of GI Tags in Sikkim	
	None
List Of GI Tags in Tamilnadu	
1	Salem Fabric
2	Kancheepuram Silk
3	Bhavani Jamakkalam
4	Madurai Sungudi
5	Thanjavur Paintings
6	Temple Jewellery of Nagercoil
7	Thanjavur Art Plate
8	Salem silk
9	Kovai Cora Cotton
10	Arani Silk Handicraft
11	Thanjavur Doll Handicraft
12	Pattamadai Pai ('Pattamadai Mat')
13	Nachiarkoil Kuthuvilakku ('Nachiarkoil Lamp')
14	Chettinad Kottan
15	Toda Embroidery
16	Thanjavur Veenai
17	Thanjavur Art Plate Logo
18	Swamimalai Bronze Icons Logo
19	Temple Jewellery of Nagercoil Logo
20	Mahabalipuram Stone Sculpture
21	Thirubuvanam Silk Sarees
22	Kandangi Sarees
23	Thanjavur Pith Works
24	Arumbavur Wood Carvings
25	Kallakurichi wood carvings

List Of GI Tags in Telengana	
1	Pochampally Ikat
2	Silver Filigree of Karimnagar
3	Nirmal toys and craft
4	Nirmal furniture
5	Nirmal paintings
6	Gadwal Sarees
7	Cheriyal Paintings
8	Pembarthi Metal Craft
9	Siddipet Gollabhama
10	Narayanpet Handloom Sarees
11	Pochampally Ikat Logo
12	Adilabad Dokra
13	Warangal Durries
List Of GI Tags in Tripura	
	None
List Of GI Tags in Uttar Pradesh	
1	Agra durrie
2	Banaras brocades and sarees
3	Banaras brocades and sarees – Logos
4	Banaras gulabi meenakari craft
5	Banaras metal repousse craft
6	Farrukhabad prints
7	Firozabad glass
8	Ghazipur wall hanging
9	Gorakhpur terracotta
10	Handmade carpet of Bhadohi
11	Kanpur saddlery
12	Khurja pottery
13	Lucknow chikan craft
14	Lucknow zardozi
15	Mirzapur handmade dari
16	Moradabad metal craft

17	Nizamabad black pottery
18	Saharanpur wood craft
19	Varanasi glass beads
20	Varanasi soft stone jali work
21	Varanasi wooden lacquerware and toys
List Of GI Tags in Utrakhand	
	None
List Of GI Tags in West Bengal	
1	Allagadda stone carving
2	Baluchari saree
3	Bankura panchmura terracotta craft
4	Bengal Dokra
5	Bengal Patachitra
6	Dhaniakhali saree
7	Madur kathi
8	Nakshi Kantha
9	Purulia Chau mask
10	Shantiniketan leather goods
11	Santipur saree
12	Wooden mask of Kushmandi

India boasts a diverse array of handicrafts, each with its own unique techniques, designs, and cultural significance. Several of these handicrafts have been granted Geographical Indication (GI) status to protect their authenticity and promote the economic welfare of the artisans.

Here are a few noteworthy examples of both handicraft and handloom which are known worldwide for their uniqueness and exclusivity thus been awarded GI Status by GoI:

1) Madhubani Paintings:

Figure 2



Figure 2 Geographical Region: Madhubani, Bihar

Madhubani Paintings were given GI Tag in the year 2008 after filing for registration by the Director of Industries, Vikas Bhawan, Department of Industries, Bihar, Patna.

Madhubani paintings are a traditional art form that originated in the Mithila region of Bihar, India, is sometimes referred to as Mithila painting. This age-old custom is thought to have started when King Janaka hired painters to paint portraits for his daughter Sita's marriage to Lord Rama in the Ramayana. Madhubani painting is a very cultural and communal practice that originated in the past when women painted on the walls of their houses for festivals, marriages, and other significant events.

Common painting themes include scenes from the Ramayana, and illustrations of the life and exploits of Lord Krishna, as well as intricate designs featuring trees, animals, and birds with symbolic meanings.

Today, Madhubani painting has gained international recognition for its unique aesthetic and cultural significance. It has become a source of livelihood for many artists in the Mithila region, contributing to the local economy and helping to preserve this cultural heritage. Granting GI status to Madhubani painting serves to protect and promote this unique and culturally significant art form. It ensures the preservation of its heritage, provides economic benefits to local artists, and enhances the global recognition of the Mithila region's rich cultural traditions.

2) Kutch Embroidery:

Figure 3



Figure 3 Geographical Region: Kutch, Gujarat

Kutch Embroidery was given GI Tag in the year 2008 after filing for registration by the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) under Ministry of Handicraft.

Kutch embroidery, a unique and vibrant handcraft from the Kutch area of Gujarat, India is an exquisite needlework, which has been passed down through the decades, renowned for its vivid colours, complex designs, and mirror work. It

involves technique which uses a number of stitches, including as buttonhole, herringbone, and chain stitches, to create intricate designs that are frequently adorned with tiny mirrors, or "abhla." The embroidery includes geometric shapes, floral patterns, animals, and traditional symbols on materials like cotton, silk, and wool employing natural colours in past; however, synthetic dyes are now more often utilised. The craft of Kutch embroidery, which is mostly done by women in rural villages as a way of creative expression and cultural preservation, is intricately woven into the fabric of the region's culture given economic freedom and prosperity to artisans.

Geographical Indication (GI) designation has been awarded to Kutch embroidery, to protect the quality and originality of Kutch needlework from imitation by guaranteeing that only genuine embroidery from the designated area is sold under this label. This legislative safeguard not only preserves the uniqueness of the art but also greatly stimulates the local economy by raising the demand and market value of authentic Kutch embroidery.

3) Channapatna Toys:

Figure 4



Figure 4 Geographical Region: Channapatna, Karnataka

The Karnataka State Handicrafts Development Corporation Limited applied for the GI tag on July 2, 2005, and the certificate was issued on January 30, 2006.

Channapatna toys, also referred to as "Gombegala Ooru" or toy-town are handmade in Channapatna town in Karnataka, India, is a centuries-old, traditional method of creating wooden toys. These toys, which come from the Ramanagara district's town of Channapatna are renowned for their vibrant colors, smooth finish, and intricate craftsmanship, making them both culturally significant and economically valuable.

Made primarily from ivory wood, these toys are traditionally colored with natural dyes from sources like turmeric and indigo, ensuring they are safe for children. The process involves shaping the wood on a lathe and coating it with lacquer for durability and a glossy finish. This craft, passed down through generations, includes both traditional toys like spinning tops and modern educational toys and puzzles. Channapatna toys hold significant cultural value, showcasing the region's artisanal skills, and are a vital economic resource for local artisans. The Geographical Indication (GI) status granted to these toys protects their authenticity, boosts their market value, and preserves the traditional craftsmanship. The increased demand for these eco-friendly, handcrafted toys both domestically

and internationally highlights their enduring appeal and significance in preserving cultural heritage while supporting the local economy.

4) Mysore Silk:

Figure 5



Figure 5 Geographical Region: Mysuru, Karnataka

Mysore Silk was given the GI Status in year 2005. Mysore silk has the distinction of being the first GI tagged product from Karnataka filed by Karnataka Silk Industries Corporation Limited.

Mysore silk sarees is cherished not only as garments of exceptional beauty but also as symbols of Karnataka's rich textile heritage and artisanal prowess. Mysore silk, originating from the city of Mysore in Karnataka, India, is revered for its exceptional quality, luxurious feel, and intricate craftsmanship. Made from pure mulberry silk, these sarees are renowned for their smooth texture and vibrant colors, often adorned with traditional motifs like peacocks, floral patterns, and geometric designs that reflect the region's rich cultural heritage. The weaving process of Mysore silk sarees involves skilled artisans using jacquard or handlooms to create elaborate patterns, sometimes incorporating intricate zari work with gold or silver threads for added elegance.

In addition to cultural value, the Mysore silk industry plays a vital economic role by providing livelihoods to numerous weavers and craftsmen in the region, contributing to local socio-economic development. The recognition of Geographical Indication (GI) status for Mysore silk sarees further underscores their authenticity and craftsmanship, ensuring that only sarees produced in Mysore and meeting stringent quality standards can bear the prestigious label. This protection not only safeguards against imitation but also enhances the sarees' market value, attracting connoisseurs who appreciate the blend of tradition and artistry embodied in each Mysore silk creation.

5) Pashmina Shawls:

Figure 6



Figure 6 Geographical Region: Kashmir

Kashmir Pashmina was given the GI Status in year 2008.

The Craft Development Institute (CDI), in collaboration with Tahafuz, a group devoted to artisan welfare, and the Indian government, has created a label to identify a genuine Kashmiri Pashmina Shawl. This mark recognises both hand-spun and hand-woven Pashmina. A non-copyable number code on the label may be checked online at their official website.

Pashmina shawls, originating from the Kashmir region of northern India, are renowned for their exceptional quality, luxurious feel, and intricate craftsmanship. These shawls are crafted from the fine wool of Pashmina goats, known for their soft undercoat that provides unparalleled warmth and comfort. This exceptionally fine wool is painstakingly hand-spun and hand-woven by skilled artisans using traditional techniques passed down through generations. They are adorned with intricate designs such as paisleys, floral motifs, and geometric patterns, often woven or embroidered onto the shawl with meticulous detail. The craftsmanship involved in creating Pashmina shawls is considered a cherished art form, reflecting the heritage and creativity of the Kashmiri artisans.

The global demand for authentic Pashmina shawls has made them an important export commodity, contributing to the socio-economic development of the region. The recognition of Geographical Indication (GI) status for Pashmina shawls ensures their authenticity and origin, protecting against counterfeit products and ensuring fair compensation for artisans.

Artisanal Crafts listed above were given GI Tag owing to their uniqueness, exclusivity and craftsmanship and got listed in the GI Registry maintained by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade which is a central government department under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in India. These examples demonstrate how GIs not only protect the unique identity of

handicrafts but also contribute to the economic well-being of artisans and the sustainable development of their communities. The recognition of GIs helps to maintain the cultural integrity and authenticity of these traditional crafts.

India's handicrafts are colourful representations of the nation's rich cultural legacy, showcasing the variety of its communities, regions, and customs. Indian handicrafts are a rich tapestry of skills, techniques, and creativity that have been passed down through the years and are woven into the fabric of daily life. Every craft, from elaborate metalwork and handwoven linens to elaborate pottery and traditional paintings, conveys a tale of cultural continuity, legacy, and identity. Because they capture the spirit of many cultures and their artistic expressions, handicrafts are important to India's cultural legacy. These crafts are more than just things; they are living representations of cultural stories that, through the hands of talented artisans, convey values, beliefs, and practises. As living artefacts, handicrafts connect the past and present, generating a sense of community and pride in local makers. Realising the value of protecting and advancing these age-old skills, India has adopted the idea of Geographical Indications (GIs) as a tactical instrument. As a type of intellectual property, geographical indications give products connected to a particular region legal protection while designating distinctive characteristics that come from that area. When it comes to handicrafts, GIs serve as a safeguard for the genuineness and uniqueness of traditional workmanship that has its roots in particular areas of the nation. The GI system is essential to maintaining the cultural and economic significance of handicrafts because it grants legal acknowledgment to the geographical origins of these crafts. It guarantees that customers can trust the originality of the goods they are purchasing and aids in the protection against unauthorised imitations. Additionally, GIs support the long-term growth of artisan communities by giving them a competitive advantage in the marketplace and bolstering the socioeconomic fabric of the areas they represent.

The implementation of Geographical Indications in the Indian handicraft industry is essentially a calculated move to strike a balance between the preservation of cultural legacy and commercial feasibility. It recognises that these crafts are living customs that add to a country's character and legacy rather than only being goods. India aims to establish a framework through GIs that will safeguard traditional craftsmanship while simultaneously empowering craftspeople, boosting regional economies, and guaranteeing the nation's ongoing celebration of its rich cultural tapestry.

2. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research has delved into the significance of handicrafts and handlooms as living embodiments of tradition and identity, capturing the essence of diverse communities across India. The introduction of GIs emerges as a strategic imperative, providing a legal framework to preserve and promote these traditional crafts by safeguarding their authenticity and unique regional characteristics. Products like handlooms, handicrafts, textiles, and other traditional artefacts are legally protected from unauthorised replication and exploitation by attaining GI status. This maintains the genuineness and calibre linked with these goods, but also guarantees equitable acknowledgement and financial gains for the artisans and the communities engaged in their creation.

Additionally, the study has shown that by helping handcrafted items stand out in both local and foreign markets, GI recognition increases their market competitiveness. As a result, local economies are supported and sustainable

livelihoods are created in the rural regions where these crafts are often performed, contributing to their socioeconomic growth. GIs support community empowerment, economic development, and the passing down of cultural information from one generation to the next in addition to ensuring the protection of intellectual property. But issues like red tape and increased awareness remain, highlighting the necessity of continuous efforts to strengthen the GI system. The potential of GIs to protect customs and uniqueness in the field of Indian handicrafts is still quite appealing, in spite of these difficulties.

It is critical to understand that the preservation of artisanal crafts including handicrafts and handlooms is a commitment to preserving a country's character as much as an economic endeavour, as we tread carefully on the thin line between tradition and modernity. In this case, the success of GIs depends on cooperation between customers, legislators, and craftspeople. The study emphasises how complex and continuous the journey towards preservation is when considering India's cultural legacy in a larger context. The establishment of GIs offers a useful foundation, but it needs to be supplemented by ongoing study, improved policy, and community involvement. The future of handicrafts in India is a sustainable progression of the country's rich cultural legacy, and GIs play a key role in fostering this harmonious blend of tradition and innovation.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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