

Preservation of Traditional Indian Embroideries and GI Tags: Revival Efforts

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Abstract: Geographical Indication (GIs) a word generally refers to the product's specific origin in a certain location. GIs are the signs of indicating a product come from a particular region and also certify for the particular features of the product, fine quality and good reputation. India is an incredible country and birthplace of many traditional art and craft that have been developed in the different states of India. Many traditional embroideries are done in various states of India like; Phulkari of Punjab, Chikenkari of Lucknow, Kasuti of Karnataka, Sujani of Bihar, Chamba Rumal of Himachal Pradesh, Sandur Lambani of Karnataka are few examples. GIs tags are helpful in promoting the local communities and their distinctive products. It also raises the economic prosperity and cultural richness of the country. All traditional embroideries of India are known for their originality and uniqueness. Geographical Indication is not a tag but also provides a unique identity to the traditional art and embroideries. The preservation of these traditional embroideries are important for the future generation and development of income sources of the particular community which developed these traditional embroideries.

Keywords: Geographical indication, traditional embroideries, preservation.

Introduction: GI (Geographical Indication) is a form of intellectual property right. This intellectual right is used for goods and products originating in a specific location. The GI Tag product products (Registration and Protection) Act 1999 this act prohibits the use of GI tagged products. A GI tag (Geographical Indication Tag) is a special label or mark or certificate that is given to a product to come from our specific place, reputation and with the unique qualities and features. Now this time hundreds of the products coming from different states have received GI tags.

In July 2025 India had registered 658 GI tags. In this study we are considered only a few highly appealing GI tagged traditional embroideries of India. Indian heritage and traditional embroidery is one of the most appealing and diverse art across the world. Every state of India has its unique culture, tradition, art and religion which manifolds the diversification. Indian culture and Indian art form specially the Indian Traditional Embroideries are well known for their originality and uniqueness. All different traditional embroideries of India reflect its symbolic significance and cultural contact. Traditional embroideries of India are depicted by Phulkari of Punjab, Chikenkari of Lucknow, Kasuti of Karnataka, Sujani of Bihar, Chamba Rumal of Himachal Pradesh, Sandur Lambani of Karnataka etc.

We must try to preserve these traditional Embroideries for the future and the changing environment and values of

these traditional art. These embroideries are the heritage of India and these traditional art is an important part of our nation. The preservation of these embroideries are important for introducing future generations to the rich culture and heritage of India.

Objectives:

1. To spread awareness to preservation of traditional methods, skills and style of embroidery.
2. To encourage rural based employment and local artisans efforts.

GI TAGS:



**Geographical
Indication (GI)
Tags**

In India traditional crafts and weaving on handlooms have a long and glorious history because of their inherent value, perfection of designs, eminence and distinct stuff skilled artisans and weavers in various regions of India have been demonstrating unique skill sets passed on as legacy over the generations. Geographical indications are intellectual property mechanisms that apply to goods and services that are identified by the location from which they were created (collected, produced, or manufactured). These mechanisms take into account environmental, historical, social, and

cultural specificities. It highlights the status of Indian handlooms, a sector that represents the country's cultural heritage and supports a range of livelihoods. It is important to underscore that the registration of a Geographical Indication acknowledges a pre-existing condition. In accordance with the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act of 1999 (the Act), handicrafts (including handlooms) may be registered as geographic indications (GI). Handicraft (including handlooms) are included. Registration prevents unauthorized use of register GI and provides legal protection to the registered property. The advantages of GI are numerous, and if they are used effectively, they can significantly improve a region's economy and pave the way for the expansion and development of the indigenous community. GI serves as insurance or protection, particularly for developing nations like India, for manufacturing that takes place in rural areas where manufacturers are unable to spend on branding due to a lack of infrastructure, marketing expertise, legal knowledge, etc.

History Of Geographical Indications (GI): The idea of protecting special products first of all starting in Europe in 1994, the WTO (World Trade Organisation) introduced a global agreement that is known as TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Right).

TRIPS are made mandatory for all the members of different countries to protect geographical indications for different products. India is also a member of TRIPS.

India passed a special law known as GI product (Registration & Protection) Act in 1999. This law came into effect in India on 15 September 2013. The first GI tag was given to the Darjeeling tea in 2005 in India.

Importance Of Geographical Indications (GIs): Geographical Indications have extreme importance for culture, economy, and global trade. GIs protect regional heritage and promote local products and traditional methods of developing that kind of products. They boost local economies and enhance the unique qualities of the local products.

1. Cultural heritage Preservation: GIs help to preserve the traditional knowledge, methods (techniques) skills and heritage. They ensure that the local people and artisans continue practicing old techniques, methods and skills.

2. Economic growth and development: GI-tagged products promote the economic growth of local communities. Producers can demand premium prices because their products are exclusively unique and special.

3. Legal Protection: GIs avoid unauthorized production by using the name of any product. It provides the authenticity and market value of real products. It provides certification to the original product.

4. Enhancing Exports: GI tag increases the worldwide trade and reputation of regional products and enhances its exportability.

5. Boost the Consumer Confidence: GIs are helpful for the consumers for consuming the originally originated products and it also assures the authenticity for the quality of the specific product and that is motivating the customer and enhances customer loyalty.

Revival Efforts And Preservation Strategies:

Government and NGO initiative: Government and NGO initiative: The Government of India and numerous NGOs have implemented various initiatives and schemes aimed at preserving traditional embroidery crafts and supporting the artisans who create them. Key government programs include the Handloom and handicrafts. Development schemes and the 'Ministry of Textiles' Artisans welfare programs, which provide financial assistance, Skill development training, and access to markets. For instance, Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yozna supports the social and economic development of artisans, enabling them to improve their skills and gain financial independence. Additionally, the National HandCrafts Development Programme (NHDP) and Cluster Development Programme focus on creating artisan clusters to promote collective growth, infrastructure support, and enhanced visibility for traditional crafts.

Rule of designers and collaboration: Designers and collaborations with artisans have played a pivotal role in the revival and preservation of Indian embroidery. Many designers recognize the beauty, heritage, and skill that Indian embroidery brings to Fashion, and have integrated traditional motifs and techniques into their collections. By collaborating with artisans, designers not only bring traditional embroidery into contemporary fashion but also create new opportunities for artisans to gain fair compensation and visibility for their work. Prominent Indian designers, like Sabyasachi Mukherjee, Anita Dongre, and Manish Malhotra, have elevated traditional crafts like Pulkari, Kantha, and Zardozi by incorporating them into modern bridal and haute couture. For example, Sabyasachi Mukherjee is renowned for showcasing traditional Indian textiles and embroideries in his designs.

Digital and educational efforts: The digital age has opened up a new avenue for promoting and preserving Indian embroidery, allowing artisans and small brands to reach Global audiences. Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest play a crucial role in showcasing Indian textiles, enabling artisans, designers, and NGOs to share their stories and craftsmanship directly with consumers. Artisans can now showcase their work on social media, building brand awareness and connecting with people interested in artisanal products and ethical fashion.

GI Protected Indian Traditional Embroidery Products In India: Many traditional Indian Embroideries of different states have received the GI tag.

Kasauti Embroidery:

1. Karnataka Handicrafts Development Corporation (KHDC) held a GI tag for the Traditional Indian

- embroidery Kasuti of Karnataka on 30th January 2006.
- Kasuti embroidery is practiced in the Northern district of Karnataka like; Dharwad, Bijapur, Hubballi, Belagavi.
- This embroidery is mainly done by the women of Lingayat Community. Kasuti embroidery is very intricate work.
- In this embroidery sometimes 5000 stitches are used for making the traditional attires.



Sandur Lambani Embroidery of Karnataka:

- Sandur Lambani Embroidery is mainly practiced in Bellary (Ballari) district of Karnataka.
- This embroidery work is practiced by the Lambani (Lambada or Banjara) Community residing around the Sandur region of Bellary district of Karnataka.
- Sandur Lambani Embroidery received the GI tag in 2010-2011.
- This embroidery used as patch- work or small bits of clothes are pieced together into a form of design. Most of the time there were leftover pieces of the fabric.
- Geometrical motifs are used in this embroidery with the multiple stitches.
- Bright colours threads are often used in this embroidery.
- The craft is tied to the traditional dresses of the Lambani women like; Skirt (Phetiya), blouse (Kanchali), veil heavily decorated.



Phulkari Embroidery of Punjab:

- Phulkari means " Flower Work" Phulkari is traditional hand embroidery practiced mainly in Punjab like; Amritsar, Patiala and Jalandhar.
- This embroidery is done mainly by rural women of Punjab.
- Phulkari of Punjab received the GI tag in 2010.
- Geometrical motifs used in this embroidery.
- Bright coloured silk floss thread (Pat) used in this embroidery.

- Traditionally made for shawls, dupattas and odhnis especially for weddings and festivals.



Sujani Embroidery of Bihar:

- Hand embroidery of Bihar is very similar to Kantha Bengal.
- Embroidery is practised in various parts of Bihar like Patna, Madhubani, Muzaffarpur (Sam surrounding villages) in Bihar.
- On 21st September 2006 Sarojini embroidery got the GI tag.
- Salita (cotton), tussar silk and casement fabric used as base clothes for this embroidery.
- Fine running stitch used for filling the background with similar colour of base fabric. Chain stitch is usually used in black colour, brown and red colour is used for the main outline of the motifs. Design is filled with running stitch in coloured threads.
- A large number of products are prepared with this embroidery like bedsheets, cushion covers, Sari, kurta pajama, dupatta, top as well as utility articles also developed by this embroidery.



Chamba Rumal of Himachal Pradesh:

- Chambal Rumal is a famous hand embroidery mainly found in Pathankot, Chamba district and other neighbouring villages and Basohi, Kangra, Kullu and Mandi.
- Chamba Rumal is traditionally practiced by the royal and local artisans of Chamba District.
- In 2006 Chamba Rumal head received GI tag.
- The motifs of Chamba Rumal are inspired by Pahari miniature paintings, scenes of Mahabharat, Ramayana,

Krishna Leela along with the motifs of human figure, animals, evergreen trees also seen on Chamba - Rumal.



Kutch traditional Embroideries of Gujarat:

1. Kutch embroidery was registered in March 2013 for GI tag.
2. Kutch embroidery is done in the main areas of Bhuj, Anjar, Mandvi and Lakhpatri in Kutch.
3. Chain stitch, buttonhole, herringbone, satin, back stitch and mirror work are used for Kutch embroidery.

Challenges In Preservation:

1. **Unfair compensation for artisans:** One of the challenges faced by Indian artisans is that they often don't receive fair compensation for their work because they operate on a small scale, forcing them to rely on middlemen to sell their products in the Market, who retain a larger share of the profit for themselves.
2. **Industrialization and fast fashion:** In changing times, machines have taken over human labor. In the era of industrialization and fast fashion, consumers want quick and affordable products.
3. Traditional embroiderers' work requires great skills, time, and effort, but due to a lack of market significance, the new generation is not interested in learning this craft.
4. **Lack of knowledge about traditions:** The new generations are strongly influenced by modern trends, but they often turn away from traditional values and cultural heritage. The lack of awareness about traditional embroidery has also limited its reach. As a result, the new generations of artisans and Indians are unfamiliar with the value of their country's precious cultural legacy.
5. **Lack of promotions and exploration:** The Indian government hasn't sufficiently focused on the promotion and exploration of traditional embroidery. Hence, the new generations are not well acquainted with it, and it is also not included in academic curricula, which is important for their extension and promotion.

Conclusion: GI as a concept is very new to India, despite the fact that it possesses a vast variety of products that could be considered geographical designators. Geographical indications are not just a tag but they are the symbol of heritage, creativity, culture, and unique skills of craftsmanship. Indian has an exclusive list of traditional embroideries of different states. GI tag protect the India's

cultural identity and support the craftsmanship and sustain traditional crafts for future generation and its is essential to all the traditional embroideries of India achieve GI tags and preserve the traditional art of India.

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