

Research Article**GI Tag Handicrafts: A study of Telangana Region****Nanneboyina Ravi**Research Scholar, Department of History & Tourism Management, Kakatiya University,
Hanumakonda, Telangana, IndiaCorresponding Author: **Nanneboyina Ravi****Abstract**

The handicrafts of Telangana represent a vibrant cultural tradition deeply rooted in the socio-economic and artistic life of the region. Several crafts such as Pochampally Ikat, Gadwal Sarees, Nirmal Paintings, Cherial Scrolls, Silver Filigree of Karimnagar, and Pembrothi Metal Craft have been recognized with the Geographical Indication (GI) tag, highlighting their unique identity and authenticity. This study focuses on the significance of GI-tagged handicrafts in Telangana, analyzing their historical evolution, craftsmanship, and role in sustaining the livelihood of artisans. It further examines how GI registration has contributed to the protection of intellectual property, prevention of imitation, promotion of rural economy, and encouragement of tourism. The paper also reflects on the challenges faced by artisans, including commercialization, lack of awareness, and declining traditional patronage, while suggesting measures for sustainable growth. Through this, the study emphasizes the need to strengthen institutional support, market linkages, and global visibility for Telangana's handicrafts to ensure their preservation and promotion in the modern context.

Keywords: Geographical Indication (GI)-Telangana Handicrafts-Pochampally Ikat- Nirmal Paintings-Cherial Scrolls-Silver Filigree-Pembrothi Metal Craft-Gadwal Sarees.

1. Introduction

India, with its rich cultural heritage, history, and traditions, is one of the world's largest producers and suppliers of handicrafts. Indian traditional art reflects grandeur, elegance, and a remarkable diversity of styles, with a unique charm often rooted in rarity and mythical significance. Under Part II of the TRIPS Agreement, a Geographical Indication (GI) is defined as an indication that identifies a product as originating from a specific territory or region, where its distinctive quality, reputation, or other characteristics are essentially linked to that geographical origin. GIs have become a crucial tool for protecting the quality and reputation of goods tied to their place of origin, helping to regulate economic control, empower traditional knowledge holders, and promote indigenous social development. As collective intellectual property rights, GIs safeguard regional heritage that has been cultivated by local communities over generations while also serving as an effective measure against counterfeiting. France was the first nation to establish a comprehensive legal framework for GI protection, setting a precedent that has influenced both national and international legislation.

In India, the Geographical Indications (GI) Law came into effect on September 15, 2003, under the framework of the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. Once registered, a GI remains valid for 10 years and can be renewed thereafter. As of

March 2022, approximately 417 products across various categories had been registered. The GI Act is enforced and administered by the Registrar of Geographical Indications, who also serves as the Controller General of Patents, Designs, and Trademarks. GIs in India are classified into four main categories: handicrafts, agricultural products, foodstuffs/natural products, and manufactured goods. The country is home to a wide variety of handicrafts, including Bamboo handicrafts, Cane handicrafts, Bell Metal handicrafts, Bone and Horn handicrafts, Brass handicrafts, Clay or Pottery handicrafts, Dhokra handicrafts, Jute handicrafts, Paper handicrafts, Rock handicrafts, Shell handicrafts, Weaving and Embroidery handicrafts, Wood handicrafts, Enamel handicrafts, Glass handicrafts, Kiritams handicrafts, Lac handicrafts, Lace and Zari handicrafts, Leather handicrafts, Marble handicrafts, Metal handicrafts, and Painting Stone handicrafts, among many others.

GI certification serves as a powerful mechanism for producers to distinguish their products from competitors, build a strong reputation, and generate goodwill that allows them to command a premium price. It offers dual benefits: as a consumer protection measure, it addresses information asymmetries and ensures product quality, and as a producer protection measure, it safeguards reputation as a valuable asset. As a market-oriented strategy, GI provides a unique opportunity to gain a competitive advantage for registered products, both in domestic and international markets. The protection framework ensures that the GI label can only be used if the product, its materials, or its production method originate from a specific region and meet defined standards. GI-tagged products, such as Darjeeling Tea and Chanderi Sarees, have proven transformative, boosting local economies, bringing global recognition, and enhancing cultural and economic value. In India, the significance of GI is immense, encompassing a wide range of products across both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.

Legal protection under Geographical Indications (GIs), when coupled with efficient administration, can significantly help legitimate rights holders prevent free-riding and counterfeiting. For instance, in the case of Darjeeling Tea, producers can ensure that the name "Darjeeling" is not used for tea grown outside the designated tea gardens or not produced according to the GI's code of practice. Traditional knowledge systems have also played a crucial role in promoting social and human development while preserving a country's cultural heritage. Beyond the potential for higher pricing, GIs increase the likelihood of reclaiming market share lost to imitations, leading to greater financial returns for rightful producers. The premium commanded by GI-certified products reflects the inherent value of this intellectual property right, which combines economic, cultural, and social qualities uniquely associated with a specific geographical location.

India, with its rich cultural heritage and diverse ethnic traditions, is also a major hub for handicrafts. The term "handicrafts" refers to a wide array of products created entirely by hand, without the use of machinery. The country's cultural diversity has given rise to an exceptional variety of art and craft forms. With the advent of economic reforms and the opening of India's markets to multinational corporations, the traditional license raj ended, and global economic boundaries became more fluid, enabling international investment and the penetration of developed countries into previously underdeveloped markets. Handicrafts represent a unique aspect of culture, crafted using local skills and materials. In India, the handicraft industry is labour-intensive, widely dispersed, and largely unorganized. After agriculture, it is the second-largest employer in the country and contributes significantly to exports while playing a vital role in overall economic development. These products are made entirely by hand or with simple hand tools, reflecting the skill and creativity of the artisans.

India produces exquisite handicrafts from a wide variety of raw materials, sourced from all corners of the country. These include art metalware, woodware, hand-printed fabrics and scarves, leather crafts, hand-knotted carpets, embroidered items, wood designs, shawls, stone

sculptures, imitation jewelry, and many other forms of artisanal products. Craftsmen follow rigorous standards with near-ritualistic precision at every stage, from selecting raw materials to the final finishing touches. Handicrafts hold immense potential for generating employment, as millions of artisans across the country possess innate artistic talent that can be nurtured into a profession. For centuries, India has been a major exporter of handicrafts, with its craftsmanship so highly regarded that, during the 18th and 19th centuries, neighboring countries along trade routes recognized India more for its artisanal skills than for its art, religion, or philosophy.

According to the census of handicrafts conducted under the 11th Five-Year Plan, India has approximately 68.86 lakh artisans, with women constituting 56.13% and men 43.87%. Despite their majority, women weavers are often not at the forefront of the production process; they are mostly engaged in allied activities and are underpaid relative to the work they perform. Over the years, the Indian handicraft industry has faced significant challenges, including the introduction of mechanized alternatives, lack of education and awareness, insufficient market intelligence, and inadequate infrastructural and institutional support, all of which have put traditional handicraft products at risk. Many traditional products and the artisans who create them struggle to survive against competition from cheaper imitations and other mass-produced items entering rapidly changing global markets. For example, crafts such as silver filigree risk disappearing unless artisans receive better compensation, the market is better organized, and product quality is strictly maintained. Geographical Indications (GIs) have consistently contributed to improving the socioeconomic conditions of producers and hold significant promise for preserving India's traditional knowledge and supporting its artisans.

2. GI Handicrafts in Telangana region:

2.1. Pochampally Ikat (Andhra Pradesh) (GI Regn No. 4)

Pochampally, a small town in Nalgonda district of Andhra Pradesh is famous for Ikat weaving. Ikat is a type of weaving wherein the warp, weft or both are tie-dyed before weaving to create designs on the finished product. The precision of warping determines the clarity of designs. Pochampally products are hand crafted to perfection by skilled artisans who are endowed with critical skills in an intricate design, having decades of experience in their respective fields. The weavers are producing different products like Sarees, Dress materials, home furnishings by using silk, cotton yarn and jari. The artistic skill of the weavers, which got reflected in the products, has always attracted attention of the people across the country and abroad.

2.2. Silver Filigree of Karimnagar - 2007 (GI.Regd.No.53)

Karimnagar Silver Filigree from Telangana is a traditional metalwork using fine twisted silver threads and tiny beads to create intricate motifs of animals, birds, and floral patterns. Artisans craft jewelry, household items, and decorative objects with lace-like designs, polished with platinum for a brilliant finish. Practiced for generations, this delicate craft is highly valued for its artistry and cultural heritage, attracting collectors and buyers from across India.

2.3. Nirmal Toys and Craft 2008 (GI.Regd.No.91)

Nirmal toys and paintings are a distinguished craft of Telangana, blending Indian and Mughal artistic styles, including Ajanta-inspired floral motifs and Mughal miniatures. Made from locally available softwoods like Panicki and white sander, the toys are shaped skillfully and finished with enamel colors for a vibrant shine. The craft is carried forward by the Naqqash artisans, who migrated from Rajasthan in the 17th century, preserving this unique artistic tradition.

2.4. Nirmal Furniture 2009 (GI.Regd.No.105)

Nirmal furniture showcases intricate designs and detailed carvings, reflecting the skill and artistry of the local craftsmen. Each piece is handcrafted, representing the rich artistic heritage of Nirmal.

2.5. Nirmal Paintings- 2019 (GI.Regd.No.106)

Nirmal Painting is a traditional art form from Telangana, India, recognized with Geographical Indication (GI) registration. These paintings are crafted using locally sourced materials such as Puniki wood, organic colors, and lacquer. They commonly illustrate scenes from the Hindu epics Ramayana and Mahabharata and reflect influences from classical Indian schools of art. Nirmal Paintings are not only a distinctive cultural symbol of Telangana but also a testament to the state's rich handicraft heritage.

2.6. Gadwal Sarees -(GI Registration No. 137, 1999)

Gadwal Sarees are traditional handwoven sarees from Telangana, India, known for their unique blend of cotton and silk. These sarees are distinguished by their lightweight cotton body and rich silk border, often featuring intricate zari work and traditional motifs. Gadwal weaving combines durability with elegance, making the sarees highly sought after for festive and ceremonial occasions. Recognized under the Geographical Indication (GI) registry, Gadwal Sarees reflect Telangana's rich textile heritage and skilled craftsmanship.

2.7. Hyderabad Haleem- (GI Registration No. 193, 2010)

Hyderabad Haleem is a traditional slow-cooked dish from Hyderabad, Telangana, made of meat, lentils, pounded wheat, and a blend of spices. It is especially popular during the Islamic month of Ramadan, served for Iftar. Known for its rich flavor and unique preparation method, the dish is cooked over a low flame for several hours to achieve its signature taste and texture. Hyderabad Haleem holds the distinction of being the first cooked dish in India to receive Geographical Indication (GI) registration. The GI certification protects the authenticity of the dish, ensuring that only Haleem prepared according to traditional methods and ingredients from Hyderabad can be marketed under this name. Its GI tag was renewed in 2022, extending its protection until 2029, reflecting its enduring cultural and culinary significance.

2.8. Cherial Paintings

Cherial Paintings are traditional scroll paintings that depict local motifs and narratives native to Telangana. Currently, these artworks are produced exclusively in Hyderabad, Telangana. Known for their dynamic storytelling style, Cherial scrolls are painted in a sequential format, similar to a comic strip or film roll, which gives them a unique narrative appeal. These paintings showcase the versatility and skill of Indian artisans and stand out as distinctive cultural artefacts. The Geographical Indication (GI) registration awarded in 2010 recognizes their authenticity and preserves the heritage of this art form.

2.9. Pembarthi Metal Craft

Pembarthi Metal Craft is a renowned metal handicraft from Pembarthi, a village in Warangal district, Telangana, famous for its intricate sheet metal brass engravings and artefacts. The craft has a history of over 800 years, flourishing under the Kakatiya dynasty, whose patronage led artisans—known as Vishwakarmas—to adorn temple vigrahas (statues) and vahanas (chariots) with their exquisite metalwork. The distinctive style of Pembarthi craftsmen is evident in many ancient temples across Telangana.

Over time, especially during the Muslim rule, Pembarthi artisans expanded their repertoire to include betel nut cases (paandaans), perfume containers (Ittar pots), chandeliers (Jhummars), vases, plaques, and mementos, blending Hindu and Muslim artistic influences. The craft has survived historical upheavals and adapted to modern utilitarian and decorative demands. Today, Pembarthi Brassware is celebrated as a symbol of Telangana's artistic heritage and has been honored with Geographical Indication (GI) registration, safeguarding its authenticity and legacy.

2.10. Siddipet Gollabama Sarees (GI Registration No. 193, 2012)

Siddipet Gollabama Sarees are traditional handwoven sarees from Siddipet, Telangana, renowned for their distinctive motifs and intricate weaving techniques. The term "Gollabama,"

meaning "milkmaid," reflects the pastoral heritage of the region, and the sarees prominently feature inlay motifs of milkmaids, parrots, and other rural elements, capturing the essence of Telangana's village life. Woven from fine cotton threads, the designs are carefully transferred onto the warp and weft threads before weaving, making the motifs an integral part of the fabric. These sarees stand as a testament to the region's rich cultural heritage and exceptional craftsmanship, symbolizing the strength, skill, and perseverance of the women artisans who create them.

2.11. Narayanpet Handloom Sarees (GI Registration No. 214, 2012)

Narayanpet Handloom Sarees are traditional handwoven sarees from Narayanpet, Telangana, celebrated for their distinctive checked patterns, vibrant body colors, and contrasting zari borders. Crafted from fine cotton or cotton-silk blends, these sarees are lightweight and comfortable, particularly suited for warm climates. The weaving technique is unique, often involving multiple sarees on a single loom, which allows intricate designs and motifs—such as swans, mangoes, and leaves—to be integrated seamlessly. The pallu (end piece) is elaborately decorated, adding to the saree's elegance. Awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2012, Narayanpet Sarees are protected for their authenticity, promoting the traditional skills of local artisans and preserving Telangana's rich textile heritage.

2.12. Banganapalle Mangoes (GI Registration No. 241, 2017),

Banganapalle Mangoes considered one of the finest desert mangoes, are renowned for their distinctive aroma, vibrant yellow color, and fiberless sweet pulp. Native to Banganapalle in Andhra Pradesh, these mangoes have maintained their unique characteristics for over a century since their introduction by the Nawabs of Banganapalle. Celebrated as a premium table fruit, they are widely consumed both in India and globally. The Geographical Indication (GI) registration ensures that only mangoes grown in the designated regions of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana can be marketed under the "Banganapalle" name, preserving their authenticity, quality, and heritage.

2.13. Pochampally Ikat (GI Registration No. 4, 2004)

Pochampally Ikat (GI Registration No. 4, Andhra Pradesh) originates from Pochampally, a small town in Nalgonda district, Andhra Pradesh, renowned for its exquisite Ikat weaving. Ikat is a unique technique in which the warp, weft, or both are tie-dyed before weaving to create intricate patterns on the finished fabric. The precision in warping determines the clarity and accuracy of the designs. Skilled artisans, with decades of experience, handcraft each product to perfection, producing sarees, dress materials, and home furnishings using silk, cotton yarn, and zari. The artistry and precision of Pochampally weavers have earned widespread recognition across India and internationally, making these products highly sought after for their craftsmanship and aesthetic appeal.

2.14. Adilabad Dokra Dokra (GI Registration No. 521, 2018)

Dokra is a traditional tribal bell metal craft practiced by metal smiths in Telangana, particularly in Jainoor Mandal village, Adilabad. While Dokra is also produced in other states, each region imparts its own distinctive style and charm, making the craft unique. Using the lost-wax casting technique, artisans create intricate figurines, jewelry, and decorative items, preserving a historical art form that has been handed down through generations. The Geographical Indication (GI) registration awarded in 2018 recognizes the authenticity and cultural significance of Adilabad Dokra, safeguarding this treasured craft of Telangana.

2.15. Warangal Durries (GI Registration No. 523, 2018)

Warangal Durries are handwoven cotton and jute rugs from Warangal, Telangana, recognized for their distinct geometric patterns and zigzag motifs. The craft received its Geographical Indication (GI) tag on March 28, 2018, granted by the Chennai-based GI Registry, with the certificate issued on May 18, 2018. Filed by the Andhra Pradesh Handicrafts

Development Corporation Limited, the GI registration acknowledges the unique craftsmanship and specific geographical origin of these durries. The certification not only safeguards the authenticity of Warangal Durries but also provides artisans with recognition and the opportunity to market their products directly, enhancing their potential for better profits and sales.

2.16. Telia Rumal (GI Registration No. 599, 2020)

Telia Rumal is a traditional handwoven textile from Telangana, particularly from Puttapaka village in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district. The craft employs a distinctive double ikat technique using natural vegetable dyes, including gingelly oil, which gives the fabric its unique texture and aroma. The name "Telia Rumal," meaning "oiled handkerchief," reflects this characteristic treatment. Adorned with geometric patterns, the textile is traditionally used as headgear, such as turbans and lungis, especially in hot climates. The GI tag, filed on December 15, 2017, by the Consortium of Puttapaka Handloom Cluster – IHDS and published in the Geographical Indications Journal No. 129 on January 10, 2020, recognizes the craft's unique geographical origin and safeguards the interests of local artisans. The revival and promotion of Telia Rumal have been significantly influenced by master weavers like Gajam Govardhana, whose efforts have brought international recognition to this culturally and artistically significant textile.

2.17. Tandur Redgram (GI Registration No. 706, 2022)

Tandur Redgram also known as Tandur Kandi Pappu, Togari Pappu, or Tur Dal, is a locally cultivated variety of pigeon pea (*Cajanus cajan*) from the Tandur region of Telangana, India. Renowned for its rich taste, high protein content (22–24%), and superior cooking quality, it is a staple in the regional diet and holds significant cultural importance. The GI tag, granted on December 6, 2022, following an application by the Yalal Farmers Producers Company Limited from Vikarabad with support from Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University (PJTSAU), recognizes the unique qualities of redgram grown in the fertile, deep-black soils of the region, enriched with clay minerals and limestone deposits. This certification safeguards the authenticity of Tandur Redgram, protects against unauthorized use, and enhances its market recognition.

2.18. Hyderabad Lac Bangles (GI Registration No. 917, 2024)

Hyderabad Lac Bangles are renowned for their intricate craftsmanship and vibrant designs, reflecting the rich cultural heritage and artisanal excellence of Hyderabad. The GI tag, granted on March 2, 2024, to the Crescent Handicrafts Artisans Welfare Association, Hyderabad, by the Government of India, recognizes the uniqueness and authenticity of these handcrafted ornaments. Made by heating and molding a blend of natural resins onto metal bangles, artisans embellish them with colorful stones, beads, and mirrors to create elaborate patterns. Traditionally worn during weddings, festivals, and other cultural celebrations, Hyderabad lac bangles symbolize prosperity, joy, and the enduring skill of local craftsmen.

3. Conclusion:

In essence, Telangana handicrafts are important for cultural preservation, economic development, empowerment of artisans (especially women), and the promotion of sustainable tourism. They exemplify the state's creativity, heritage, and potential for global recognition in traditional arts.

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