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An Analysis of Geographical Indications in India and Tamil Nadu with Special Reference to Kanchipuram Silk Sarees



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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Received: 22-07-2023 Received in revised form: 02-09-2023 Accepted: 04-09-2023 Available online: 30-09-2023</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords: Employment Opportunities; Intellectual Property (IP); Geographical Indications (GIs); Kanchipuram Silk Sarees; Silk Sarees.</p>	<p>A name or symbol used on items that refers to a particular geographic area or origin is known as a Geographical Indication (GI). The use of a GI to identify a product's origin is meant to certify that the product has specific attributes, high reputation owing to its geographical location of origin. A group of manufacturers who are connected to a specific location where the good originally originated are given GI protection. The GI Logo serves as a certification mark in India and is used to identify all GI-registered Indian items. This GI will help in economic expansion, job creation, and income generation. The United Kingdom's Scotch Whisky, Cambodia's Kampot Pepper, Turkey's Kilim Carpets, Switzerland's Swiss Watches, and China's Yangzhou Lacquerware are a few examples of GIs. The tagline of GIs is Invaluable treasures of Incredible India. The study seeks to comprehend and examine the GIs of India and with specific reference to Tamil Nadu and Kancheepuram Silk Sarees.</p>

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The [World Trade Organization \(1994\)](#) defined geographic indications (GIs) as "Indications which identify a good as coming from the territory of a country, or a region or locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation, or other characteristics of the good are essentially attributable to its geographical origin". Products, both natural and man-made, are given GI Tags, that are identified with a specific geographical location in the country.

In India, the Geographical Indications tag came into effect from September 15, 2003. Darjeeling Tea, West Bengal, obtained India's first GI Tag. The Department of Industry Promotion and Internal Trade (DPIIT) of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is responsible for providing these tags and the products are referred as "Invaluable Treasures of Incredible India". In India, the validity GI Tagged product is ten years.

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GIs reiterate the fact the diverse and the rich culture of India. The States and Union territories have their own tradition and culture that can be harnessed in the upliftment of people.

According to the list from the Registrar of GI for April 2023 to May 2024, India currently has 475 GI goods registered. The fields of handicrafts and agriculture have the highest proportions of GI, followed by those of manufactured goods and foodstuffs, and finally, the fields of textiles and natural goods have the lowest proportions of GI. With 57 GI-tags (as of April 2023), Tamil Nadu leads the list of GI tags followed by Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka. In GI Tagged handicrafts Uttar Pradesh is placed first with 36 handicrafts.

Tamil Nadu is known for its Geographical Indication certification, with a rich variety of artisanal works, foods and manufactured goods etc. Salem Ven Pattu was the first item in Tamil Nadu to receive a GI tag in 2005. The products include Manapparai Murukku from Trichy, Thaikkal Rattan craft, Auhtoor Vetrilai, Sholavandan Vetrilai, Cumbum Panneer Grapes, Negamam cotton sarees, Ooty Varkey, Mailadi stone carvings, Salem Sago, Honey from Marthandam and Manamadurai.

1.1 Review of Literature

Moudgill (2022) analysed India's use of GI during the COVID-19 pandemic in healthcare. The researcher examined the impact of GI on social upliftment and rural development, promoting human development, and increasing rural employment and export earnings. The study proposed solutions that regulatory framework should prioritize quality control criteria for brand building in international markets.

Chaudhary *et al.*, (2022) examined in depth the possibilities for GI to revitalize the handicraft industry in Uttar Pradesh. In India, agricultural items come in second with over 55% of all GI-registered goods being handmade. The lack of knowledge of GI is thought to be the cause of the decrease, thus the government has to take action to educate the craftsmen.

Dinal and Sundaram (2022) analysed the Kanchipuram silk saree industry. 15 weavers of the Kanchipuram saree were interviewed in order to gather their responses. The study also compared the weavers' recognition and financial standing before and after acquiring the GI badge. The textile industry of Kanchipuram has evolved into a corporate sector, at the same time it is found that the producers and the manufacturers (weavers) continue to struggle to make ends meet on a daily basis and the authors suggested that initiating government schemes would improve the economic status.

Makam (2023) examined how crucial it is to strike a balance between IPRs and a region's cultural history in order to guarantee Development that is inclusive and the fair sharing of gains. It evaluated the challenges and prospects while highlighting the need of fostering an environment that strikes a balance between ensuring the protection of intellectual property rights, economic progress, and the preservation of cultural heritage. Communities, stakeholders, and governments should use spatial cues to advance equitable economic growth, conserve cultural variety, and advance sustainable development.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Kancheepuram is known as the Temple Town. Since a significant portion of Kanchipuram's population depends on the silk business, the city is referred to as the "Silk City". Tourist arrivals have seen a rise over the years. Kancheepuram is also famous for the production of silk sarees through centuries. Silk sarees have always been a part of every household and an important component of weddings and occasions of celebrations. Many cooperatives, subsidies and schemes were established

to preserve the tradition of weaving. Major schemes included the Government of Tamil Nadu initiating Weavers Card.

The Government of India has recognized Kanchipuram silk saree as a GI officially since the year 2005-06. The silk mark logo was introduced in 2004 to maintain the ethnicity of Kancheepuram Silk saree. It serves as a legal certification mark for silk textiles in India and is just advisory in nature. It confirms that a material is made entirely of natural silk. The Central Silk Board of India, the state-controlled organization, established the "Silk Mark Organization of India" to oversee certification. The mark originally had a hang-on tag with a silk mark emblem woven into it, to which a special numbered hologram is attached. This study aims to analyse the role and importance of GI with reference to Kanchipuram silk saree.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- To analyse the GI Tags of various Indian States with special reference to Tamil Nadu
- To investigate the total number of families involved production of Silk Sarees.
- To compare the production of Kancheepuram Silk Sarees before and during COVID-19.
- To review the schemes and subsidies provided by the Government to the weavers.

1.4 Hypothesis of the Study

- The value of silk sarees produced, and the number of households involved in handicrafts are not significantly correlated.
- The proportion of silk sarees manufactured to all handicrafts produced in Kanchipuram District before and after COVID-19 did not vary significantly.

2.0 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

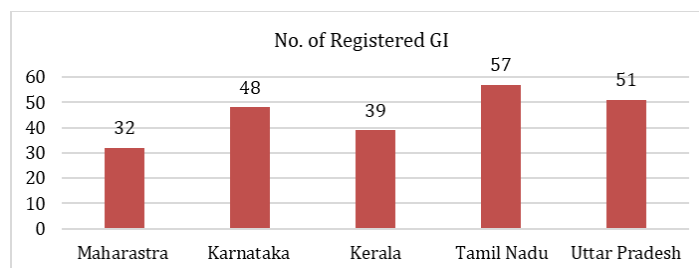
The present work is descriptive type. The study exclusively relies on secondary information obtained from books, papers, and periodicals and other published and unpublished sources. It is also based on contributions from individuals, organizations, and other institutions.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 State wise Distribution of Registered GI Tags in India

Figure 1

State wise Distribution of Registered GI Tags in India



Source: Intellectual Property India 2023-2024

It is seen in from Figure 1 that in India, the maximum number of 57 (12%) GI were registered by Tamil Nadu followed by 51 (10.73%) from Uttar Pradesh, 48 (10.10%) from Karnataka, 39 (8.21%) from Kerala while Maharashtra has registered 32 (6.73%) GIs.

3.2 Product wise Distribution in Tamil Nadu

Figure 2

Product wise Distribution of GI Tags in India



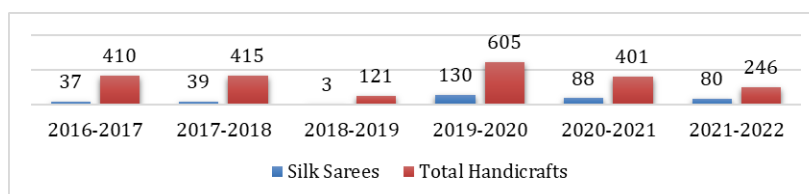
Source: Intellectual Property India 2023-2024

Figure 2 shows that The Handicrafts category had the most GIs registered, 32 (56.14%), followed by the agriculture category with 14 (24.56%) and the Food stuffs category with 6 (10.52%).

3.3 Total Number of Handicrafts Products Manufactured (No. of Units)

Figure 3

Total Number of Handicrafts Products Manufactured (No. of Units)



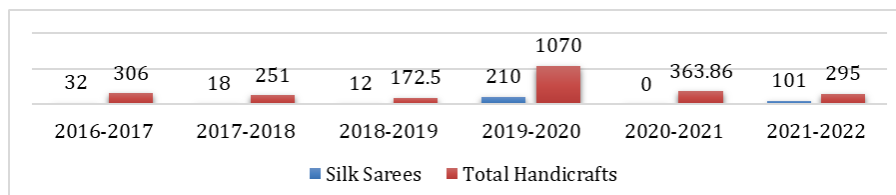
Source: Kancheepuram District Statistical Handbook 2016-17,2017-18,2018-19,2019-20,2020-21,2021-22

The Figure 3 indicates that 32.52 per cent of silk sarees were produced out of total handicrafts produced in Kanchipuram during the year 2021-2022, 21.94 percent in 2020-2021, 21.48 per cent in 2019-2020, 9.4 percent in 2017-2018, 9.02 per cent in 2016-2017 and 2.47 per cent during 2018-2019. Thus, there is an increase in the contribution of Silk Sarees to total handicrafts produced in Kanchipuram district during COVID-19.

3.4 Value of the Handicrafts' Products

Figure 4

Value of the Handicrafts Products (₹ in Lakhs)



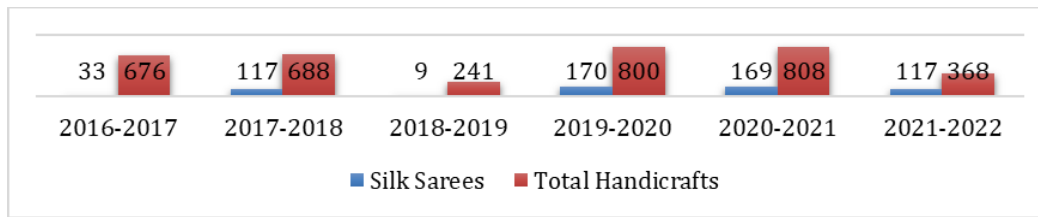
Source: Kancheepuram District Statistical Handbook 2016-17,2017-18,2018-19,2019-20,2020-21,2021-22

Figure 4 indicates the contribution of silk sarees to the total value of the handicraft's products produced in Kancheepuram district. It shows that during 2021-2022, the contribution of silk sarees was higher with a percentage of 34.24 and during the year 2020-2021, the contribution from the value of silk sarees to the value of total handicrafts produced is nil.

3.5 Number of Families Engaged in Handicrafts

Figure 5

No. of Families Engaged in Handicrafts



Source: Kancheepuram District Statistical Handbook (2016-17,2017-18,2018-19,2019-20,2020-21,2021-22)

Figure 5 shows the number of families engaged in Handicrafts in Kanchipuram district. It indicates that out of the total families engaged in Handicrafts 31.8 per cent of the families were engaged in the production of silk sarees in the year 2021-2022.

3.6 Relationship Between the Number of Families Engaged in Handicrafts and the Value of Silk Sarees Produced

- **H₁:** The value of silk sarees produced (in lakhs of rupees) and the number of households involved in handicrafts are significantly correlated.

Table 1

Regression Statistics

Multiple R	0.458737
R Square	0.21044
Adjusted R Square	0.01305
Standard Error	80.22388
Observations	6
Significance F	0.360163

Source: Computed using data from Kancheepuram District Statistical Handbook 2016-17,2017-18,2018-19,2019-20,2020-21,2021-22

The Table 1 indicates the significant value as 0.360 and hence the hypothesis (H₁) is rejected as the p value is less than 0.05. As a result, there is significant relationship between the number of households producing handicrafts and the price of silk sarees (₹ in lakhs) produced.

3.7 Difference Between the Percentage of Silk Sarees Produced to Total Handicrafts Produced from Kanchipuram District Before and During COVID-19

- **H₂:** The proportion of silk sarees manufactured to all handicrafts produced in Kanchipuram District before and after COVID-19 vary significantly.

Table 2

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances

	Variable 1	Variable 2
Mean	6.963333333	25.31333333
Variance	15.17863333	39.00493333
Observations	3	3
Pooled Variance	27.09178333	
Df	4	

t Stat	-4.317803771
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.006234495
t Critical one-tail	2.131846786
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.01246899
t Critical two-tail	2.776445105

Source: Computed using data from Kancheepuram District Statistical Handbook 2016-17,2017-18,2018-19,2019-20,2020-21,2021-22

The Table 2 indicates the significant value as 0.006. The hypothesis (H_2) is accepted because the p value is less than 0.05. As a result, the proportion of silk sarees manufactured to all handicrafts produced in Kanchipuram District before and after COVID-19 differs significantly.

3.8 Schemes Provided by the Government of India and Tamil Nadu

The textiles industry's initiatives are intended to promote and modernize textile industries and units across all of India, and they have a significant potential to create job opportunities for people employed across the nation, particularly in Tamil Nadu. Some of the schemes are discussed as follows:

- (a) *Amended Technology Up-gradation Fund Scheme (ATUFS)*: This initiative aims to encourage employment, investment, productivity, quality, and import and export substitution in the textile sector. It also promotes investments in the development of textile machineries.
- (b) *National Handloom Development Programme and National Handicrafts Development Programme*: The program's strategic interventions include financial support for new, upgraded looms and accessories, design innovation, the development of products and infrastructure, skill upgrading, training, the establishment of Mega clusters to increase manufacturing and exports, simple access to working capital through tailored Mudra loans for weavers and artisans, and direct marketing support for weavers and artisans.
- (c) *Silk Samagra*: R & D initiatives have initiated creating new goods by combining silk with other fibers that are in demand in global markets, such as wool, coir, cotton, etc.

3.9 Subsidies by The Government of Tamil Nadu to Weavers

- (a) Free saree and dhoti distribution to hand- and power-loom weavers and free school uniforms for the children of the weavers. The co-operative society weavers make the sarees and dhotis needed for distribution, which are subsequently purchased and provided to the taluk office for distribution by the Tamil Nadu Handloom Weavers' Cooperative Society known as "Co-Optex." It provides weavers and their families ongoing employment while also meeting their apparel needs.
- (b) Free energy is provided to the families that have both power and hand looms. Power loom weavers receive up to 500 units of electricity every two months, while handloom weavers receive up to 100 units every two months.
- (c) According to the GI regulations a Kancheepuram saree must have 0.6% gold and 57.5% silver in the zari.

4.0 SUGGESTIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

As many private shops sell adulterated silk sarees for low prices, yarns should be made available at a cheap or subsidized rate to make silk handloom products competitive and affordable in

the market. The efficient functioning of weavers will result from the elimination of irregularities such as the supply of raw materials, ineffective administration, low pay, a lack of skilled marketing, and operational management. For higher output, handlooms should use contemporary technologies. Weavers in Kanchipuram are unable to use technologically advanced looms due to lack of support, this will directly impact saree production, output, and quality. Additionally, it will encourage diverse products and expand the market. Awareness amongst the Public will have the greatest impact on the selling of consumer goods. The Government should take effective measures to enhance the production of handloom sarees in Kancheepuram district.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Sarees from Kanchipuram are known for their elaborate designs and vibrant hues. The GI label protection not only attests to the product's geographical origin, but also to its compliance with the criteria. Many of the weavers who abandoned the arts for secure and higher-paying employment in metropolitan cities. The difficulties faced by the weavers are numerous, making it extremely difficult for them to sustain in their occupations. Sustaining this heritage of silk weaving can be made possible through engaging the younger generation in the training programmes and giving them stable employment, as well as government subsidies for the procurement of raw materials. Thus, branding and commercialization of GI products would result in the upliftment of weavers.

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