

GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS: A CASE STUDY OF CHANDERI SAREES

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Abstract: The protection of Geographical Indications (GIs) has, over the years, emerged as one of the most contentious intellectual property right (IPR) issues in the realm of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). It has gained more interest since its protection has been ensured multilaterally under the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement of the World Trade Organisation. Chanderi Sarees is officially registered items in GI registry of India under textile goods form Madhya Pradesh. A GI certification is licensed to the producers and other business operators of the GI production line through a membership application in a GI club. This paper aims at identifying factors that are likely to predict the behaviour/characteristics/uniqueness of Chanderi Sarees in adopting a GI certification in general and by this bring to light the lacunas in the Geographical Indications and its implementation in particular.

INTRODUCTION

Chanderi Sarees,Chanderi Sari for Women,Chanderi Silk Sarees,Indian Chanderi Sari. Chanderi is a town of historical importance in Ashok nagar district of Madhya Pradesh. It is surrounded by beautiful hills southwest of Betwa river. There are several monuments of the Bundela Rajputs and Malwa sultan.

Chanderi, which is amongst the best known handloom clusters, occupies a special place because of its centuries old weaving speciality of producing finely textured fabrics of **silk** and **cotton** embellished with zari woven work, and more specifically because of its saris that have been patronized by royalty.

Chanderi is a traditional ethnic fabric characterized by its lightweight, sheer texture and fine luxurious feel. **Chanderi** fabric is produced by weaving in **silk** and golden Zari in the traditional cotton yarn that results in the creation of the shimmering texture.

It is registered in the registry of Geographical Indication in 2005 under Textile by Chanderi Development Foundation, Madhya Pradesh

HISTORY OF CHANDERI SAREES:

Ancient texts speak of Madhya Pradesh as a famous center for weaving between the 7th century and the 2nd century BC. One of the historical identities of Madhya Pradesh, is situated on the boundary of two cultural regions of the state, Malwa and Bundelkhand. This habitation, in the dense forests of Vindhya Ranges, is a depository of various traditions. Contemporarily, in eleventh century, its location near the trade routes, connecting Malwa, Mewad and Central India to the ports of South and Gujrat, gave it the importance. It has been an important ancient center of Jain culture. We find its reference in the Epic Mahabharata. Famous Persian scholar Albaruni referred this town while making a reference to a period around 1030AD in his book "Albaruni's India".

Mughals, Rajputs and Maratha dynasties ruled this region from time to time. Kings and Kingdoms, Badshahs and Sultans, battles won and lost, Queens who performed Johar, Palaces, Forts, Doors and what not, which gave name and fame to Chanderi, now remain only part of stories and fables; but what survived throughout, from 12th and 13th centuries AD till today, is the magic of the weave of Chanderi which is known to rich and middle classes of India as 'Chanderi Saris'.

Proven record of tradition of cloth weaving is available from 13th century. In the beginning, weavers were mostly Muslims. In 1350, Koshti weavers from Jhansi migrated to Chanderi and settled down here. During Mughal period cloth business of Chanderi reached to its peak. The cloth length of Chandri was sent to Mughal Badshah Akbar folded and packed in a hollow of a bamboo, when it was taken out, a whole Elephant could have been covered by its length. This was the delicacy and sophistication of weaving of those days. During the reign of Jahangir, this art of weaving still used to mesmerize people. But this is also true that this excellence of weaving which peaked during Mughal period, also deteriorated during this very period. Jain community has been living in Chanderi for a very long time. There are many Jain temples and pilgrimages in Chanderi. It is said that in Gajrah Samaharos, held between 1436 to 1468, turbans made only from Chanderi cloth were worn. Chroniclers of history of Chanderi have mentioned the uniqueness of Chanderi fabrics. Tieffenthaler, a Jesuit priest who stayed in nearby Marwar from 1740 to 1761, mentioned in his description De L'Inde in 1776 that "very fine cloth is woven here and exported abroad." One by-product of this was the growth of new weaving centers; Chanderi rose to prominence as a cloth producer on the back of the raw cotton boom.

Weavers produced very fine quality turbans for export to Maratha rulers among whom the cocked 'turban' was becoming a distinguishing mark of high nobility. Much earlier one finds mention of Chanderi in Maasir-i-Alamgir (1658-1707) wherein it is stated that Aurangzeb ordered that "in the Khilat Khana embroider cloth should be used instead of stuff with gold and silver worked on it." The material was very expensive, a pair of sari costing eight hundred to one thousand rupees and sometimes even more. "The beauty of fabric consists in its fineness, softness and transparency, but the ends were often worked and fringed heavily with gold thread." A British R.C. Sterndal described Chanderi cloth as, "Chandery is a place where thin Malmal cloth is woven. The cloth woven in Chandery is the favorable choice of Queens in India. This cloth is very expensive, which have works of Golden thread on its borders. The cloth of Chandery can be identified by its thin, soft and transparent texture, which can only be experienced." Till recently, all the turbans of Maratha rulers of India were made by Chandery weavers. These turbans were woven on a 6" loom. There is probably no weaver of this school of weaving is left in Chandery now. Royal families of Gwalior, Indore, kohlapur, Baroda and Nagpur used clothes woven in Chandery on festivals like child birth, marriage, etc. Chandery produced a range of saris appropriate to the tastes of its clients, the royalty and nobility of Gwalior, Baroda, Nagpur and beyond. Rarely could a trader get past the discerning eye of an elder in these select households. The Maharani of Baroda would immediately put aside the 200s count cotton by just a 'rub on the cheek' and could decipher the finer nuances of the motif work and pay accordingly. Gwalior state patronized Chandery weavers from time to time. Traditionally, Chandery cloth was woven using hand spun cotton thread. Threads were always brought here from outside. Due to its proximity to trade routes, supply of threads was never interrupted; but in 19th century local weavers started using mill spun thread. Then Silk thread was preferred because the mill spun cotton thread could not produce the required shine which was the specialty of Chandery cloth. This was the time when 'woven air', which was the name to describe exclusiveness of Chandery cloth had started losing its meaning.

Major Findings:

1. After the registration of Chandery Sarees under the registration in Geographical Indication in 2005 there is great increase in the export.
2. As a result of registration of Chandery Sarees under the registration in Geographical Indication there is increase in the demand of it from the domestic market.
3. People are ready for paying high price due to its purity which is indicated by Geographical Indication.
4. Investment in this is increased by the investors even large investors are also taking interest in Chandery Sarees.
5. It remove the asymmetry of information regarding quality of the product.
6. Geographical Indication helps in making brand value of the Chandery Sarees.
7. It results in increase in the salary of the actors associated with value chain of Chandery Sarees.

CONCLUSIONS:

No doubt there is vast improvement in the Demand, Production, Goodwill and Export of Chandery Sarees due to Geographical Indication but due to weak coordination of state and central government, it does not benefited as its maximum efficiency and the benefit derived by the Geographical Indication does not percolate perpositionally as the contribution of the actors of value chain in Chandery Sarees.

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