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**Infringements in GI Protected Products:
How Do We Protect the Producers and
the Consumers?**

**N. Lalitha
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Abstract

Origin labelling of goods known as Geographical Indications (GI), is an intellectual property right. The legal structure governing GIs was introduced in late 1990s and has been implemented since early 2000s. In this paper, we discuss protection of interests of the producers by law and the adequacy of these provisions to counter infringements. Infringements are very common and it is taken cognizance off more in goods, which have higher trade volumes both in domestic and international markets. The well-known examples of Darjeeling Tea and Basmati Rice are cases in point. However, a cursory look at the registration of GI products from India throws light on a range of goods covering agriculture, manufactured and handicraft goods. These are sold through a variety of marketing channels. This necessitates appropriate governing mechanism for inspection and detection of infringements. Drawing evidences from both secondary data and primary case studies concerning GI protected handicrafts, this paper attempts to answer the questions on the governance mechanisms in place to implement GI tag use. This is required to ensure the perpetuation of geography and quality link which the consumers concur with while making purchase. Such mechanism to supervise and inspect quality standards can also act as a watchdog against infringements. The paper highlights the competition faced by the GI tagged handicrafts as well as instances of legal action, coping and mitigation strategies followed by artisan producers to counter similar/ counterfeit products especially machine made products.

Keywords : Geographical indications, infringement, authorised user, inspection body

JEL Codes : O34, F14, L51, L67 and M38

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Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Contents	iii
List of Table	iii
1 Introduction	1
2 Importance of GI, Infringement, Legal provisions and Challenges	2
2.1 <i>Importance of GI</i>	2
2.2 <i>Infringement</i>	3
2.3 <i>Authorised User (AU)</i>	3
2.4 <i>Inspection body</i>	7
3 Infringements of the Indian GIs and producers response	8
3.1 <i>Role of Government</i>	12
4 Concluding Remarks	13
References	15

List of Table

Table 1: Break-up of GI AU Applications as on March 31, 2017	6
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Infringements in GI Protected Products: How Do We Protect the Producers and the Consumers?

**N. Lalitha
Soumya Vinayan**

1. Introduction

The legal framework governing the registration and protection of origin-linked products came into being in India in 2003 with the adoption of the Geographical Indications (GI) Goods (Registration and Protection) Act 1999, and Rules 2002. Under the Act, agricultural, handicrafts, natural and manufactured products that have strong documented evidence about the link between the geo location and the product, are protected. The link could be in the form of natural factors like quality of water, climatic factor or landscape that is very unique to the region or the human skills involved in processing or manufacturing the product. GIs, like other intellectual properties (IPs), provide a bundle of rights to the proprietors. These are ‘the power to control the resource, the right to determine what use is made of it and under what conditions and, most importantly, the right to exclude others from it’ (quoted in Dagne 2012, p.381). The right to exclude others stems out of the geographical boundaries set up based on careful consideration of the uniqueness rendered due to natural and human factors. However, due to the limited awareness about GI and the legal framework in general among the producers and the consumers, infringements in GI are quiet common in all types of GI products. While infringements in products that are linked with the region through natural factors are not unheard of (Darjeeling Tea), products that are linked with the region mainly because of human skills are more liable to be infringed. This is due to the (1) mobility of the skilled labour and (2) availability of similar/core raw materials in other parts of country.

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Unlike the other IPs, infringements in GI would affect all the producers of a product in a given region due to its collective ownership and hence, should be addressed immediately. We argue in this paper that for preventing GI infringements two essential complimentary aspects i.e., registration of authorised users (AU) and a functioning inspection body should be in place. The paper is organised as follows. In the second section following this introduction, we highlight the importance of GI, provide the definitions of GI infringement, authorised user and inspection body and a discussion on the same. In the third section, we provide evidences of GI infringements drawn from authors' own studies and elsewhere along with the action taken by the different stakeholders. The last section provides the conclusion.

2. Importance of GI, Infringement, Legal provisions and Challenges

2.1 Importance of GI

GI is one of the intellectual property rights tools wherein the right is collective as it is owned by all the producers within the defined GI territory. As GI indicates that the uniqueness of the product is derived due to its link with a place, it can be used as a potential marketing tool to carve a niche market in the midst of the uniform industrial goods. The advantages would be manifold if all the processes like the production, processing and packaging takes place in one locality, since all the benefits of employment, infrastructure etc. would benefit the community in a particular place, through the multiplier effect.

GI bridges the information gap between the buyer and the seller and contributes to creation of a niche market based on uniqueness and quality, as distinguished from other products. But the niche market could only be created when there is a systematic effort to launch such GI products based on their uniqueness. Uniqueness in most of the GI products is a qualitative phenomenon and has to be experienced to understand the distinct feature. Hence, consumers who value the uniqueness make repeated purchases and are willing to pay a higher price for the uniqueness and the producers are willing to invest to maintain the uniqueness. Thus, GI can be aptly termed as credence good where not just repeated purchases and inspection, but also the reputation of the good as emanating from the region plays an important

role in consumption.¹ Thus, GI if appropriately used, could be a tool to promote rural development and women empowerment, to build sustainable communities and fight hunger.

In order to realise all these benefits, it is required that the proprietors of GI form themselves into a collective, identify the value chain, evolve a code of practice and set up an inspection mechanism that will guarantee the consumers for the products' uniqueness and authenticity, and also ensure that there is no infringement of the collective right.

2.2 Infringement

According to Article 22.1 of the GI Act, "*A registered GI is infringed by a person who not being an authorised user (AU) thereof (a) uses such GI by any means in the designations or presentation of goods that indicates or suggests that such goods originate in a geographical area other than the true place of origin of such goods in a manner which misleads the persons as the geographical origin of such goods: or (b) uses any GI in such manner which constitutes an act of unfair competition including passing off in respect of registered GI*". Thus this brief definition, defines both an infringer and the acts of infringement. To cite an example, Banarasi sari is not only preferred for its design or colour or texture, but for the fact that it has originated from Banaras and woven by a weaver from the region, a reputation built over time. Hence, an act of weaving a 'Banarasi sari' for instance in southern part of India will be an act of infringement.

2.3 Authorised User (AU)

The GI application filing consists of part A and Part B. Part A of the application deals with GI registration for a product. Part B of the application deals with the recognition of persons who may use the GI certification. In order to prevent any unauthorised use of GI, it is essential that the proprietors of GI complete the part B of the GI application which is known as the application for the recognition of the AU. The definition of AU is synonymous with the term 'producer'. Section 2 (1) (k) of the GI Act (1999) defines the "*producer in relation to goods, means any person who : if such goods are agricultural goods, produces the goods and includes the person who*

¹ See Nelson 1970 for a discussion on search, experience and credence goods.

processes or packages such goods; if such goods are natural goods, exploits the goods; If such goods are handicrafts or industrial goods makes or manufactures the goods and includes any person who trades or deals in such production, exploitation, making or manufacturing as the case may be of the goods”.

Thus the definition of the producer under the GI Act is very broad and includes not only producers, but also traders and other dealers including those who are engaged in packing the goods, or say online trading of the goods, or in other words all the stakeholders in the value chain. Thus, to prevent any misuse of GI, it is essential all stakeholders in the value chain should register with the GI Registry for recognition as AU, with a statement how he/she qualifies as a producer with a copy of the application to the registered proprietors (or include a consent letter from the proprietors) of that particular GI. In fact, the Registry publishes the AU application in the journal and writes to the registered proprietors about the claim. In case of no opposition from the proprietors of GI or anybody else, the person is registered as the AU.

While the geographical location has to be the same as that of the product for the artisans and the agricultural producers, it is not essential for the traders. To cite an example, in the case of kutchi shawl a person who is producing the same in the designated area of Kutch would be considered as a producer. A trader who is procuring from the artisan in Kutch but residing and trading in Mumbai may also apply for AU. But this becomes unwieldy in practical scenario. As the traders deal with more than one producer (which may or may not be in the GI locality) at a time, traceability is not maintained and in the absence of any efforts from the producer to retain the identity of the origin of the product, the regional identity of the product is lost. The problems become manifold when the same dealer/trader sells both GI products and similar and/or counterfeit products of GI. For example, a trader in textiles could be selling a GI tagged Banarasi sari as well as a power loom made artificial zari sari. But the act of infringement happen when the artificial, machine made zari sari is sold as hand woven Banarasi sari!!.

In the case of products traded in the organised sector it is possible to identify the value chain. For instance, under the authentication process by the Tea Board, 171 companies dealing in Darjeeling tea have registered with the Tea Board. Of this, seventy-four are producer companies and ninety-

seven are trader/exporter companies (Pai and Singla, 2016, p. 17). But in contrast to this, most of the craft producers often operate in the informal sector.

One important question that the researchers face during the field study is that: does non-registration of the producers as AU make them unauthorised producers? While certainly it is not the case, yet registration as an AU helps the producer to fight any case of infringement.

Here, it is observed that though more than 326 products (including logo and products of foreign origin) have been registered with the GI Registry of India, not all the proprietors of the products have identified the authorised users or the value chain. One important reason is the limited awareness about GI itself. For instance, while a number of GI applications were filed by government agencies, a small group of producers motivated by a single individual or NGO also filed the GI application. In such cases, the awareness of GI filing is limited to the small group of persons. Hence, identification of AU had not taken place. It is also not unusual to find in the context of Indian GIs, that the proprietors have renewed the GI registrations too, without attending to the Part B part of the applications. Hence, given these scenario, even if infringement of GI had taken place, no action would have been taken due to lack of awareness about the GI registration, its impact as well as the potential of GI among different stakeholders.

The GI registry started receiving GI AU applications from May 2009 and has received 3897 GI AU applications as on March 31, 2017. A total number of 1466 GI AU certificates have been issued. From April 01, 2016 to March 31, 2017 alone, the GI Registry received 32 GI applications and 1548 AU applications. 34 GIs and 282 AUs were registered during this reference period (Government of India 2016-17). Table 1 provides the status of AU applications by the broad category.

Table 1: Break-up of GI AU Applications as on March 31, 2017

Type of goods	No of GI AU applications received	No. of GI AU applications registered
Handicraft (including textiles)	2554	1374
Agriculture	1271	25
Manufacturing	56	56
Food stuff	16	11
Natural	0	0
Total	3897	1466

Source: Government of India 2016-17, p.8.

Lalitha and Vinayan (2018) observe that the AU registrations are relatively higher in the case of textile products compared to other products. They argue that it could be due to the fact that most of the textile GI applications have been filed by the cooperatives or exporter associations or samitis or that the yarn production in India is centralised (the main source is that of spinning mills while the share of hand spun is negligible). However, filing the AU application alone does not serve the purpose as evident in the case of Bhavani Jamakalam. Interaction with the weavers and societies producing the Bhavani Jamakalam brought out that the weavers were experiencing a steep decline in the sales due to the rampant competition from the powerloom producers. The power looms were producing the similar design and texture, which a common consumer would never be able to distinguish the original, and the duplicate. Though a number of cooperatives became the AU, they did not know how to utilise it nor did they have any information on how to deal with the unfair competition from the powerloom. This is reflected in the statement of Chinnaraja Naidu², “Infringements do take place. The proprietor or user can register a complaint with the police if they find out that their innovations are being copied. However, not one case has been registered so far as people do not know whom to blame for infringement or whom to approach”³.

This brings us to the next issue in GI namely the governance mechanism in the form of inspection body which is concerned with the standards to be followed and maintaining GI by serving as a watch dog.

² Presently Deputy Registrar of GI, GI Registry, Government of India, Chennai.

³ "GI can protect handicrafts from abuse" by Radhika Santhanam <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/on-campus/GI-can-protect-handicrafts-from-abuse/article20561046.ece>, accessed on 23rd October 2018.

2.4 Inspection body

While submitting the GI application for the consideration of registration of the product (Part A), the applicant is required to mention the details of the inspection structure that will regulate the use of GI within the territory or locality (GI Rules, 32 (g)). GI Rules 32 1 (c) states the application should mention the “*the particulars of the mechanism to ensure that the standards, quality, integrity and consistency or other special characteristic in respect of the goods to which the geographical indication relates which are maintained by the producers, maker or manufacturers of the goods, as the case may be;*”

A detailed analysis of the type of inspection structure mentioned in the application brought out the lapses in the inspection body set up (Lalitha and Vinayan 2019). These authors point out that for 22 per cent of the products, the inspection body has not been set up and for 34 per cent of the applications, the names of the agencies that would function as the inspection body is mentioned but not the details of the roles. In 21 per cent of the applications, the role of the inspection body is to check the quality of the GI product and the quality details are specified. In 11 per cent of the applications, the purpose is stated, as ‘the GI Inspection body has been constituted to regulate the use of GI in the territory to which it relates and to maintain the quality of the GI produce’. Detailed research is required to study the performance of such inspection agencies.

A functioning inspection mechanism is necessary and it boosts consumers’ interest in the GI product. However, under the GI Act of India, failure to setup an inspection structure is not considered as a sufficient ground for demonstrating the inadequacy of an application to register a GI (Pai and Singla 2016).

Nair (2016) observes that products like Champagne, Cognac, Parma Ham have become GI icons due to the consistent emphasis on quality, implemented by layers of governance structures. EU law necessitates that effective verification and controls exists at multiple levels in the supply chain, ensuring compliance with product specification before placing it in the market for GI tag use and the market monitoring of the use of the names to ensure legal compliance,⁴ which safeguards that consumers get

⁴ <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/comment-article-by-latha-r-nair-making-india-geographical-indications-gi-brand-conscious/article8361576.ece>, accessed on 26 October 2017.

authentic product and thereby build on consumers' trust. The following case highlights the working of such mechanisms.⁵

The Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) has initiated the Spirit Drinks Verification Scheme (SDVS) which requires the producers of the GI spirit drink in the UK to apply for verification under the SDVS. This is to ensure that all the production facilities, importers and brands meet with the standards set by the SWA. Such a requirement is to authenticate the product and assure the consumers of its quality. Outside Scotland any spirit producer who wants to use Scotch whisky in their product must first apply under the SDVS. SWA had filed cases against Oasis Distilleries Ltd, Adie Broswon Distillers & Bottlers Pvt Ltd and Malbros International Pvt Ltd in India against the use of the terms 'Scotch' and 'Scotland' by these three Indian liquor firms. SWA won the case because besides the additional protection it had in India, it had set up the additional inspection mechanism under SDVS. As none of these three Indian companies were listed under the SDVS, it had become easy to prove the violation. The Indian Court granted three permanent injunctions against each company prohibiting them from referencing 'Scotch' or 'Scotland' on any of their products Royal Arms, Blue Patrol and Malbros.

Thus, such governance structure set up through the collective action and inspection body would ensure that there is no free ride on the good will created by the GI producers.

3. Infringements of the Indian GIs and producers response⁶

There are evidences in the Indian context where the government or the religious board is strictly guarding the GI. For instance, the GI on Mysore silk is fiercely protected by the Karnataka state government, where the Mysore Silk products are sold only through the government sales emporiums and no other person is given the franchise. Darjeeling tea GI is protected by the Tea board. The Thirupathy Devosam Board has ensured that the

⁵ Compiled from <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/world/uk-toasts-indian-court-ruling-on-scotch/article8337266.ece>, accessed on 23rd October 2018.

⁶ Here we present the discussion based on the case studies carried out by the authors and supported by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi, (cited as Lalitha, 2014 and Vinayan, 2013) and another study supported by INTACH Academy cited as Lalitha, 2018 here.

Thirupathy laddu is available only in designated places in Thirupathy. However, majority of the GI proprietors do not have such capacity to guard the GI due to a variety of factors.

While the watchdog mechanism set up by the Tea Board has been largely able to prevent misuse of GI and copyright in the case of Darjeeling tea, yet infringement does take place. Das (2009) and Pai and Singla (2016) points out infringement in case of Darjeeling tea, where the quantity transacted is much higher than reported production from the designated area. The invasion of the powerloom products have significantly affected the handloom segment a lot particularly the GIs like Banarasi sari, Kancheepuram and Pochampalli to mention a few, where the weavers have left weaving and taken up some other source as livelihood. The other strategy of the weavers had been to produce the cheaper materials to cut down costs and compete with the power loom producers (Pai and Singla, 2016). This actually may be termed as deskilling of the artisans as they are moving away from their traditional style of weaving to the industrialised weaving segment.

In the context of the Banarasi weavers, the moot question is: 'Will GI be helpful in bringing back those thousands of weavers back into this famous craft who gave up weaving as their livelihoods that were destroyed due to almost the same reasons GI protection is supposed to address? . . . Majority of the producers do not have the capacity to report and fight infringement' (quoted in Kumar and Bahl, 2010, p.8).

A recent research on GI registered craft products from Kutch found the widespread infringement of craft products and its devastating impact on traditional practices (Lalitha, 2018). In Kutch, competition from duplicate products in embroidery, Ajrakh printing and kutchi weaving had been rampant from the machine embroidery, screen printing and power looms respectively. 48 per cent of our (total 204) respondents said they are aware of the duplicate products in their craft and 84 per cent of the respondents are aware that it affects their sales. 86 per cent of the respondents reported on the different aspects by which the duplicate products attract the customers. Prominent among these reasons were, lower price (73%), attractiveness (13%), product range (6%) and low consumer awareness (5%).

Kutch weavers association was formed with about 350 members to file the GI application for Kutch Shawls, though the association hoped to fight against the competition from machine made shawls of Ludhiana. However, even after about 7 years of GI registration, the effectiveness with which the competition has been countered is not satisfactory. In the words of one of the master weavers, “it is very difficult for the ordinary consumers to distinguish between the machine made and the hand woven shawls. Only a weaver can identify the difference. The machine made shawls have invaded the market. Due to this unfair competition, there is not much work for the weavers now”. Besides the lack of knowledge of how to go about filing the case against the Ludhiana shawl makers, the master weaver added “those who can take action are not doing anything and those who cannot take action want to take action”. He added that many weavers do not want to strain their relationship with traders who supply the acrylic yarn to the weavers in Kutch. The association met couple of times to discuss the issue but no concrete action has emerged so far. It was obvious in this case that, the main issue has been the lack of identification of AU and an active inspection body which can identify the points of entry and the kinds of entry of infringed products.

One way of countering the competition is to sell the product with a logo or handloom mark, or silk mark or craft mark. Use of exclusive marks like handloom mark was reported by a handful of respondents (10). Using the recognised marks in the finished product gives the consumers assurance of the quality. But the awareness is totally missing among the weavers which give room for the powerloom players to misleadingly call their produce as handloom product (Lalitha, 2018).

It was noted from the discussions that there are logos for embroidery and weaving that were registered along with the GI application. But the survey results indicated only 15 persons out of the entire 204 respondents use the logo and many were not aware of the logo (Lalitha, 2018). Situation remains the same across products like Swamimalai Bronze Icons, Mysore Agarbathi, and Machilipatnam Kalamkari work (Lalitha 2014). Less than 5 per cent of the Pochampalli weavers were of the opinion that a logo would be useful for marketing (Vinayan 2013). However, studies have demonstrated consumers’ willingness to pay for GI products (Soam and Sastry, 2008, Datta 2010, Rose and Umesh 2012, Vinayan 2015) highlighting that consumer awareness does lead to better economic returns for the producers.

Interestingly during the personal interview with one of the master weavers (Lalitha, 2018), we noticed a bundle of the logo (GI) placed in a corner of the room, which he said he had not been using. He said unlike the handloom mark which is provided after inspection and had specific serial numbers that can be used for tracing the handloom good, the GI logo is given to the members of the association and can be easily replicated by the competitors. He also emphasised that it is not possible for the small weavers with one or two looms to fight against infringement, and that the weavers should respond to infringement with positive actions. The suggested measures include, focusing on marina wool products, which is hard to use in power loom and wide publicity for the hand woven products according to the master weaver. But at the point of our study (February 2018) it was not happening. Most weavers have responded to the unfair competition by shifting to other product lines like saris, stoles and dupattas made of organic cotton making a shift in the product line completely and concentrating less on the shawls segment.

The Kutch weavers strategy is similar to that of the Kota handloom weavers to innovatively fight the competition from powerloom. The strategy was to weave very intricate designs that are preferred by the premium segment of the consumers and weave the GI logo on the corner of the sari (Sharma and Kulhari 2015) that are difficult to replicate in powerloom.

Machilipatnam Kalamkari (MK) presents another dimension, as the proprietors of GI have also followed up with filing AU, which includes the prominent producer cum trader. Two of these AU are exporters. MK like Ajrakh printing faces tough competition from screen printers. The cost difference between machine printing (Rs.5 per metre) and vegetable printing (Rs. 30 per metre) explains the economics. According to these AUs copying of the Machilipatnam designs, replicating the same in machine printing and selling the same as MK is a gross violation of the GI. Evidently, the textile ministry had not acted against the violators though the AUs had brought it to the notice of the Ministry. According to the AUs, MK enjoys a niche market due to the hand block printing and use of vegetable colours but they do not get their due share because of the competition from the screen printers (Lalitha 2014).

Social dynamics also plays a role in checking the infringements (Lalitha, 2014). For instance, in the case of Aranmula mirror, there are about 15

artisans belonging to the two panchayats of Aranmula and Mannupuzhachery which is defined as the GI territory. Though the registered proprietors are aware of the fact that a few individuals are making the metal mirrors outside the designated area and also selling it as the Aranmula metal mirror, the proprietors have not taken action. The reason told by the proprietors was that ‘even the infringers belong to our caste (vishwakarma)’and that the families are related.

Mysore agarbathi which is a GI protected under manufactured product category, the manufacturers pointed out that fragrance infringement is fierce which deprives the manufacturers of exclusivity.

In 2005, it was brought to the attention of the registered proprietors of Pochampalli Ikat GI that machine made saris were being passed off as Pochampalli Ikat by a Mumbai based businessman through a large retail chain. M/S Anand and Anand, a legal firm, was hired to argue the case of infringement at a reduced cost for weavers and the process was initiated. However, during the discussion with both the proprietors, the manufacturers association and the cooperative society, it was revealed that an out-of-court settlement had taken place which led to the manufacturer destroying the unsold stock and assurance that machine made ikat saris would not be henceforth sold as Pochampalli. The association maintained that the infringement was due to a lack of implementation of the inspection structure (Vinayan 2013). They also pointed out that in the absence of out of court settlement, the Pochampalli case would have set an example for punitive actions against infringement in case of GI registered non-agricultural products.

3.1 Role of Government

Origin labelling pre-dates by several centuries but the awareness among consumers about the legislation and registration of GI products was found to be abysmal. This is not surprising given the fact that producers themselves were not aware of the same. There are a number of GIs like Thanjavur painting which does not have any ‘association with Thanjavur’ at present. This is because, though the craft originated there, now the artisans are engaged in this craft in different parts of Tamil Nadu and all the materials required for the painting are sourced from different places of the country. As Neilson et al. (2018) says, GI here has more symbolic value and in such cases, it is difficult to estimate the economic benefit and ‘the GI does not

actually need to be properly functioning, replete with complicated quality control mechanisms, for these outcomes to be realised' (p.21). However, in other products, which are economic assets of region, it is essential to have collective action that draws up rules and regulations of the use of GI and set up the inspection body. Though the Act defines the cases when a registered GI is said to be infringed, it is silent on the mechanism and provisions to fight against the infringement and this is an area where the government needs to play a larger role' (Kumar and Bahl, 2010, p.8). In case of Pochampalli, in fact, the state government had formed District and State level Committee for the inspection of GI implementation which constituted not only representatives of the registered proprietors but also officials from the concerned departments in charge of textiles and handlooms, representatives of several state and central institutions as well as non-governmental organisations working in the area.⁷ However, both at the state and district levels, very few meetings had taken place and nothing concrete had evolved out of it.

4. Concluding Remarks

Studies on crafts have shown that across the value chain from producers and dealers, to manufacturers and exporters 'not one expressed any optimism regarding the possibilities for legal enforcement of ownership rights' (Liebl and Roy 2003). This disillusionment could have been compounded not only because of lack of awareness about GIs but also out of the ineffective implementation of Handloom Reservation Act in vogue since 1950s which had reserved 22 items (it came down to 11 in 1993) for exclusive production by handloom. The total ineffectiveness in the implementation of reservation was seen from the fact the number actually reported has been shockingly as low as 5 to 15 for the entire country despite gross violations across the country (Vinayan 2006). Officials concerned with the implementation of reservation, often cited technical specifications of products reserved as a major impediment to effective implementation of the Reservation Act. For example, weavers in Pochampalli point out that tie and dye saris produced by Arvind mills does not come under the purview of the Reservation Act because the cloth has more than 45% of blended material. Positive strategies like weaving very complicated designs that would be difficult to replicate in the power loom segment would create a niche market for the artisans.

⁷ See Annexure 3.1 (Vinayan 2013)

However, skilled artisans resorting to producing cheaper materials would actually lead to deskilling and loss of traditional practices and would only intensify the infringements.

Given the complex scenario concerning handicrafts and agricultural GIs in the country, it would be interesting to note how the rules are framed for the use of the common GI logo unveiled by the Government of India in August 2018. Had the AUs been registered, allocating the logo for a fee would have been possible. In the absence of the AU and a properly functioning inspection body, the rules governing the use of logo are very important. Implementing the logo would be half the battle won for GI and popularizing the logo widely would help the consumers to differentiate the GI products from the rest and patronise.

Success of GI depends on collectivism from the producers' point of view to evolve and implement the regulations governing GI and being a 'responsible' consumer from the consumer point of view to look for the authentic product. If these two aspects were addressed, then the sustainability of livelihoods of those producers would be guaranteed. In short, the government has to initiate post GI registration activities so that implementation of GI takes place. GI awareness creation is important and the government has a major role to play as GIs are cultural heritage assets of the region. In this regard, we strongly recommend the following. Irrespective of the proprietorship of the product, once the GI is granted for a product, the government should provide wide publicity about the (1) registration, (2) producers association and (3) defined GI area in the vernacular papers for wider public to know about the GI registration. Such initiative along with publicising the common logo would help the producers to take more interest in the protection and conservation of the product and benefit consumers to buy authentic GI products and patronise GI producers.

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The broad thrust areas of research at the Institute include Natural Resource Management, Agriculture and Climate Change, Industry, Infrastructure, Trade and Finance, Employment, Migration and Urbanisation, Poverty and Human Resource Development and Regional Development, Institutions and Governance.

- In the area of **Natural Resource Management, Agriculture and Climate Change**, in-depth studies have been carried out relating to some of the major development interventions like Participatory Irrigation Management, Watershed Development Programmes, Joint Forest Management and Protected Area Management. The studies have focused mainly on aspects relating to economic viability, equity and institutional mechanisms. In the sphere of management of natural resources, these studies often explore the interrelationships between the community, government and civil society. Many of these studies, based on careful empirical enquiry at the micro level, have contributed to the on-going debates on sustainable environment and institutions. Issues in Common Property Land Resources and land use have also been researched extensively.
- The research in the area of **Industry, Infrastructure, Trade and Finance** focuses on the response of micro, small and medium enterprises to the changing government policies in the wake of liberalisation. The research has contributed to work on industrial clusters, flexible specialization and addresses issues involving intellectual property regimes, especially for pharmaceuticals and biotechnology. Studies dealing with issues in provisioning of and access to basic infrastructure both in the rural and urban areas, the linkages between infrastructure, trade and finance, regional growth and aspects of governance have also been carried out at the Institute.
- Studies under the theme **Employment, Migration and Urbanisation** relate to population, demographic changes, labour, nature of employment, diversification of economic activities and migration. An emerging aspect has been to study international migration to trace social, economic, cultural and political influences through remittances, social spending and norms setting. Urban services and aspects of urban economy and governance have also been an important emerging area of research at the Institute.
- The research in **Poverty and Human Resource Development** focuses on population, labour and poverty issues. The studies relate to quality of life, education, social infrastructure, diversification of economic activities and migration. The informalisation process in the labour and production systems leading to poverty and social security issues forms another important theme. The research on health and family welfare has contributed towards developing a framework for target-free approach in family planning. In the informal sector debate the research has focused on the collection of social statistics to influence policies for better labour conditions and social security reforms.
- The enquiry in **Regional Development, Institutions and Governance** concentrates on application of regional planning models, data collection and analysis for regional planning exercises, impact of area development plans on growth and development of the regional economy. Studies have also focused on studying the role and participation of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the development process, the changes in the characteristics of the NGOs and so on.

The major strength of the Institute is a thorough understanding of the micro processes and a consolidated effort to link these to macro issues. The faculty members have made considerable endeavour towards developing policy-sensitive database of the Indian economy, especially relating to the informal activities, including child labour. The Institute has played a useful role in promoting empirical research in the country and the evolution of related conceptual framework and approaches. Overtime, the Institute's research agenda has broadened to cover a fairly wide range of issues pertaining to development policy both at the regional and the national levels. The results of the Institute's research are shared with policy makers, non-governmental organisations and other academicians. The faculty members at the Institute also participate in government panels, committees and working groups to influence certain policy decisions. The Institute promotes public discussion through the publication of its research findings and through seminars, conferences and consultation and undertakes collaborative research along with NGOs, international organisations, government and academic institutions.