

Leveraging the Benefits of the Geographical Indication (GI) Tag for Revival and Sustenance of Farrukhabad Prints

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ABSTRACT

India being a land of diverse culture and cultural practices, gave rise to many arts and crafts with each having its own distinct style. With the passage of time many traditional craft practices languished necessitating their preservation. Hence, the GI -Tag was envisaged, to not only preserve the traditional knowledge but also give registered artisans the rights to be the sole users. The 'Farrukhabad Prints' are originally from Farrukhabad region which evolved through centuries of labor by the natives and has such unique features not found elsewhere in India. Thus, GI-Tag gives rights to legal owners to commercially exploit the craft for their gains. The present study was conducted after a gap of a decade since the grant of GI -tag to 'Farrukhabad Prints' in 2013. The data was collected from secondary and primary sources both in order to assess the awareness about GI-Tag, among the registered users regarding its use, benefits and future scope. The GI data of the hand printing centers was compared and unique characteristics highlighted for quick identification and setting apart products from one center from another in the market. The registered users were found to be absolutely clueless about its purpose and had not yet used it for their gains, indicating towards requirement for training and advocacy.

Key Words : Farrukhabad Prints, Geographical indication, Revival, GI fairs, Registered users, Unique characteristics, Sustenance

INTRODUCTION

The cotton hand block printing craft is believed by few to have originated much before 1000 years in Farrukhabad. However, due to the lack of recorded history and extant pieces available from those times, its antiquity that far couldn't be established. As per written records it is an established fact now, that it was practiced ever since the city was founded by Mohd. Bangash in 1714. Today, there are but few artisans who practice hand block printing on cotton and silk, with most of them having shifted to hand screen printing technique completely. The pattern of the 'tree of life' design was the most popular pattern from this printing center, which required high level of artistic skills to print. The printing industry was an important foreign exchange earner and the district occupied a notable place in the export map of

the world for its silk and cotton prints since the earliest times known. In 1976 there were 240 textile printing units in the district which had a total investment of Rs. 2.40 crore. A sum of Rs. 3.50 crore was invested by way of purchasing raw materials and saree, quilt covers, curtains etc. About Rs. 55 crore of products were produced by these units in 1975-76 and nearly 3000 persons were employed in this trade during that year (<https://ipindia.gov.in/about-us-gi.htm>, 2019).

Review of literature:

Geographical Indication:

Geographical Indications of Goods are defined as that aspect of industrial property which refer to the geographical indication referring to a country or to a place situated therein as being the country or place of origin of that product. Typically, such a name conveys an

assurance of quality and distinctiveness which is essentially attributable to the fact of its origin in that defined geographical locality, region, or country. Under Articles 1 (2) and 10 of the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, geographical indications are covered as an element of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). They are also covered under Articles 22 to 24 of the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement, which was part of the agreements concluding the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations. India, as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 has come into force with effect from fifteenth September 2003 (<https://ipindia.gov.in/about-us-gi.htm>, 2019).

In other word it's a tool which helps producers to differentiate their product from that of other competing products in the market and enables them to build goodwill and a reputation around their products (Geographical Indications of India Socio- Economic and Development Issues, 2011).

In 2000 New Textile Policy rolled out and phasing out of GATT, which actually made the quota system from the world trade phase out and an open market system emerged. This made the competition in export market fierce and only the most competitive and quality product sell in the market (Rao, 2012). It actually weeded out many manufacturers who weren't able to maintain the quality and many other nations took over. By the end of the last century the requirement for innovative designs was strongly felt, which resulted in more emphasis being given to contemporary design. The role of a designer who could create more contemporary designs based on the traditional design repertoire became a central one. This desperate need for creating something unique and modern hit the craftsmen the hardest which were at the receiving end. They were pushed further away from the consumers and were unaware of their taste and demand. The dependency on the middlemen and the exporter/retailer who provided the designs to be produced, led to the decline in the artistic ability inherited by the artisans. This slowly killed the traditional design repertoire of the Farrukhabad prints and the remaining damage was done by rampant use of screen printing. The gradual decline of the craft started in late 1980's, with it being on verge of extinction today. Therefore, the efforts made by the stakeholders to retain the traditional craft and knowledge by attaining GI tag for 'Farrukhabad Prints' is a step in

the direction of revival of the craft.

Economic condition of Farrukhabad:

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj in 2006, listed Farrukhabad amongst other regions, as one of the country's 250 most backward districts (out of a total of 640). It is one of the 34 districts in Uttar Pradesh currently receiving funds from the Backward Regions Grant Fund Programme (BRGF). (Ministry of Panchayati Raj, 2012). Industrial development in the Farrukhabad district has been sluggish. This is despite the fact that Farrukhabad has been famous for its cloth printing and zardozi embroidery work. The zardozi embroidery today remains Farrukhabad's primary industry spread across the city and its rural periphery. The Zardozi embroidery from Farrukhabad is exported to many international markets in Europe, North America and Middle Eastern countries (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, 2016).

Present Status:

The general lethargy and lack of practical approach by its craft persons involved in this craft eventually led to its decline and craft lost its importance. The only ray of hope are these handful of young entrepreneurs who have taken upon themselves the challenge of revival of 'Farrukhabad Prints' from this region and are working hard to regain its lost position (Lal, 2008, pp. 77-80). After a decade long effort, the efforts to revive the craft started showing results with stakeholders being granted GI in 2013, 'Textile Park' being approved with state of the art infrastructure in 2016 and enlisting of the hand block printing under One District One Product (ODOP)- an MSME initiative of U.P. Govt.

METHODOLOGY

The various stakeholders and the organization who were instrumental in working on the documentation for applying for GI Farrukhabad Prints were contacted and interviewed. Qualitative data analysis was conducted on data collected from online source and quantitative data collected through questionnaire implemented to the registered artisan users of the Farrukhabad Print -GI tag. The questionnaire was implemented to collect data on awareness about GI, its usage and utility *i.e.*, if any benefit has been gained till date and its future scope.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the north, Farrukhabad and its adjoining areas such as Kanauj, Bulandshahr, Lucknow etc. have long been an important and flourishing center of calico printing. (Verma, 1980) 'Farrukhabad Prints' under Application No: 234 in respect of Textile and Textile goods not included in other classes; falling in Class – 24 and Clothing falling in Class – 25 was accepted under Sub-section (1) of Section 13 of Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. Subsequently, after a rigorous process and scrutiny, GI tag was finally granted to this block printing cluster for its unique prints and printing style under the name "Farrukhabad Prints" in the year 2013. The applicant 'Vastra Chappai Udyog', Farrukhabad, Uttar Pradesh with various enlisted stakeholders, now are the authorized user.

The products majorly produced at present in this center are bed covers, curtain, wall hangings, quilt covers, cushion covers and yardage material. Along with, scarves, stole, saree, gents' muffler, shawl and dupatta both in cotton and silk in large scale for exports purposes. The above products are both hand block printed and hand screen printed in exclusive designs both traditional and contemporary.

Farrukhabad's artistic, intricate and unique hand block prints are the classical polka dots, variety of tree of life design exclusively designed here for clients around the world and paisley (mango /keributi) as it is known to the West is printed in bold, medium, and very fine designs (List of craft registered under Geographical Indication Handicrafts, 2019). There are many other designs in hand block printing being used in production of various articles as per consumer's demand and taste. The artisans of Farrukhabad are practicing two types *i.e.*, block printing and screen printing. Initially, the artisans used natural dyes for printing but at present they are using mostly synthetic dyes.

A comprehensive study on the various centres of wood block printing around India with GI-TAG revealed the number of players in the market. This helped in gauging the competition in this segment, as well as in identifying the unique characteristics of each including 'Farrukhabad prints' (Table 1). It was found that there are in all 5 GIs granted till date for Hand (wood block) Prints which included centres at Sanganer, Bagru, Bagh, Farrukhabad and Banaras with each one of them having its own distinct identity (Table 2) and are classified under various classes of product (Table 3).

According to Mr. Rohit Goel, President- 'Vastra Chappai Udhog', Farrukhabad there has been no benefit extended by GI-tag to this cluster in the entire decade since its grant, except a recent participation in a GI fair. Its failure was mainly attributed by him to illiteracy and poor awareness among the stakeholders. They have a belief that it is a kind of a burden on them to be part of it and has financial implications. There has been lack of NGO activities and government trainings in this cluster which are much needed to elevate the knowledge and skill of the cluster. No visible significant impact of GI-tag was found to be there and mostly stakeholders were clueless about its benefits.

Along with the GI tag, many centers are also going for third party certification like *Craft mark*, now increasingly evident in Indian handmade products as companies such as *Fabinida* and *Anokhi* have been at the vanguard of such certification and promoting it as USP of their brand. Many of the schemes and policies are now favorable to take these handcrafted products to international level as the approval for setting up of "Textile Park" in Farrukhabad is another step towards producing quality and quantity for exports.





GI Fair – Platform for Promotion and Marketing:

Of all the registered user interviewed only one manufacturer and exporter participated and therefore

Table 1 : Classification of products under consideration

S. No.	Class	Products under consideration	Regions
1	16	Paper, cardboard, and goods made from these materials, not included in other classes. Printed matter;printers' type. Printing blocks.	Pethapur
2	24	Textiles and textile goods, not included in other classes; bed and table cover.	Sanganeri, Bagh, Bagru, Banaras, Farrukhabad
3	25	Clothing, footwear, headgear	Sanganeri, Bagru, Banaras, Farrukhabad

Source: <https://ipindia.gov.in/>

Table 2 : List of all registered geographical indications under hand block printing & carving centers						
Sr. No.	App. No.	Geographical Indications	Classification of goods	State	Year of registration	Logo
Good (As per sec 2(f) of GIG Act 1999) - Handicraft						
1	98	Bagh Prints of Madhya Pradesh	24	Madhya Pradesh	2008 2016 (logo)	
2	147	Sanganeri Hand Block Printing	24 & 25	Rajasthan	2009	-
3	183	Bagru Hand Block Print	24 & 25	Rajasthan	2011	-
4	234	Farrukhabad Prints	24 & 25	Uttar Pradesh	2013	
5	585	Pethapur Printing Blocks	16	Gujarat	2018	
6	624	Banaras Hand Block Print	24 & 25	Uttar Pradesh	2021	

Source: <https://ipindia.gov.in/>

Table 3 : Unique identifying characteristics and number of registered users			
Sr. No.	Geographical Indications	No. of Registered Users	Unique Identifying Characteristics
1	Bagh Prints	156	Geometrical patterns in black and red on white background
2	Sanganeri Hand Block Printing	251	Floral, foliage, trellis, geometric and figurative designs printed on white background. Has delicate natural looking floral sprays in softer tones and aesthetic appeal.
3	Bagru Hand Block Print	344	Same as Sanganeri prints except that it is printed with mostly red and black color on off-white or fawn background.
4	Farrukhabad Prints	82	Exceptional skills in carving (wood block) and printing very intricate designs with large repeats on both cotton and silk. The unique prints are the classical polka dots, variety of contemporary tree of life design and paisley (mango /keributi) which are printed in bold, medium, and very fine designs.
5	Banaras Hand Block Print	60	Fine printing on silk using big and bold designs.

Source : <https://search.ipindia.gov.in/GIRPublic/>

benefited from the, 'GI Fair' organized at India Expo Center and Mart, Greater Noida held from 20th - 24th July 2023.

Though, the GI fairs are a constant feature around the country the benefits reaped through them needs to

be researched upon. The participant company 'La Terra', a Narayan International enterprise into home furnishing received the best stall award (Fig. 1) and also bagged orders with Reliance home furnishing brand - 'Swadesh'. As more success stories are built around the GI -tag

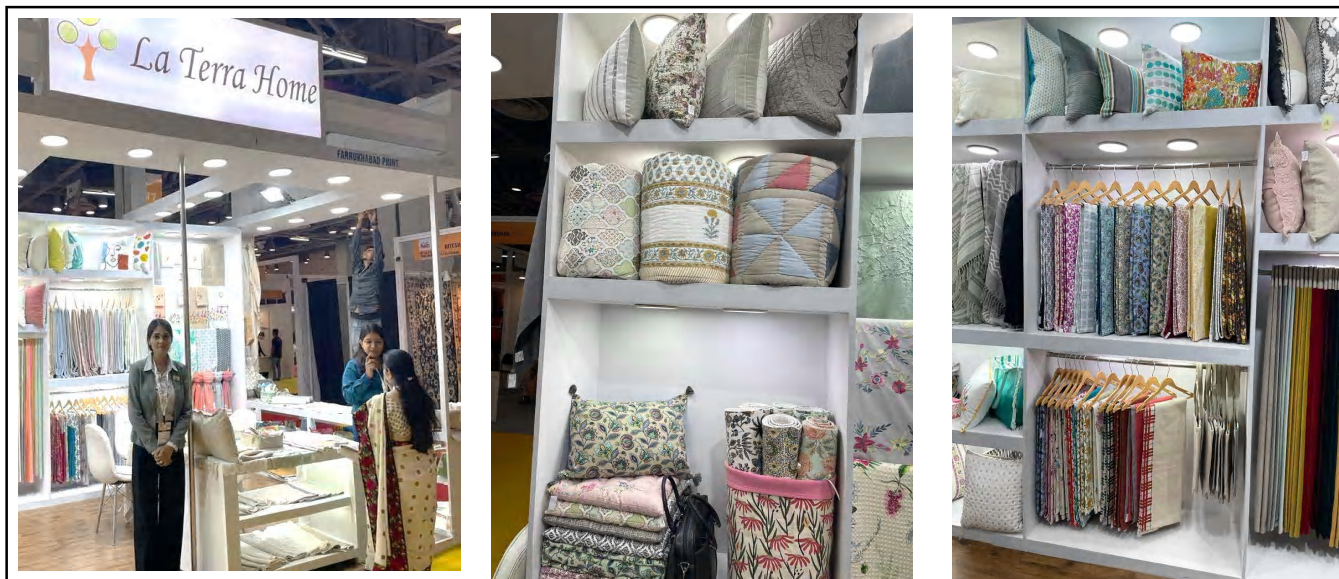


Fig. 1 : The stall of 'La Terra Home' at GI Fair, India Expo Center and Mart, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh

more will be the benefits gained as envisaged in the provision of the act itself.

Suggestions and Conclusion:

In the past two decades the world famous art of Farrukhabad block printing industry with its untiring efforts has been able to achieve its due place in the various forums nationally, which it rightfully deserved and recognition which was long overdue. The first win came with the grant of Geographical Indication to "Farrukhabad Prints" in 2013; second with the approval and sanctioning of grant for "Farrukhabad Textile Park" 2016; and finally its selection under One District One Product (ODOP) in 2018. These achievements once again have laid strong foundation to build a successful business model for the SME and MSME enterprises which will surely bear fruits in the future. After a long time favourable government policies and their efforts to integrate the textile printing industry assures future gains and full returns on investment made by all the stakeholders. In the present scenario Farrukhabad printing seems to be all set to scale new heights with relaunching of 'Farrukhabad Prints' brands once again to the world.

Although government is providing a lot of support to craft and craftsmen to protect their art and culture and derive maximum benefit from the policies, many are either still unaware or not sure of their results, hence deter from applying for them. It's been ten years since GI has been awarded to "Farrukhabad Prints" its indeed

time to do a cost benefit analysis for the same. It's imperative to understand and leverage all its benefits towards rebuilding the brand image of Farrukhabad Prints in national and international market. The stakeholders need to invest capital on quality control and on well-crafted marketing strategy to create a valuable GI brand. As the consumers become more aware than before and increasingly demand GI tagged products, the Farrukhabad Print cluster has to brace up its activities to improve production and quality both. Presently, the number of registered users is far lower than other three major centers and only above Banaras. Therefore, many more artisans practicing the craft have to come forward and register themselves to support the handicraft which will help in providing sustainable livelihood to many. Also, the government should provide the stakeholders the required assistance towards the skill upgradation, modernization of the techniques and quality control for the upliftment of this handicraft and its craftsmen.

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