

# Importance of increasing consumer awareness for gaining advantages from Geographical Indicators in Bagru and Sanganer

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## Abstract

Rajasthan has a rich cultural heritage in textiles which can be seen through its exquisite traditions of dying printing and embroideries. At present most of the geographical indications in Rajasthan are dominated by textile craft and one of the most economically viable crafts are the ones from Sanganer and Bagru. Both these places are known for the unique block printing traditions and their motives are known all over the world for their uniqueness and style. Both these crafts have been granted GIs for over a decade now and there have been no other industries for the manufacturers of the craft. The other side of these textile crafts are consumers who are willing to or have been buying these crafts for a long period of time. The paper discusses the impact of their knowledge towards these products and the effects on their attitude and buying behavior. The paper is based on primary research evidence of a controlled size set of consumers in Jaipur to determine the respondents' knowledge of GIs on the products from Sanganer and Bagru textiles and whether the knowledge has any impact on their purchase behavior. The paper uses both qualitative and quantitative data and uses a closed-ended questionnaire to research consumer attitude and behaviors. The same could be utilized to increase the impact of GIs on the potential consumers so that they are able to identify the authentic product and are also willing to pay a premium for the same.

**Keywords:** Geographical Indications, consumer behaviour, consumer awareness, textile craft

## Introduction

Rajasthan has a rich cultural heritage and tradition of arts and crafts practiced by the local communities. These crafts including textile crafts are often intertwined with the day-to-day lifestyle of the local community

which use locally available materials and climatic conditions for product development. This also gives these crafts a unique local flavour of the place they are produced. Jaipur is the capital of Rajasthan and also the largest city of the state. It has one of the biggest footfall of tourists in the country. The tourists visit Jaipur not only for its monuments but also for its craft products especially the block printed textiles, blue pottery and 'jaipuri razai'.

GI or geographical indication is given to an agricultural product or craft of a local community due to the uniqueness of the product belonging to the geographical location. In Rajasthan, Department of MSME along with State Government through agencies like Rajasthan Small Scale Industries Corporation (RSSIC) and local NGO's have been instrumental in pushing the agenda of GI awareness among various craftspeople groups and encouraging them to make local organizations to help apply for GI applications. A significant number of indigenous crafts have been handpicked by these agencies which have actively worked towards registration for GI. Jaipur city has two significant block printing centres at its close proximity: Sanganer and Bagru. Both the printing styles have a dedicated patronage and have a registered GI due to their distinct style and technique which is practiced in these two centres. It is also important to note that Jaipur is their closest urban retail market and also serves as an important commercial centre for national and international orders.

Consumer knowledge is essential to determine the buying attitude and behaviour of individuals. Knowledge also helps the consumers choose and itemize the benefits of a product, thereby helping individuals decide on factors like price, utility and novelty of the product which helps them make a purchase decision. It is determined by a number of factors including both demographic and psychographic which make pivotal importance in an individual's decision-making process.

In this study, a survey was conducted with respondents in Jaipur to determine the attitude of consumers towards GI based textile products of Bagru and Sanganer. The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To determine the impact of knowledge of GI's in individual's decision making process towards the purchase of GI based products.
- To determine the influence of GI's on an individual's buying decision.
- To suggest measures to increase visibility of GI's for consumers

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## Literature review

According to WIPO Geographical Indication (GI) is described as “A geographical indication (GI) is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin. To function as a GI, a sign must identify a product as originating in a given place.”

GI's are an important and useful tool in preserving the cultural heritage of a local community by providing legal protection to the traditional knowledge of the geographic location by allowing communities to exclusively use and exploit them for their advantage and preventing others from free riding on the goodwill of the products.

Jaipur is a hub of printed textiles and has two important printing centers of Sanganer and Bagru around it. According to Jaipur Fabric Block, Sanganer printing has been around for more than five centuries with the art-form originating around 16<sup>th</sup> century when artisans relocated to Rajasthan village of Sanganer where the unique printing style developed. According to them it became one of the major exports of the East India Company.

The history of Bagru hand block print is undocumented and unclear from most accounts. Bagru village has been involved in block printing custom using natural dyes for more than one hundred years.

According to Deccan Herald (2016) “There is no literature about the beginning of this printing technique, but it is said that it was started around 450 years back in Bagru. This village has a community, CHHIPAS- a traditional crafts people who print and design fabrics by hand. They are known for their unique designs of luxuriant trellis in sophisticated natural colors.”

Around Jaipur, both Sanganer hand-block prints and Bagru prints have registered GI's on these goods which could be sufficiently exploited to the benefit of the artisans. It is also important to note that both these geographic locations are adjacent to Jaipur, the largest city in Rajasthan and a very important commercial centre for tourism in India and is at a close proximity to New Delhi, the capital of India. The craft is renowned and well known for its style of prints and the uniqueness it offers to the consumers. However it is important to note that the connoisseurs of both the crafts buy it for its exclusivity but are rarely aware of the GI status of the craft. The same has also not been utilized by the artisans as they themselves are often not aware of the GI status of the craft and are reliant on

the goodwill of the product and recurring customers to sell the product. Subsequently a lot of manufacturers also feel that while the demand is strong right now but it is uncertain for the future.

Consumer psychology examines how people interpret and use information about a good or service, shape their opinions and attitudes toward it, and decide whether or not to make a purchase (Chisnall, 1995; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Lutz, 1991). According to Fishbein one of the frameworks for the study of the link between a person's beliefs about the specific features of an item and his or her general attitude towards that object is the learning theory of attitude development.

According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1980), a person's attitude toward an item is positively correlated with the behaviours they perform in that direction, but it may also be influenced by a variety of circumstances that induce learning to occur before attitude development. While belief strength reflects how strongly a consumer believes that an attribute is genuinely present in an object, an attribute's evaluative judgement reflects how much the customer cares about the presence of that characteristic.

Consumer perception is important for sale and commerce of the products. The consumer perception helps determine the impact on buying behaviour and the willingness of consumers to buy a certain product. The current trends worldwide are that many consumers are turning away from mass-produced goods and larger organizations and are expressing preferences for 'locally' or 'sustainably' produced goods.

This has been significantly observed in the younger generations and in the fashion and textile sectors. GI based products help provide for values such as heritage, cultural diversity and authenticity. Through support for sustainable livelihoods and preservation of traditional knowledge: In the GI context particularly, the economic and commercial advantages which accrue due to branding can be instrumental in sustaining and improving the livelihoods of farmers, artisans, weavers and other producers and also preserve traditional crafts and practices which could otherwise become extinct.

Echols (2003) says that the blend of ancient and innovative knowledge and techniques are essential for community development which is also highlighted in research and literature from various experts including Rangnekar (2004) who says that traditional knowledge along with new creativity can provide a lifetime of knowledge to rural community.

According to Jain A (2011) traditional societies could benefit a lot by using their GI's in connection with reputed trademarks to exercise market power. The GIs can excise a lot of market pull for the underlying product. However, due to the lack of awareness the full potential of GI's largely remains untapped.

## **Method**

The study was done through primary survey operationalized through a Likert scale questionnaire on the consumers of products of Bagru and Sangner. The survey used the technique of snowballing as it is important that the respondents are also buyers and users of the products to give a reasoned response to their choices and are aware of the product and its characteristics.

The study was conducted in the geographical locations of Jaipur through a Likert scale survey on the Knowledge, Attitude and Behaviour (KAB) scale. The consumer set was chosen from a group of people in trade fairs who were already purchasing the products from the artisans.

The sample size was chosen through Cochran formula to determine the correct size set.

The KAB scale was made through literature review and revision was done through comments as received from individuals experts in the domain.

## **Result**

In the Likert scale survey, the following data was collected regarding some pivotal points in consumer knowledge, attitude and behaviour. In the survey the respondents were asked about their awareness of Geographical Indications and the importance of GI's for local crafts people and their livelihoods. In the survey less than 25% of the total respondents were aware of GI's and their use. Some of the key discussion are as can be seen below:

### **Authenticity of products with GI's**

The respondents were asked if they were aware of the authenticity of products which had a registered GI and any measure which could be used for the mapping the authenticity of any products.

The respondents were less aware or not aware that GI's were an indication that product is made by the artisans and is from the geographical location it promises to come from. This is corresponding to the fact that there is less awareness which is reflected in the responses where the respondents are neutral. The population aware of GI's responded with strong agreement with the same.

**Table: 1 Mapping the authenticity of textile products with GI**

Responses	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
No. of respondents	2	21	52	49	57	181

**Geographic Location and its importance for characteristics of the Craft**

The respondents to this question were in agreement that geographic location plays an important role in determining the characteristics. Some respondents pointed out that it was due to the geographic name of Bagru and Sanganer which were key determining factors in purchase decisions. The respondents were also eager to point-out that the reason to visit Jaipur city markets is also because there is an easy access to these textile crafts and the respondents from Jaipur said that their relatives from other towns and cities often request these products from them when they visit them.

The respondents however did not see a relationship between the usage of GI and geographical location. The information was collected in the qualitative data collection where the respondents were verbally asked for the reason for a few of their responses. The respondents said that they rely on the geographic location (which most often is the Jaipur city markets or trade fairs ) of the shopping areas to the craft centres and the goodwill of the information provided by the shopkeepers to ascertain the authenticity of the products.

**Table: 2 Impact of Geographical Location on the properties of the craft**

Responses	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
No. of Respondents	1	12	59	50	59	181

### Impact of GI on buying preference

The respondents for this question were asked if a product has a GI tag would it affect the respondents buying preference. The replies to these questions were consistent with the lack of awareness of the consumers about GI's and their importance.

The respondents were sceptical or negative about having GI as a criteria for buying preference. The respondents were also neutral about the impact of GI on one's buying preference in general. Most of the respondents also said that they were not aware of anything like a GI logo or had no knowledge of its' existence and therefore it has no outcome on their preference.

The response for this question can be seen in the tables below:

**Table 3: Impact of GI on buying preference of consumers**

Responses	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
No. of respondents	14	33	80	31	23	181

### Labels and GI tag preference

The respondents in this scenario were asked a negative question to check the consistency of their response with the previous question. The respondents were asked if they are alright if the product does not have an identifying feature like a GI tag or a mark to distinguish one product from another one. The respondents were unaware of GI's and therefore an authenticity tag or the lack of it did not impact their buying and purchase decisions.

**Table 4: Consumer Confidence in Labels and tag for identification**

Responses	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
No. of Respondents	12	25	77	42	25	181

### Premium for buying product with a registered GI

When the respondents were asked if they would be ready to pay a premium for products with a GI tag most of the respondents were neutral as they were unaware of GI's and were not sure whether it affected their attitude towards buying of textile handcrafted products. Most of them replied that colors and patterns affected their buying judgement more than any other tags.

Only the respondents who have shown knowledge about GI's agreed that they would be willing to pay a premium for registered products as it ensures their trust in the authenticity of the products.

The results can be seen from Table 5:

**Table 5: Willingness to pay a premium for products with registered GI**

Responses	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
No. of respondents	11	31	63	43	33	181

### Discussions

Through the primary and secondary research as conducted the following points were determined.

Consumer knowledge plays a crucial role in attitude and thereby buying decisions however in this case the consumer knowledge for GI was low which prevented them for paying a premium for the products based on the geographical location. The GI tag on the product is important to establish the products origins however it is equally important that consumers are aware of its importance.

There should be more emphasis towards consumer knowledge and awareness as consumer knowledge impacts the attitude of consumers towards GI based products and thereby the buying behaviour. It is also important to identify the various stakeholders who should be disseminating the information.

It is also important to note that currently consumers are not aware of GI



as way of mapping product authenticity. The direct role relation between authenticity and registration of GI needs to be made clear to the consumers so that the all the parties are equally benefitted from the same.

It is also important to note that currently there are no logos or and no tags which demonstrate the product is a GI based product, therefore do not seek the registration or the product labels for the same. They solely rely on the uniqueness of the product to make their purchase

### **Conclusion**

Through this research we can conclude that it is important that for the maximum benefits to manufacturers and craft communities so and charging of a premium for GI it is important that consumer knowledge is increased. Consumer knowledge is a direct reflection of the attitude and behavior that they are exhibiting towards these products.

It is also important to note that attitudes and behaviour towards shopping change over a period of time and it would not be a drastic change in a short period therefore it is essential that the initiatives are taken. Another point to note is that in the international markets especially with the products like wine and cheese from Europe there are very well established GIs and the manufacturers are able to get a premium for the products before or because of their GI status the same however has not been exploited with most of the crafts in India predominantly in Rajasthan because the consumer needs to be as aware as the manufacturer and has to take pride in their cultural heritage as much as European consumer does for their homegrown products.

There is a lot of untapped potential which could be uncovered through this medium and it is not only beneficial for the manufacturers but it is also beneficial for consumers oh want to buy these products and are also conscious and doubtful of the authenticity of the products and most often rely on the goodwill of the oh of the shopkeepers to guide them about the products.

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