

Exploring Consumer Awareness About Geographical Indication (GI) Handloom Products in Telangana.

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Abstract

The handloom sector in Telangana holds significant cultural and economic importance, particularly with its Geographical Indication (GI) certified products such as Pochampally Ikat, Gadwal Sarees, and Narayanpet Handloom. This study aims to assess consumer awareness, buying behavior, and the effectiveness of marketing strategies in promoting Telangana GI handloom products. A structured survey was conducted among 200 respondents from diverse demographics, including gender, age group, education level, and occupation.

Findings reveal that while 68% of respondents are aware of GI tags for handloom products, only 60% recognize that specific Telangana handloom products have GI certification. Social media and government promotions are key sources of awareness, with 32% of consumers learning about GI handloom products through government campaigns and 26% through social media. Consumer buying behavior indicates that 42% purchase Telangana handloom products occasionally, while affordability, fabric quality, and authenticity significantly influence purchasing decisions.

The study also evaluates marketing and awareness strategies, highlighting that 26% of respondents believe discount schemes and promotional offers are the most effective methods to boost sales. Additionally, 22.5% support better online marketing and influencer endorsements as crucial strategies for increasing consumer engagement. Despite government initiatives, 34% of respondents find them ineffective in promoting Telangana GI handloom products.

The research underscores the need for enhanced digital marketing efforts, government-backed awareness programs, and improved retail availability to strengthen the market for Telangana GI handloom products. Future strategies should focus on bridging the gap between traditional artisans and modern consumers through innovative branding and digital outreach.

Keywords: Telangana handloom, GI certification, consumer awareness, marketing strategies, buying behavior, social media promotions.

INTRODUCTION

Handloom weaving is an integral part of India's cultural and economic heritage, with Telangana being one of the key states known for its unique handloom traditions. Several handloom products from Telangana, such as Pochampally Ikat, Gadwal Sarees, Narayanpet Handloom, Siddipet Gollabama Sarees, and Telia Rumal, have received Geographical Indication (GI) tags, signifying their authenticity,

traditional craftsmanship, and regional uniqueness. The GI tag serves as a mark of identity that not only protects the rights of weavers but also enhances the market value of these products.

Despite government initiatives and promotional efforts, the awareness of GI-tagged handloom products among consumers remains a critical factor influencing their demand and sustainability. Consumer awareness and preference for these products may vary significantly between urban and rural populations due to differences in exposure, purchasing power, lifestyle choices, and market accessibility. While urban consumers may have access to branded outlets and online marketplaces, rural consumers often rely on local fairs and traditional retail chains.

This study aims to empirically assess the level of awareness of Telangana's GI handloom products among urban and rural consumers, exploring the factors that influence their knowledge, preferences, and purchasing behavior. Through surveys and data analysis, this research will identify gaps in consumer awareness and provide insights into strategies that can enhance the market reach of Telangana's GI handloom products.

By understanding consumer perspectives, this study will contribute to the broader goal of preserving Telangana's handloom heritage, supporting local artisans, and promoting sustainable fashion choices in the textile industry.

Review of Literature

The awareness and market sustainability of Geographical Indication (GI) handloom products have been extensively discussed in various studies. However, empirical research focusing on consumer awareness, preferences, and purchasing behavior of Telangana's GI handloom products remains limited. This review explores existing literature related to GI-tagged handloom products, consumer awareness, urban-rural differences, and market dynamics, highlighting key findings and identifying research gaps.

Studies indicate that consumer awareness of GI handloom products remains limited despite various promotional efforts. According to a report by the **Ministry of Textiles (2023)**, only a small percentage of consumers actively recognize the importance of GI tags in ensuring authenticity and quality. Similarly, **Sharma and Kumar (2022)** highlight that while government promotions and social media campaigns play a vital role in awareness creation, traditional word-of-mouth and local exhibitions continue to influence consumer knowledge.

Geographical Indication (GI) is a certification that recognizes products for their regional authenticity, traditional craftsmanship, and unique weaving techniques (**Das, 2020**). Studies indicate that GI tags help protect indigenous products from imitation, increase market recognition, and boost the economic well-being of artisans (**Chaudhary & Bhattacharya, 2019**). However, research by **Reddy et al. (2021)** found that despite these benefits, the awareness and understanding of GI among consumers remain low, limiting its potential impact on market demand.

Consumer awareness plays a crucial role in the demand for handloom products. A study by **Sharma and Singh (2018)** on handloom textiles in India found that while educated consumers associate GI tags with authenticity, a majority of buyers remain unaware of their significance. Similarly, **Rao and Kumar (2022)** analyzed Telangana's handloom industry and concluded that urban consumers are more likely to recognize and value GI handloom products compared to rural consumers, who often make purchase decisions based on price and availability rather than certification.

Several studies have explored the differences between urban and rural consumer behavior regarding handloom textiles. **Prasad (2017)** found that urban consumers prefer handloom products for their unique

craftsmanship and sustainability, while rural consumers often choose based on affordability and functionality. A comparative study by **Iyer et al. (2020)** highlighted that rural consumers tend to rely on traditional retail markets and local fairs, whereas urban consumers explore handloom products through branded stores and e-commerce platforms. However, there is limited research specifically comparing urban and rural awareness of Telangana's GI handloom products, which is a gap this study aims to address.

With the rise of e-commerce and digital marketing, online platforms have become important in promoting GI handloom products (**Sundar & Mehta, 2021**). Research shows that social media campaigns, influencer marketing, and government initiatives have increased consumer interest in handloom textiles (**Basu, 2020**).

The literature highlights the significance of GI tagging for handloom products and its potential impact on consumer perception. However, there is a lack of empirical studies focusing on consumer awareness, particularly comparing urban and rural perspectives in Telangana. This study seeks to address this gap by assessing the awareness levels, purchase behavior, and influencing factors that shape consumer decisions regarding Telangana GI handloom products.

Objectives

1. To analyze and compare the level of awareness and understanding of Geographical Indication (GI) handloom products among urban and rural consumers in Telangana.
2. To identify the factors influencing consumer awareness, preferences, and purchasing behavior regarding Telangana GI handloom products.

Methodology

This study aims to assess the awareness of Geographical Indication (GI) handloom products among urban and rural consumers in Telangana. The research adopts an empirical approach by collecting primary data through surveys and analyzing consumer perceptions, preferences, and purchasing behavior.

1. Research Design

This study follows a **descriptive and comparative research design**, as it seeks to:

- **Describe** the level of awareness about GI handloom products among consumers.
- **Compare** the awareness and purchasing behavior of urban and rural consumers.
- **Identify** key factors influencing consumer awareness and preferences.

A quantitative research approach was used, supplemented by some qualitative insights from open-ended survey responses.

2. Data Collection Method

a. Primary Data Collection

- **Survey Method:** A structured questionnaire will be used to collect data from respondents.
- **Sample Size:** The study aims to survey 200 respondents, equally distributed between urban and rural areas of Telangana.
- **Sampling Technique:** A stratified random sampling method will be employed to ensure representation from both urban and rural consumers.

- **Survey Mode:** The questionnaires were distributed through online Google Forms and offline paper-based surveys in select locations (handloom fairs, malls, and rural markets).

b. Secondary Data Collection

To support the primary data, secondary data will be collected from:

- Research papers, journal articles, and books on GI handloom products.
- Government reports from the Telangana Handloom Department, Ministry of Textiles, and TSCO (Telangana State Handloom Weavers Cooperative Society).
- Market reports and e-commerce data on Telangana GI handloom sales trends.

3. Data Analysis Method

1. Descriptive Analysis: Frequencies and percentages will be used to summarize consumer awareness levels, purchase frequency, and preferences.

2. Correlation Analysis: Correlation analysis will assess the relationship between consumer awareness and purchase decisions.

Analysis and Discussions:

Table No: 1 Analysis based on Gender

Gender		
Particulars	Frequency	%
Male	40	20
Female	160	80
Total	200	100

(Source: Primary)

The gender distribution of respondents indicates a significant disparity, with 80% being female and only 20% being male. This suggests that the majority of the survey participants are women, which could have implications for the findings related to awareness, purchase behavior, and preferences for Telangana GI handloom products.

Table No: 2 Analysis based on Age

Age Group		
Particulars	Frequency	%
Below 20 years	14	7
21–30 years	105	52.5
31–40 years	35	17.5
41–50 years	24	12
Above 50 years	22	11
Total	200	100

(Source: Primary)

The age distribution of respondents reveals that the majority fall within the 21–30 years age group (52.5%), indicating that younger adults are the primary participants in this study. This demographic trend could influence the overall findings related to awareness, purchasing behavior, and preferences for Telangana GI handloom products. Dominance of Young Adults: Over half of the respondents (105 out of 200) belong to the 21–30 years age group, suggesting that this segment is highly engaged with

handloom products, possibly due to growing fashion trends and increasing awareness of traditional textiles. Middle-aged Consumers: The 31–40 years (17.5%) and 41–50 years (12%) age groups also represent a notable portion of respondents, indicating a steady interest in handloom products among working professionals and mature buyers.

Table No: 3 Analysis based on Education Level

Education Level		
Particulars	Frequency	%
No formal education	15	7.5
Primary education	12	6
Secondary education	24	12
Graduate	124	62
Postgraduate or higher	25	12.5
Total	200	100

(Source: Primary)

The education level distribution of respondents indicates that a majority (62%) are graduates, signifying a well-educated sample group. This suggests that most participants possess a strong academic background, which could influence their awareness and purchasing behavior regarding Telangana GI handloom products. High Percentage of Graduates (62%): This dominant group is likely more aware of GI handloom products, their significance, and the factors influencing their purchase decisions. Postgraduate or Higher (12.5%): A significant portion of respondents holds a postgraduate degree or higher, further supporting the idea that educated individuals may have a better understanding of product authenticity and quality. Moderate Representation of Secondary Education Holders (12%): This segment forms a substantial part of the sample, suggesting that individuals with basic education also contribute to handloom consumption.

Table No: 4 Analysis based on Occupation

Occupation		
Particulars	Frequency	%
Student	6	3
Homemaker	24	12
Private sector employee	62	31
Government employee	86	43
Business owner	22	11
Total	200	100

(Source: Primary)

The occupational distribution of respondents highlights that a majority (43%) are government employees, followed by private sector employees (31%). This suggests that a significant portion of the sample consists of working professionals, which may influence their purchasing behavior and financial capability regarding Telangana GI handloom products. Government Employees (43%): Being the largest group, they may have stable incomes and higher purchasing power, making them a key target audience for Telangana GI handloom products. Private Sector Employees (31%): This substantial group also represents a segment with disposable income and interest in premium or traditional handloom products.

Homemakers (12%): Homemakers, often key decision-makers in household purchases, form a noteworthy proportion. Their role in influencing family buying decisions can be significant. Business Owners (11%): This group could be potential stakeholders in promoting or reselling Telangana GI handloom products, given their entrepreneurial nature. Students (3%): The smallest segment, students, might have limited purchasing power, but they could play a role in influencing future trends and awareness about handloom products.

Table No: 5 Analysis based on Residential Area

Residential Area		
Particulars	Frequency	%
Urban	100	50
Rural	100	50
Total	200	100

(Source: Primary)

The data reveals an equal distribution between urban and rural respondents (50% each), indicating a balanced representation of both residential areas. This ensures that insights derived from the study are inclusive of perspectives from both urban and rural populations, making the findings more comprehensive. Urban Respondents (50%): Individuals from urban areas may have greater exposure to modern retail outlets, online shopping platforms, and premium handloom products. They might also have higher disposable income and brand consciousness. Rural Respondents (50%): Rural respondents, on the other hand, may have stronger cultural ties to traditional handloom products, possibly influencing their purchase behavior based on affordability, necessity, and cultural heritage.

Section 2: Awareness of GI Handloom Products

Table No: 6 Analysis based on Awareness about GI tags for handloom products

Awareness about GI tags for handloom products		
Particulars	Frequency	%
Yes	136	68
No	64	32
Total	200	100

(Source: Primary)

The data indicates that 68% of respondents are aware of GI (Geographical Indication) tags for handloom products, while 32% are unaware. This suggests a moderate to high level of awareness, which is crucial for the promotion and preservation of authentic handloom products. Majority Awareness (68%): A significant proportion of consumers recognize GI tags, implying a good level of awareness regarding the authenticity and uniqueness of handloom products. Lack of Awareness (32%): A considerable portion of respondents is still unaware of GI tags, highlighting the need for increased education and promotional efforts. Marketing Strategies: Brands and policymakers should leverage this awareness by emphasizing GI-tagged handlooms in their campaigns to attract more conscious buyers. Educational Initiatives: Awareness programs can be designed to educate the remaining 32% about the importance of GI tags in preserving heritage and ensuring quality. Consumer Trust and Sales: Since most consumers are aware, they may be more likely to prefer and purchase GI-tagged handloom products, which can enhance demand and improve sales.

Table No: 7 Analysis based on Awareness about certain handloom products from Telangana have a GI tag

Awareness about certain handloom products from Telangana have a GI tag		
Particulars	Frequency	%
Yes	120	60
No	80	40
Total	200	100

(Source: Primary)

The data reveals that 60% of respondents are aware that certain handloom products from Telangana have a GI (Geographical Indication) tag, while 40% remain unaware. This indicates a moderate level of awareness regarding Telangana’s handloom heritage. Majority Awareness (60%): A significant proportion of respondents are informed about GI tags for Telangana’s handloom products, reflecting an appreciation for authenticity and quality. Lack of Awareness (40%): A notable percentage still lacks awareness, suggesting the need for further education and promotional efforts. Targeted Awareness Campaigns: Authorities, brands, and handloom cooperatives should launch initiatives to educate the remaining 40% about Telangana’s GI-certified handloom products (e.g., Pochampally Ikat, Gadwal sarees). Market Potential: Since majorities already recognize these GI tags, leveraging this knowledge in marketing strategies can enhance demand for Telangana’s authentic handlooms.

Table No: 8 Analysis based on Awareness about Telangana GI handloom products

Awareness about Telangana GI handloom products		
Particulars	Frequency	%
Pochampally Ikat	70	35
Gadwal Sarees	65	32.5
Narayanpet Handloom	31	15.5
Siddipet Gollabama Sarees	24	12
Telia Rumal	10	5
Total	200	100

(Source: Primary)

The data indicates varying levels of awareness about different Geographical Indication (GI)-tagged handloom products from Telangana among the respondents. Pochampally Ikat (35%) and Gadwal Sarees (32.5%) have the highest awareness, indicating that these two handloom products are the most recognized. Narayanpet Handloom (15.5%) and Siddipet Gollabama Sarees (12%) have lower awareness, suggesting limited outreach or lesser market visibility. Telia Rumal (5%) has the least awareness, highlighting the need for greater promotional efforts to educate consumers about its heritage and significance. To enhance consumer knowledge and market demand, government bodies, artisan cooperatives, and brands should implement promotional strategies such as digital campaigns, exhibitions, and storytelling-based branding for all Telangana GI-tagged handloom products.

Table No: 9 Analysis based on Source of Awareness

Source of Awareness About Telangana GI Handloom Products		
Particulars	Frequency	%
Family & friends	24	12
Social media (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, etc.)	52	26
Government promotions	64	32
Local markets or exhibitions	36	18
Online shopping platforms	24	12
Total	200	100

(Source: Primary)

The data highlights various sources through which respondents have gained awareness about Geographical Indication (GI)-tagged handloom products from Telangana. Government promotions (32%) are the most significant source of awareness, indicating the effectiveness of public initiatives in promoting traditional handlooms. Social media platforms (26%) play a crucial role, demonstrating the increasing impact of digital marketing in spreading awareness. Local markets and exhibitions (18%) contribute significantly, showing that direct consumer engagement at physical locations enhances knowledge about GI handloom products. Family & friends (12%) and online shopping platforms (12%) have a relatively lower impact, suggesting that word-of-mouth and e-commerce platforms are yet to become primary awareness channels. A strategic blend of online marketing, government initiatives, and local promotions can significantly enhance the reach and popularity of Telangana's GI handloom products.

Section 3: Consumer Perception and Buying Behavior

Table No: 10 Analysis based on Frequency of purchase Telangana handloom products

Frequency of purchase Telangana handloom products		
Particulars	Frequency	%
Frequently (more than twice a year)	24	12
Occasionally (once or twice a year)	84	42
Rarely (once in a few years)	72	36
Never	20	10
Total	200	100

(Source: Primary)

The data provides insights into how often consumers purchase Telangana handloom products, revealing their buying habits and interest in these traditional textiles. Occasional buyers (42%) dominate the consumer base, indicating that many people buy these products once or twice a year, likely for festivals, special occasions, or cultural events. Rare buyers (36%) purchase these products only once in a few years, suggesting a lack of regular engagement or lower necessity for handloom products in daily use. Frequent buyers (12%) who purchase more than twice a year form a small but significant group, potentially comprising loyal customers or those with a strong preference for traditional textiles. Non-buyers (10%) have never purchased Telangana handloom products, indicating a segment that has either low awareness, low interest, or no need for these textiles. A combination of cultural promotions, targeted advertising, and customer engagement strategies can help increase purchase frequency and expand the customer base for Telangana handloom products.

Table No: 11 Analysis based on Preferred Purchase Channels

Preferred Purchase Channels for Telangana GI Handloom Products		
Particulars	Frequency	%
Directly from artisans/weavers	35	17.5
Government handloom outlets (TSCO, Lepakshi, etc.)	52	26
Online marketplaces (Amazon, Flipkart, etc.)	43	21.5
Local fairs/exhibitions	36	18
Shopping malls or private handloom stores	34	17
Total	200	100

(Source: Primary)

This data provides insights into where consumers prefer to buy Telangana GI handloom products, helping businesses, artisans, and policymakers optimize sales strategies. Government Handloom Outlets (26%): The most preferred choice, likely due to authenticity, trust, and government-backed pricing policies. Online Marketplaces (21.5%): A significant share of buyers uses e-commerce platforms, reflecting convenience, accessibility, and wider product variety. Local Fairs/Exhibitions (18%): These attract customers interested in experiencing handloom culture and making informed purchases directly from artisans. Direct from Artisans/Weavers (17.5%): A smaller but crucial segment prefers buying directly from craftsmen, supporting fair trade and authenticity. Shopping Malls/Private Handloom Stores (17%): These remain a niche but valuable channel, catering to customers looking for exclusive collections and premium pricing. By leveraging both traditional and digital channels, Telangana GI handloom products can reach a broader audience, boost sales, and strengthen the handloom sector.

Table No: 12 Analysis based on Consumer Awareness of GI Certification

Consumer Awareness of GI Certification in Telangana Handloom Purchases		
Particulars	Frequency	%
Yes, always	124	62
Sometimes	42	21
No, I don't know how to check	34	17
Total	200	100

(Source: Primary)

This data evaluates how well consumers recognize and verify the GI (Geographical Indication) certification while purchasing Telangana handloom products. 62% of consumers always check for GI certification, indicating a high awareness level. 21% check sometimes, showing moderate awareness but inconsistency in verifying authenticity. 17% do not know how to check for GI certification, pointing to a need for better education and guidance. By increasing awareness and accessibility of GI-certified Telangana handloom products, both consumer trust and sales can be boosted significantly.

Section 4: Marketing and Awareness Initiatives

Table No: 13 Analysis based on Effectiveness of Government Initiatives in Promoting

Effectiveness of Government Initiatives in Promoting Telangana GI Handloom Products		
Particulars	Frequency	%
Very effective	46	23

Somewhat effective	62	31
Not effective	68	34
Not aware of any government initiatives	24	12
Total	200	100

(Source: Primary)

This data assesses public perception of government efforts in promoting GI-certified Telangana handloom products. 23% find government initiatives very effective, showing that some interventions are working well. 31% believe they are somewhat effective, indicating room for improvement. 34% say they are not effective, suggesting dissatisfaction with policies or outreach. 12% are unaware of any government initiatives, highlighting a lack of communication or reach. By refining outreach and execution, government initiatives can boost consumer awareness, enhance artisan livelihoods, and strengthen the Telangana handloom industry.

Table No: 14 Analysis based on Impact of Social Media Campaigns

Impact of Social Media Campaigns on Telangana Handloom Product Awareness		
Particulars	Frequency	%
Yes, frequently	86	43
Yes, occasionally	48	24
No	66	33
Total	200	100

(Source: Primary)

This data highlights the influence of social media campaigns on raising awareness about Telangana GI handloom products. 43% of respondents frequently engage with social media campaigns, indicating a strong impact of digital marketing. 24% occasionally notice these campaigns, showing a moderate level of reach. 33% have not been influenced by social media campaigns, suggesting that more targeted efforts are needed. By refining social media strategies, engagement and awareness levels can be significantly increased, leading to higher adoption and sales of Telangana handloom products.

Table No: 15 Analysis based on Strategies to Enhance Awareness and Sales

Strategies to Enhance Awareness and Sales of Telangana GI Handloom Products		
Particulars	Frequency	%
Better online marketing and social media presence	45	22.5
More government-backed awareness programs	36	18
Celebrity and influencer endorsements	45	22.5
More availability in malls and branded stores	22	11
Discount schemes and promotional offers	52	26
Total	200	100

(Source: Primary)

The data highlights key strategies that can improve awareness and sales of Telangana GI handloom products. 26% prefer discount schemes and promotional offers, indicating that price incentives can boost sales. 22.5% support better online marketing & social media presence, reinforcing the need for a strong digital strategy. 22.5% believe celebrity and influencer endorsements will enhance visibility, showing

the impact of brand ambassadors. 18% prefer more government-backed awareness programs, suggesting the need for official promotions and initiatives. 11% want better availability in malls and branded stores, indicating a need for improved retail presence. By implementing these strategies, the Telangana handloom industry can increase market reach, boost sales, and ensure the sustainability of traditional weaving practices.

Correlation Analysis					
	Purchase Frequency	GI Awareness	Specific GI Awareness	GI Product Awareness	Source Awareness
Purchase Frequency	1	-0.17	-0.26	-0.22	-0.29
GI Awareness	-0.17	1	0.99	0.85	-0.33
Specific GI Awareness	-0.26	0.99	1	0.8	-0.3
GI Product Awareness	-0.22	0.85	0.8	1	-0.25
Source Awareness	-0.29	-0.33	-0.3	-0.25	1

- **Strong positive correlation (0.99) between GI awareness and specific GI awareness** indicates that people aware of GI tags are also likely to know about specific GI handloom products.
- **Negative correlation (-0.26) between purchase frequency and specific GI awareness** suggests that knowledge of GI products does not necessarily translate to frequent purchases.
- **Moderate negative correlation (-0.29) between purchase frequency and sources of awareness** shows that promotional efforts might not be effectively driving purchases.
- **Negative correlation (-0.33) between GI awareness and source awareness** implies that those who are aware of GI handloom products may have learned about them from non-promotional sources.

Conclusion

The study highlights the significance of Geographical Indication (GI) handloom products in Telangana and the varying levels of consumer awareness, buying behavior, and marketing effectiveness. The findings reveal that while a majority of consumers (68%) are aware of GI tags, fewer recognize the specific GI-certified handloom products of Telangana. Social media and government promotions play a crucial role in spreading awareness, yet many consumers remain uninformed about certification details. Consumer purchasing behavior indicates a preference for authenticity, quality, and affordability, with government handloom outlets and online marketplaces emerging as popular purchase channels. Despite various marketing initiatives, a significant portion of respondents believe government efforts are not entirely effective in promoting Telangana's GI handloom products.

To strengthen consumer engagement and sales, the study suggests enhancing digital marketing strategies, leveraging influencer and celebrity endorsements, and expanding product availability in mainstream retail outlets. A comprehensive approach integrating government support, industry participation, and consumer-driven promotional strategies is essential for sustaining and expanding the market for Telangana's GI handloom products.

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