

‘Ponduru Khadi’ Awarded Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

In December 2025, Ponduru Khadi, a traditional hand spun and handwoven cotton fabric from Andhra Pradesh, was officially granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag. This recognition, issued by the Geographical Indications Registry under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, honours the centuries-old artisanal craft and provides legal protection against imitation.

Overview and Key Facts

- **Origin:** Produced exclusively in Ponduru village, Srikakulam district, Andhra Pradesh.
- **Local Name:** Commonly known as Patnulu.
- **Registered Proprietor:** The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) filed the application (No. 1049) and is the official proprietor.
- **GI Protection:** Registered under Classes 23, 24, and 25, covering yarns, threads, and textile goods.

Unique Production Process

The fabric is renowned for being one of the only khadis in the world produced through a 100% manual process without any mechanization.

- **Fish Jawbone Cleaning:** A unique global practice where the cotton is cleaned and combed using the jawbone of the Valuga fish, which enhances the fiber's softness and durability.
- **Indigenous Cotton:** Made from local varieties including hill cotton, punasa cotton, and red cotton.
- **Gandhi Charkha:** Spinners use a rare single-spindle charkha with 24 spokes, often called the "Gandhi Charkha".
- **High Yarn Count:** The fabric is exceptionally fine, with a yarn count typically ranging from 100 to 120.

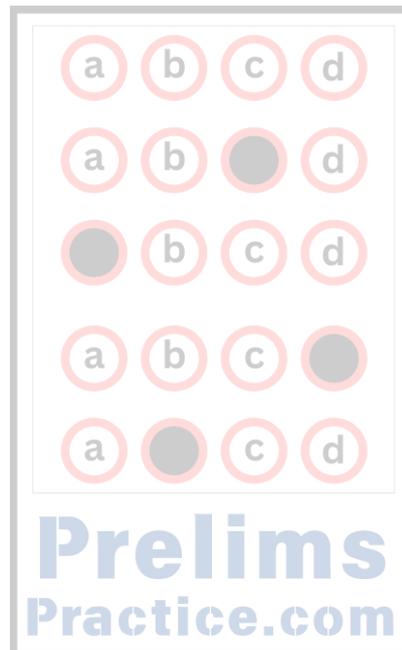
Historical Significance

- **Mahatma Gandhi's Preference:** Gandhi famously praised Ponduru Khadi in his journal Young India in 1921 after receiving a stole made from it. He even sent his son, Devdas Gandhi, to study its production.

- **Independence Movement:** It became a symbol of Swadeshi (self-reliance) and the struggle against British industrial textiles.

Economic and Cultural Impact

- **Livelihood Support:** The GI tag aims to boost the income of local weaving communities, primarily the Pattusali, Devanga, and Sali castes.
- **ODOP Integration:** Ponduru Khadi is also part of the One District One Product (ODOP) scheme for Srikakulam.
- **Sustainability:** The use of chemical-free, short-staple indigenous cotton makes it an environmentally sustainable textile.



Explanation of Exam Oriented Key Points

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Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

A Geographical Indication (GI) tag is a distinctive sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities, a reputation, or characteristics essentially attributable to that place of origin.

Overview of GI Tags

- **Legal Nature:** It is a form of Intellectual Property Right (IPR) that recognizes the collective rights of a community or group of producers rather than an individual.
- **Categories Covered:** GIs are typically granted for agricultural goods (e.g., Basmati rice), foodstuffs (e.g., Tirupati Laddu), handicrafts (e.g., Banarasi Saree), natural products, and industrial products.
- **International Framework:** Governed globally by the WTO's TRIPS Agreement and the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.
- **Indian Framework:** Regulated by the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, which came into force in September 2003.

Key Points & Significance

- **Authorized Users:** Only registered producers from the designated region are allowed to use the tag. It prevents unauthorized third parties from exploiting a product's reputation.
- **Validity:** The registration is valid for 10 years but can be renewed indefinitely for subsequent 10-year periods.
- **First GI in India:** Darjeeling Tea was the first product to receive the GI tag in India (2004–2005).
- **Leading States:** As of late 2025, Uttar Pradesh leads with the highest number of GI-tagged products (over 70), followed by Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.

- **Issuing Authority:** Issued by the Geographical Indication Registry in Chennai, which operates under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).

Benefits

- **Producer Protection:** Ensures fair compensation for local artisans and farmers by preventing "fakes" and commanding premium prices in international markets.
- **Consumer Confidence:** Acts as a certification of authenticity and quality, assuring buyers of a product's genuine origin and traditional production methods.
- **Economic Development:** Boosts rural employment, promotes GI tourism, and supports the government's "Vocal for Local" and "One District One Product" (ODOP) initiatives.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Helps safeguard traditional knowledge and practices that have been passed down through generations.



Practice Questions:

1. With reference to "Ponduru Khadi," recently in the news for receiving a GI tag, consider the following statements:

- I. It is a handspun and handwoven cotton fabric produced exclusively in the Ponduru village of the Srikakulam district, Andhra Pradesh
- II. The unique process of cleaning the indigenous cotton involves using the jawbone of the Valuga fish
- III. Spinners in Ponduru use a rare multi-spindle charkha (spinning wheel) with 24 spokes, commonly known as the Ambar Charkha
- IV. Mahatma Gandhi praised the fabric and recommended its use during the pre-Independence movement, linking it to the ideals of Swadeshi and self-reliance

How many of the above statements are correct?

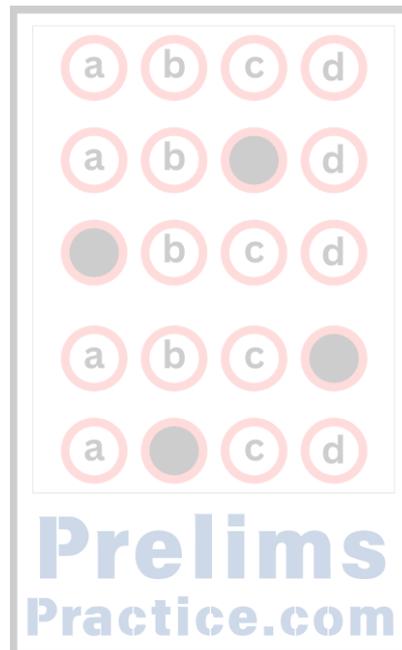
- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) Only three
- d) All four

Answer: c

Explanation: **Statement I Correct:** Ponduru Khadi is indeed a handspun and handwoven cotton fabric produced in Ponduru village of the Srikakulam district in Andhra Pradesh. **Statement II Correct:** A highly unique and exclusive feature of this fabric's production is cleaning the indigenous cotton using the jawbone of the Valuga fish (a freshwater fish), which helps remove minute impurities and straighten the fibers. **Statement III Incorrect:** Spinners in Ponduru are famous for using a single-spindle charkha with 24 spokes, commonly known as the Gandhi Charkha, not the multi-spindle Ambar Charkha. The Ambar Charkha is a later, more mechanized development used elsewhere to increase productivity. **Statement IV Correct:** Mahatma Gandhi was famously impressed by the finesse of Ponduru Khadi, praising it in his journal Young India and recommending its use as a symbol of Swadeshi (self-reliance) during the freedom movement.

For More Practice Questions, visit:

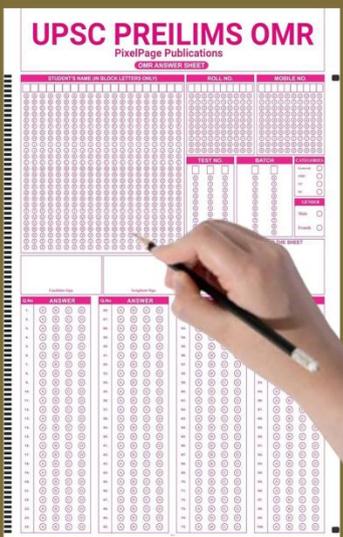
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