

**INTACH Journal of Heritage Studies**

**Volume 6, Issue 2 - 2025**

*Crafting Heritage: The Role of GI-Products and Crafts Based Tourism in the Preservation of Indian Cultural Sites*

**Khushi Kesari**

Program Officer, History Lab:  
Community, Heritage, & Material Culture  
Advanced Study Institute of Asia at SGT University

**Abstract**

In a rapidly globalizing and fast-paced world, the preservation of cultural heritage and traditional practices faces increasing challenges. The importance of heritage and cultural site conservation extends beyond the mere preservation of cultural diversity; it plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of identity and continuity within communities. In this context, one emerging approach to safeguarding heritage and cultural sites is through the promotion of craft-based tourism, particularly when tied to Geographical Indication (GI) tags. GI is a specialized form of intellectual property that identifies products as originating from specific regions, thereby associating their unique characteristics with their geographic origins. GI-tagged crafts, when integrated into tourism, hold the potential to serve as powerful instruments for heritage conservation, not only by enhancing the cultural value of traditional practices but also by providing economic incentives for local communities. This research examines the potential of GI and craft-based tourism as tools for heritage preservation through a case study of three culturally rich examples: Pipli, Raghurajpur, and the Rann of Kutch Festival.

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the role of GI-tagged crafts in Pipli and Raghurajpur, along with various Gujarati handicrafts showcased at the Rann of Kutch Festival, in enhancing the cultural significance of their respective cultural heritage sites. Through these case studies, the research aims to explore how craft-based tourism can support the sustainability of traditional practices and promote local infrastructure development. Additionally, the study examines how tourist engagement, particularly through storytelling, workshops, and demonstrations, influences visitors' understanding and appreciation of heritage and craftsmanship. By studying the interaction between tourists and artisans, the research seeks to understand how these activities cultivate a deeper connection with cultural heritage.

The research adopts a multi-methodological approach, combining case studies of the craft-rich villages of Pipli and Raghurajpur with an analysis of the Rann of Kutch Festival, which showcases a diverse range of Gujarati crafts and cultural traditions. The data will be collected from primary and secondary sources, including academic literature,

tourism reports, and government policies, as well as video interviews with artisans, tourists, and tourism officials available online and some offline interviews at craft hubs. Additionally, an economic impact assessment will be conducted to evaluate the extent to which tourism centered on GI-tagged crafts contributes to income generation and supports local development initiatives.

This study aims to demonstrate how GI and craft-based tourism can significantly enhance the cultural value of heritage sites by preserving traditional practices and fostering sustainable economic opportunities for artisans, thus contributing to local economic revitalization. It will highlight the socio-economic benefits of craft tourism for artisans while addressing challenges such as commercialization, limited market access, and insufficient government support. Through a critical analysis of the roles played by government policies, tourism organizations, and local cooperatives, the study will assess how these stakeholders can better promote sustainable tourism practices and support the conservation of heritage spaces. Focusing on Pipli, Raghurajpur, and the Rann of Kutch Festival, this research aspires to contribute to broader discussions on heritage conservation in India by demonstrating how economic development and cultural preservation can be harmonized to safeguard cultural heritage and benefit local communities in a rapidly changing world.

---