

GI APPLICATION No.

195

The Geographical Indications of Goods
(Registration & Protection) Act, 1999

25/1/10

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0192

(To be filed in triplicate alongwith the Statement of Case accompanied by five
Additional representation of the Geographical Indication)

One representation to be fixed within the space and five others to be send
separately.

FORM GI -1 (A)

Application for the registration of a geographical indication in Part-A of the
Register Section 11 (1), Rule 23 (2)

A) Application is hereby made by **Tamil Nadu Handicrafts Development Corporation, ('Poompuhar')**, for the Registration in Part A of the Register of the accompanying geographical indication furnishing the following particulars:

B) **Name of the Applicant** : Tamil Nadu Handicrafts Development Corporation, a Government of Tamil Nadu Undertaking ('Poompuhar').

C) **Address** : Tamil Nadu Handicrafts Development Corporation, ('Poompuhar') at No.759, Anna Salai, Chennai – 600 002, Tamil Nadu, India.

D) **List of Association of Persons / Producers / Organization / authority** : To be provided on request

E) **Class** : 27

F) **Type of Goods** : Carpets, rugs, mats and matting, linoleum

and other materials for covering existing floors; Wall hangings (non-textile falling in Class 27

G) Specification :

- “Pattamadai Mats” popularly known as “Pattamadai Pai” are made with Korai grass grown on the banks of river Tamiraparani and are extremely delicate and highly valued.
- Their fineness ranges from 80 to 140 (counts) wrap threads for every nine inches of total warp width, the higher the count, the fine is the mat.
- The mats have weft being of Korai grass and warp of cotton or even silk threads.
- The mats are made in numerous colours and designs.
- They are usually rectangular in shape and are produced in various sizes to serve different purposes such as covering the floors, hanging on walls, mats for worshipping and sleeping, etc.

H) Name of the Geographical Indication (and particulars) :

“Pattamadai Mats” popularly known as “Pattamadai Pai”

Pattamadai, a little village in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu, is the traditional home to unique tradition of mat weaving from korai grass grown on the banks of river Tamiraparani.

I) Description of Goods :

Pattamadai Mats are woven by the Labbai Muslim weaver community of Pattamadai. The Mats are woven with Korai grass grown on the banks of river Tamiraparani around Pattamadai.

The fully grown, korai grass is cut and soaked in water / running water of river Tamiraparani and then split into fine strands. These strands are woven into fine mats, which is result of centuries of experience and expertise. So supple and lustrous is the mat that it seems to be made of silk threads. No wonder it is called a pattu pai or silk mat.

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J) Geographical area of production and map :

Pattamadai, a little village in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu, is the traditional home to unique tradition of mat weaving from korai grass grown on the banks of river Tamiraparani. However, the same is now been practiced by nearby villages in and around Pattamadai in Ambasamutram taluk of Tirunelveli District of Tamil Nadu. (**Enclosed:** The Tirunelveli District Map, as per Census of India, 2001)

K) Proof of Origin (Historical records) :

The reason for producing fine quality mats in Pattamadai village alone rather than in the adjoining villages (Harikasevanallur and veeravanallur) is due to the fact that the particular kind of korai grass/sedge grass (*Cyperus corymbosus Rottb.*) from which fine strands can be extracted grows naturally on the banks of Tamiraparani river on a stretch of five acres, opposite Tharuvai village 11 kms from Pattamadai. The effect of the combination of the Tamiraparani river waters and the wild korai grass which is peculiar only to Pattamadai is the main reason for the establishment of this industry at Pattamadai.

The climate and the soil characteristics may perhaps explain the growth of korai grass in the area. The rainfall is light and evenly distributed and the temperature is equable. The alluvial soil on the banks of the river Tamiraparani is ideal sites for the growth of korai grass. The most famous of the varieties of korai grass the “Karungadukorai” which grows on five acres of land opposite Tharuvai village 11 kms from Pattamadai situated on the Tirunelveli-Shencottai trunk road.

The Korai grass grows up to a height of 3 1/2ft to 4 ft and there are two harvests in a year- one in September October and again in February – March it takes three to four months for the korai grass to grow full before harvest. The grass is green in colour.

The special kind of korai grass “Cyperas” grass growing wild on the banks of the river Tamiraparani and found in Tharuvai village, 11km. from Pattamadai and in Mela Thiruvengadapuram village, also few Km. from Pattamadai is most suited for high count weaving and forms the main raw material for weaving fine mats. Perhaps, the wild nature of this grass is ideally suited for mat weaving.

It is mentioned in the report that more than three generations back a Lebbai by name Syed Khalifa Meeran landed in Pattamadai. His exact origin is not know except that he hailed from the West Coast. He settled down permanently at Pattamadai and married a girl from the Rowther Community in the village. He found the pace suitable to carry on preaching as there were some Rowther Muslim families engaged in agriculture. The children of Syed Khalifa Meeran were not satisfied with mere preaching and so they sought to mat weaving which was a flouring industry in the district, to supplement their income. With their natural talent, they mastered the craft and so the succeeding generations have become the sole monopolists of mat weaving. The 61 family of Lebbai’s in Pattamadai were said to be the descendants of Syed Khalifa Meeran and his sons. Seeing the Lebbai’s combined preaching with mat weaving the Rowther started to dovetail their occupation of agriculture with weaving of rough quality mats as the latter

production of fine quality mat is attributed to Hassan Bawa Lebbai, a descendant of Syed Khalifa Meeran, who lived about a century ago. As has been stated above, his forefathers were engaged in the preparation of rough quality mats.

On one occasion, it is stated, he was drying wild korai grass in the sunlight when it started raining heavily accompanied by squally wind. His Korai grass blown off into the river. After the rain has stopped he found his korai grass floating in the Tamiraparani river nicely and thoroughly soaked to water. He salvaged the korai grass and found to his surprise that the grass was soft and smooth. He quickly separated the fiber from the waste and found that he could split the korai fiber into a number of strands of a fineness he had never seen before. Hitherto he could only obtain 30 to 40 counts of strands, now he found he had before him strands of 100 to 120 counts. With these strands, he commenced weaving. He found the product of such softness that he decided to experiment with his korai grass by soaking it in the Tamiraparani river water. The next stage was the cutting of korai growing wild on the banks of the Tamiraparani river and repeating the process of soaking. From that time onwards, out of his loom poured mats of excellent quality and smoothness. This started attracting the attention of his fellow artisan who learnt from him the secret and from that day the Lebbai community in Pattamadai began the production of fine mats, which still stand unsurpassed and unrivalled by weaver in other parts of the country.

(Source: Gazetteers of India, Tamil Nadu State, Tirunelveli District, Vol. I, pp – 585 - 587.)

Reed mats of a peculiarly fine texture are made at Pattamadai, near sermadevi, but the industry is in the hands of a few poor Musalman families and shows no signs of improvement.

(Source: Imperial Gazetteers of India, 1909, Vol. 23, p – 372.)

Pattamadai is for centuries a world renowned centre for the production of exquisite quality silk mats, and some of the super fine mats could be folded

like a saree. The mats of Pattamadai have won world fame. It had the honour of sending a hand-woven superfine silk mat to Queen Elizabeth-II on the occasion of her coronation in 1953. The mat, made on a special order had cost, even in those days Rs. 985. The skill of the artisans of Pattamadai impressed many dignitaries from various countries including the former USSR President Mickail Gorbachev as also the leaders of India.

(Source: Gazetteers of India, Tamil Nadu State, Tirunelveli District, Vol. I, pp – 587 - 588.)

L) **Method of Production :**

The process of creating the mat is pain taking and time consuming. Korai grass/sedge grass (*Cyperus corymbosus Rottl.*) of family Cyperaceae grows abundantly along the banks of the Tamiraparani river.

Pattamadai Mat Making Process:

The process of creating a mat is quite complex.

a) Raw material:

The Korai grass normally grows to a height of 90 – 120 cm and is cut finely e Korai grass is harvested in the months of September / October and February / March. The outer part of the stem is used for weaving, while the inside portion of the stem is removed with a sharp-edged knife. The counts of the mat depend on how many strips of grass is cut into. The Strips of grass are then dried in the hot sun and core is taken. The Korai grass is not exposed to humidity as they tend to turn black with exposure. As the dried grass strips turn a yellowish green colour they are boiled in a pot of water and then dried again. The dried grass is made up into bundles and then soaked in running water, so that the grass to swell up to three times its original size. Afterwards, it is dried again in the sun and then the outer layer is separated and differentiated by different grades.

b) Dyeing:

For Dyeing both natural and chemical dyes are used. With chemical dyes a wide hue of colours are being incorporated in mat making. They can either be single coloured or combined in traditional red, green and black. A chemical dye does not require mordant's but natural dyes are used with mordant. The dyes obtained from the plant materials sometimes have multiple diverse uses. They can be used as colorant for cloth, paper, wool, mat, etc.

c) Isolation of Dye:

The graded Korai grass is soaked in the isolated dyes so as to take colour. It is then dried in shade.

d) Weaving:

The weaving is done on a floor loom, the process is slow and follows a basket weave pattern. The weft covers the warp entirely and the pattern formed has an interesting striped effect of its own. The weft of the Pattamadi mats of reed depends upon the quality required. Four strands of 100 count are taken together to produce a single thread of great strength. For weaving one end of this wet grass is inserted in a hole of a long line stick, which can be compared to a huge needle. With the help of the stick, the grass is passed into the loom. Afterwards the stick and the grass is held on the both sides by hand and is twisted to give uniform roundness and strength. Then the reed is placed against it several times to keep it in position. After the weaving is complete, the mat is compressed to eliminate any unevenness, a process that takes at least four hours. Once the weaving is complete, the mat is dried in the sun for a short while. It is then finished with a polishing stone.

e) Quality:

The cost of mats depends on the quality and the number of counts. The mat in the 140 counts is regarded as superior and number one quality. The cost of this quality mats is high up to Rs. 5000/-, while the cost of mats with 120 counts and 100 counts are regarded as fine quality and the cost ranges from Rs. 2000 -3000 and Rs. 1000 – Rs. 1500 respectively.

M) Uniqueness :

- a) The effect of the combination of the Tamiraparani river waters and the wild korai grass which is peculiar only to Pattamadai is the main reason for the establishment of this industry at Pattamadai.
- b) The climate and the soil characteristics may perhaps explain the growth of korai grass in the area. The rainfall is light and evenly distributed and the temperature is equable. The alluvial soil on the banks of the river Tamiraparani is ideal sites for the growth of korai grass. The most famous of the varieties of korai grass the “Karungadukorai” which grows on five acres of land opposite Tharuvai village 11 kms from Pattamadai situated on the Tirunelveli-Shencottai trunk road.
- c) Human Skill: The fully grown, korai grass is cut and soaked in water / running water of river Tamiraparani and then split into fine strands. These strands are woven into fine mats, which is result of centuries of experience and expertise. So supple and lustrous is the mat that it seems to be made of silk threads. No wonder it is called a pattu pai or silk mat. Therefore, the above mentioned factors are linkage for their delicate feature and highly value.

N) Inspection Body :

An committee represented by the Master Weavers of Pattamadai Mats and The Tamil Nadu Handicrafts Development Corporation, shall prescribe the quality and production parameters for Pattamadai Mats.

Steps are being taken by the Applicant to setup a suitable and effective independent Inspection body involving external members.

O) Others :

Tamil Nadu Handicrafts Development Corporation a state govt. undertaking chiefly constituted as the apex body in charge of the handicrafts sector in the state of Tamil Nadu was setup in 1973 and

share capital participation from the Government of Tamil Nadu and the Govt. of India. The Corporation is running its business activities under the trade name 'Poompuhar' having its regd. Office at No.759, Anna Salai, Chennai - 600002.

The objectives and functions of Poompuhar are:

- A. To undertake the marketing of handicrafts produced by the artisans of Tamil Nadu
- B. To impart training to artisans to upgrade their skills
- C. To improve the productivity and the quality of the products; at the same time to reduce drudgery and remove occupational hazards
- D. To encourage new innovative designs
- E. To provide socio-economic security for craftsmen.

Accordingly Poompuhar has ever since been supporting the artisans involved in various handicrafts and in assisting them with their livelihood, business and trade.

Along with the Statement of case in class 27 in respect of Pattamadai Mats in the name (s) of (d) Tamil Nadu Handicrafts Development Corporation whose address is producers of the said goods to which the geographical indication relates and which is in continuous use since time immemorial in respect of the said goods.

2. The application shall include such other particulars called for in rule 32(1) in the Statement of case.

Enclosed.

3. All communications relating to this application may be sent to the following address in India; P.Sanjai Gandhi, Advocate, No58, Dr. Besant Road, Ice House, Chennai-600 005.

4. In the case of an application from a convention country the following additional particulars shall also be furnished.

Not Applicable

- a. Designation of the country of origin of the geographical indication.

Not Applicable

b. Evidence as to the existing protection of the geographical indication in its country of origin, such as the title and the date of the relevant legislative or administrative provisions, the judicial decisions or the date and number of the registration , and copies, of such documentation.

Not Applicable



SIGNATURE

Date: 25 / 01 / 2010