STATEMENT OF CASE

(FOR THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP COMMITTEE MEETING AT KARIM NAGAR, A.P. ON THE 28th OF SEPTEMBER, 2006)

NAME & ADDRESS OF THE APPLICANT:

Karimnagar Silver Filigree Handicrafts,
#4-5-38, Fathepura, Karimnagar – 505 001,
Andhra Pradesh.

NAME OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION:

SILVER FILIGREE OF KARIMNAGAR

LEGAL COMPETANCE OF APPLICANT:

Karimnagar Silver Filigree is Mutually Aided Cooperative society is started with (15) SHG groups covering (150) Artisans. The Society is a registered one under Cooperative Act and running on sound Cooperative Principles. It has democratically elected body consisting of President, Secretary, Treasurer and 9 Board of Directors. Society is formed in 2004 and Govt. of A.P facilitates its formation.

PROOF OF ORIGIN/ BRIEF HISTORY

Karimnagar derives its name from Syed Karimuddin, a Quiladar, and is known as a centre for Vedic learning from ancient times. Karimnagar is home to many tribes such as Gonds, Koyas, Chenchus all living in their own settlements and speaking their own dialects. The locals specialize in Silver Filigree work, which is a very delicate form of metal craft.

The district of Karimnagar in Andhra Pradesh has long been known for it's exquisite Silver Filigree work, which was started nearly 200 years ago in the Elegandal town near Karimnagar District in Andhra Pradesh. However, in 1905 this unique art form, moved to Karimnagar and it is here that dedicated artisans still practice the art as a legacy handed down the generations. Even after the advent of modern technologies and machineries, their style of working remains much the same as it has been since anyone can remember.

Filigree has continued for generations on the same pattern as those of the ancient Greeks & Europeans in India & parts of central Asia. The ancient Tuscans, Romans, Armenians & Greeks as well, made Filigree Jewelry and the art form reached its peak stage and began to be stamped in 1910s and 1920s. Today along with Indians, Chinese and Italians are also making the handicrafts. In India Filigree is specialty of Cuttack in Orissa and Karimnagar in Andhra Pradesh and is principally centered at Elegandal, Manakondur and Karimnagar since 200 years. The craft is believed to have been brought from the Persian city ISFAHAN that is a thriving center for Filigree. A few Hindu Kamsali artisans (Black smith & Gold smith) traveling through Persia had seen the Filigree art and overwhelmed with the craft, they brought it to the District. The Nizams of Hyderabad were the best patrons of Karimnagar Silver Filigree Industry and under their lead, the local rich men and Zamindaries used filigree articles in Social occasions.

The silver filigree handicraft of Karimnagar not only lends artistic elegance to once home but it's also a prized possession of marvelous workman ship.

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA OF PRODUCTION:

Karimnagar is located 158 Kms from Hyderabad where this art is flourishing in the Karimnagar District. Elegandal located 10kms from Karimnagar, was once the capital of Telangana where the art first originated. Karimnagar district is bounded by Madhya Pradesh state in the east, Nizamabad district in the West, Warangal and Medak districts in the South and Adilabad district in the North directions.

DESCRIPTION OF GOODS:

Silver Filigree is a form of metal craft practiced in Karimnagar. It is a very fine and extremely intricate carving on sheets of silver. The popular silver filigree items are traditional pandans, jewellery boxes, vases and replicas of Charminar and motifs of birds and flowers are extensively used in these intricate carvings. The designs of leaves, flowers, trees, animals and birds seem to be predominant. The works are costly and yet, priceless.

There are three types of works in Silver Filigree. They are;

i) 'Meenakari work',
ii) 'Khulla Jaal Work', and
iii) 'Flower and Leaves Work'.

An article depicted in one type of work can be prepared in other types as well. The customers at their choice can order for the articles in any type of work they like.

The range of filigree products includes:

Standard forms of Jewelry: Bangles, brooches, bracelets, armbands, earrings, ear loops, hairpins, coat pins, necklaces, pendants, chains, tie pins, buttons etc.,

Non Jewelry Decorative Items: Paan-daans, attar-daan, cigarette boxes, ornamental boxes, kum-kum boxes, perfume tins, leaf patterned purses, tea trays, key chains, hand bags and other contemporary monumental replicas like charminar, high tech city, globe, etc., and idols of Gods and Goddesses.

CLASS AND TYPE OF GOODS:

Class 6: Key chains.

Class 8: Hand tools and implements (hand operated); cutlery; side arms; razors.

Class14: Bangles, Brooches, Bracelets, arm bands, ear rings, ear tops, coat pins, necklaces, chains, tie pins, buttons, paan-daan, attar-daam, cigarette boxes, ornamental boxes, kum-kum boxes, perfurm tins, leaf patterned purses, tea trays, key chains, other contemporary monumental replicas like Charminar. High Tech City, Globe, etc., and idols of Gods and Goddesses.

Class 18 : Purses and hand bags.

Class 20 : Furniture, mirrors, picture frames.

Class 26 : Brooches, hair pins, tie pins and buttons.

Class 28 : Decorations for Christmas trees.

UNIQUENESS OF SILVER FILIGREE OF KARIMNAGAR:

What makes Silver Filigree so unique and delightful to the discerning eye is the fact that no two works of art are ever the same. Each item is a distinct, elegant masterpiece, which makes us marvel at the incredible craftsmanship and the close attention to detail that has gone into creating it.

The making of Silver filigree articles involves extremely intricate techniques that require great patience and skill. The craft is delicate and time consuming, consisting of cutting, twisting, plating of fine pliable wires or threads of silver or gold & uniting them at their points of contact with a base. The small grains or beads of the same metal, on the cross-junctions at regular intervals make it more efficient. The key uniqueness lies in the

intricacy of the silver metal being made into thin wire, which is later, twisted to give diverse designs. The thinnest twisted silver wire is woven into a trellis like network to produce artifacts adding up to the beauty of Silver Filigree work.

In Filigree work, the articles have an intricate trellis-like network (referred to as 'jali' in the local parlance) made of twisted silver wire. The making of this silver wire is in itself a fascinating process. There are three types of unique styles used in Silver Filigree work and are the patterns called,

-'Meenakari',

-'Khulla Jaal', and

-'Flowers and Leaves'

The creation is entirely handmade and the silver used is of very high quality. Each creation is generic, unique and different from others. A variety of thin and delicately worked silver articles of jewellery and household items are the hallmarks of silver filigree work.

Karimnagar is the only place in the entire country where this artistic industry is surviving for generations. There is another work called "Cuttak Work" which resembles Karimnagar filigree work, but the major difference between the two is that, while Karimnagar filigree work is done entirely by hand and the products are 100% silver without any mixture, Cuttak work is not only mixed but is done with the aid of machines.

SEQUENTIAL METHOD OF PRODUCTION:

As with many production systems, wherein an object produced in the preceding process becomes the input for the following process so is the case with filigree

1.*Melting:*

Melting of Silver is the first step and this is done by a method called "*Bhatti*", for generations.

2.*Silver Wiring:*

Drawing wire is the heart of Silver filigree process. To make the wire, the melted silver should have purity of 92% or greater and is made into an ingot and cast into a smaller, round ingot bar (*chandi-kadi*) wherein its end is tapered by forging to prepare it for drawing into heavy-gauge wire. The pure silver ingots are put through a wiredrawing

machine to produce very fine hair-like wires. Two of the thinnest wires are heated and wound around a 'charkha' and flattened again. In Filigree work, twisted silver wire is the

material, and the articles have the trellis-like appearance of 'jali' (net), which endows them with a rare charm.

3.*Sheet Machine*:

Silver is drawn into thin wires using sheet machine. Sheet machine and Zig-Zag Machine is used to get the shapes of the Silver along with filing and fine welding.

The steel drawplate (O: *jonta*; H: *jantri*; Tel: *kambechchu*) are mounted on a large draw bench (H: *rarkush ki jantra*), which has a series of holes in diminishing diameter sizes. The bar is then reduced in diameter gradually by drawing it with tongs (*chimta*) through each smaller hole. The process can either be done by hand or mechanically. Fine gauge wire is produced manually by the ancient traditional method of using a table-sized draw bench mounted with two reels. From the larger reel (*charkha*), wire is passed through a fixed drawplate to the second, smaller reel (*charkhi*). This process is repeated each time for drawing the wire through a progressively smaller hole in the draw plate until a wire of the desired gauge is achieved.

Three types of wire are necessary in filigree work and each has a specific function.

i) First is the outer frame wire (O: *bita tura*), which is the heaviest (14 gauge) and is square in section. The frame wire outlines the basic design and supports everything within it.

ii) The second wire is a lighter (15-20 gauge) square wire that divides the space within the outer frame into smaller units and helps in defining the main line of the design subject, such as a flower, leaf, or creeper pattern.

iii) The third wire is made of tow strands of round wire spiraled together, which is later flattened by hammering on an anvil or passing it through the rollers of a rolling mill. From the result are made all of the many units used to fill the remaining space in the frames.

4.*Softening the Silver wire:*

The silver wire has to be heated again for molding and folding it. And the artisans, who have been doing it as a family tradition and community specialization, do this carefully. Before filler units are inserted into the object, they are heated to anneal or render them soft, then cleaned by soaking in an acid solution and rinsed in water. Into the outer frames, suing a tweezers, the filler units are picked up and placed, packed in tightly until all the units hold together simply by the pressure of one against the other.

5.*Zig-Zag:*

The twisted silver wire is the main material and these are then twisted together and crimped into zigzag patterns around the ribs of the design formed by thicker strips of silver, and expertly soldered. By changing the tools, various patterns on the silver wire can be drawn using a machine called 'Zig-Zag'. The silversmith crimps thin strips of fine silver into zigzag patterns and loops around the thicker silver strips, which form the framework of the main object. . The motifs are usually leaves, flowers, creepers, animals and birds. The strips of fine silver are then deftly soldered. Because of their unique zigzag-knitting pattern, they seem like exquisite lace work with fine silver.

6.*Filing into fine Shape:*

The silver wire is twisted around the design patterns. And soldering is done to join the patterns to get a lay out design. All the filigree parts must be joined by solder, and tow grades are used.

i) The first melts at a higher temperature and is used at joins in frames when made, and
ii) the second melts at a lower temperature and is used to join the filler units to the frames after placement.

A paste is prepared from borax and ground red crab-eye seeds (H: *lal ratti*: O: *kaith),* the same seed used by Indian goldsmiths for weighing precious metals. Here, its purpose is to act as a gum that holds the filigree parts together . The object is lifted with a tweezers and dipped into this solution. Over it is dusted a mixture of fine solder filing and borax. The object is then lifted with tweezers and placed either on a sheet of mica (H: *abrak*), when soldered over a charcoal fire, or on an asbestos sheet, when soldering is done with the flame of a blowpipe.

7.*Fine Welding:*

Fine welding is a part of the craft and is performed to attach the joints and get the right shape. After object and supports are placed upon the charcoal bed, the heat level is brought up with a hand bellows (H: *dhaunkri*). When a blowpipe is used, its end is pointed through a flame of an oil or kerosene lamp, and then oxygenized. The heat is heightened and extended flame is directed towards the object being soldered. The solder melts and runs into all points of contact and joints. Whereupon the flame is immediately withdrawn. The object is lifted with tweezers and quenched in cold water then cleaned in dilute sulphuric acid solution. From this it emerges with the typical dead-white color commonly found in finished filigree objects.

8.*Design Setting:*

Design setting is by and large done by the women who give the best form to the craft.

9.*Final Heating:*

To give toughness for the entire structure, a final heating is done.

10.*Polishing:*

Final cleaning is done using a brass wire hand brush (H: *pithcal tra kai kanchi*) and a soapnut (H: *ritha*) and water solution. Because of filigree work's delicate nature, No machine polishing is done. The visible upper edges of the heavier wires are hand burnished to brightness with a highly polished or steel-tipped burnisher (A:*saiqal*: O *surskala*), the polished wires making a contrast with the others that are left matte white.

HUMAN SKILL AND LABOUR INVOLVED

There are a number of families having silver filigree work as their hereditary occupation. Among them, there are few who have been awarded Gold or Silver medals for their valuable contribution towards this exceptional craft. However, one Master Craftsman secured National Award during 1967 in the competition conducted by All India Handi Crafts Board at New Delhi for his masterpiece in Silver filigree work. It is a money purse prepared in "Khulla Jaal work" with utmost skill and dexterity.

The cost of an article is worked out by adding the wages of craftsmen with the cost of Silver. The wages of a craftsman for 10grammes of silver filigree works are between Rs3.50 to Rs4.50 and a good craftsman can hardly turn out a work of 10grammes in a day of 8hours working, due to the highly intricate and time consuming patterns, which have to be done with utmost precision, patience and skill. It may thus be seen how poorly a craftsman with such a fine art is rewarded in terms of money.

The entire process of making a silver filigree creation is highly labour intensive and every step of production requires physical effort to a larger extent. Starting with;

a) Melting: which is done by artisans using the method of "Bhatti" for generations

b) Wiring: considered as the soul of Silver Filigree. After the melting, pure silver ingots are put through a wiredrawing machine to produce very fine hair like wires. Two of the thinnest wires are heated and wound around a "Charkha" and flattered again.

c) Zig-Zag: The wires are then twisted together and crimped in to Zig-Zag patterns around the ribs of the design formed by thicker strips of silver, and expertly soldered.

INSPECTION:

The artisans undertake the following quality inspection mechanism in making the craft:

1. Before the art is taken up for processing the artisans ensure that 92% and above silver purity is maintained or else they cannot take it up for making the art. This is a very vital factor as Silver less than 92% cannot be made in to wires and hence cannot be used in the art.

2. Another testing mechanism is employed to test the purity of the finished product. Every product goes to a test of purity once finished. The process is called "Tounch" and there are many centers that offer this Quality Inspection Test.

   Steps involved in 'Tounch':

- 3 gms of test silver is taken from the sample finished product and melted to get a silver solution.

- 3 gms when melted gives 500 ml Silver Solution. This is taken in a bottle and to it 5 ml of Mercury is added to get a Silver Water.

- This silver water is titrated against Nitric acid. A burette is used for the titration and parameter is fixed at 90% (i.e. Reading/Sample Taken).

- Slowly the Titration is done and the Nitric acid is allowed to mix with the Silver water. Stirring the Silver water against titration with Nitrtic acid gives it a white color and finally the color changes to red. The reading at which silver solution is tuning red is noted and calculated by the sample taken to give the exact purity of the silver.

MODE OF MARKETING:

The artisan receives an agreed upon fee for his work based on the weight of the finished objects he delivers. A skilled artisan called karigar heads a team of artisans. He acts as a middleman and wholesaler of filigree products, distributing finished jewelry and objects widely in India as well as exporting them abroad. They supply the craftsmen with the designs they wish them to execute and are alert to changing fashions and consumer response.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh is taking initiatives to preserve this precious art by patronizing the craftsmen by way of organizing them into a co-operative society and

making available loans etc. The Zilla Parishad is looking after the welfare of this society by taking up the responsibility of marketing these products.

Due to credit mobilization, sufficient working capital for purchase of raw material and infrastructure boost the morality in making intricate designs of silver filigree handicrafts has increased. Jewelry and non-Jewelry items are valued from Rs.100/- to 70,000/- per piece.

The first, formal public display of silver filigree creations was held at Taj Residency, Hyderabad that fetched a cash sale of about Rs.5.00lakhs and further got orders for Rs.30.00lakhs. The craftsmen had also participated in two international Exhibitions conducted at Dubai during January 2005 and at Prague, Czech Republic from 5th May 2005 to 13th May 2005. The event was synchronized with Indian food festival and Indian tourism seminar. The potential importers and exporters for the craft expect to find best business partners with good performance provided the legal aspects regarding EXIM policies are fulfilled.

FUTURE OF SILVER FILIGREE:

"Standardization is alien to them", so say admirers of the silversmiths of Karimnagar - the creators of silver Filigree. Because, the most fascinating aspect of silver Filigree is the element of newness and surprise it has. Every piece looks different, delicate and unique. The craftsmen of Silver filigree have emerged with a strategy called as 5 'P's strategy for the betterment of their creation. It is briefly discussed below: -

5 'P's Strategy-

1. Products:

- Product catalogue
- Product design and development by National Institute of Design and Development in CAD/CAM.
- Lacquering machine and sheet and wire drawing machine
- Enamel application.

2. Price:

- Standardization of pricing through grading.
- Quality control

3. Place:

- Permanent exhibition stall at 5 Star Hotel.
- Common facility center at Karimnagar.

4. Packaging:

- New Innovative Packaging (domestic/international) crash course will be conducted by Indian Institute of Packaging.
- Standard bar coding.

5. Promotion:

- Participating in Jewellery & Handicraft exhibitions worldwide.
- Get facilitated with Indian Embassies abroad for appointing suitable business partners.
- Web marketing strategy.
- Publicity through Print & Electronic Media.
- Making these articles special for corporate gifts.

With an Annual Turnover of Rs.2 crores and being a source of livelihood for almost 500 craftsmen, the intricately embellished silver Filigree handicrafts draws one's attention and leaves the viewer deeply awestruck. Once encouraged and patronized by the Nizams of Hyderabad, during whose reign it flourished, Silver Filigree is now all set for a fresh lease of life so as to regain its past glory.