



ISSN: 2583-7753

# LAWFOYER INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF DOCTRINAL LEGAL RESEARCH

[ISSN: 2583-7753]

Volume 4 | Issue 1

2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70183/lijdlr.2026.v04.96>

© 2026 LawFoyer International Journal of Doctrinal Legal Research

Follow this and additional research works at: [www.lijdlr.com](http://www.lijdlr.com)

Under the Platform of LawFoyer – [www.lawfoyer.in](http://www.lawfoyer.in)

---

After careful consideration, the editorial board of LawFoyer International Journal of Doctrinal Legal Research has decided to publish this submission as part of the publication.

---

In case of any suggestions or complaints, kindly contact ([info.lijdlr@gmail.com](mailto:info.lijdlr@gmail.com))

To submit your Manuscript for Publication in the LawFoyer International Journal of Doctrinal Legal Research, To submit your Manuscript [Click here](#)

---

# CASE STUDY ANALYSIS ON PICHWAI PAINTINGS OF NATHDWARA: THEOPHANIC ART WHERE THE INFINITE DIVINE MANIFESTS THROUGH PHILOSOPHICAL TAPESTRY

---

Rushikesh Suresh Belagali<sup>1</sup>

## I. ABSTRACT

*Pichwai paintings of Nathdwara represent a profound confluence of art, devotion, and philosophy, embodying what may be termed theophanic art, a visual medium through which the formless divine manifests into perceptible form. Rooted in the temple traditions of Shrinathji in Nathdwara, Rajasthan, these intricate textile paintings function not merely as decorative backdrops but as sacred visual narratives that translate metaphysical concepts into tangible expression. Emerging within the Vaishnavite Pushtimarg tradition, Pichwai art reflects a deeply symbolic engagement with divinity, where motifs, colours, and compositions correspond to theological doctrines, seasonal rituals, and devotional practices. This study situates Pichwai painting within the framework of geographical indications, examining how its uniqueness satisfies the statutory definition under Section 2(1)(e) of the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, which requires a demonstrable link between the quality, reputation, or other characteristics of the goods and their geographical origin, arising from the interplay of geographical setting, artisanal skill, and inherited cultural knowledge. The art form's evolution from a temple-centric ritual object to a globally recognized cultural commodity highlights broader transformations in the relationship between heritage and intellectual property in the Global South. At the same time, increasing commercialization, imitation, and declining intergenerational transmission pose significant challenges to its authenticity and sustainability. By analysing Pichwai through both cultural and legal lenses, this research paper underscores the importance of protecting not only the tangible aspects of such art forms but also the intangible traditions and*

---

<sup>1</sup> Student of LLM in Intellectual Property Law at Amity Law School in Amity University, Noida, Uttar Pradesh (India). Email: rishibelagali@gmail.com

*knowledge systems that sustain them. It ultimately positions Pichwai painting as a living embodiment of India's spiritual and artistic heritage, requiring balanced preservation within contemporary global markets.*

## II. KEYWORDS

Geographical Indications; Pichwai Paintings; Traditional Knowledge; Intellectual Property Rights; Cultural Heritage.

## III. INTRODUCTION

“पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति। तदहं भक्त्युपहृतम् अश्रामि प्रयतात्मनः॥”, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 9, Verse 26 “Whoever offers to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, I accept that offering made with a pure heart.”<sup>2</sup>

Pichwai paintings embody this very philosophy of devotion, where the offering to the divine transcends material value and becomes an act of प्रेम (love) and भक्ति (devotion). Just as simple offerings are sanctified through devotion, Pichwai transforms cloth, color, and craftsmanship into sacred visual offerings to Lord Krishna. Indian History provides several proofs that the stories of Lord Krishna have always been the centre figure of creativity and art through dance, dramas, songs, poetry, puppets, and paintings. The saints describe the paintings of the divine as windows to the spiritual world as they are not mere imaginations of the artist, but they reflect the “Saakar Roop” or the manifested form of God. Be it Pattachitra or Madhubani, Tanjore or Saanjhi of Vrindavan, mughal miniatures or Kerala Murals.

They all play around Krishna's Pastimes in the forests of Vrindavan, gokul and Brajbhoomi as whole. One such divine artform is Pichwai. The term directly denotes “a piece of cloth that hangs in the back”. Traditionally, these paintings were made to be used as backdrops in temples which were called as Havelis and lord Krishna, lovingly called

---

<sup>2</sup> Bhagavad-gītā As It Is ch. 9, v. 26 (A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada trans., Bhaktivedanta Book Trust 1972).

as Thakurji who relishes resting in front of these artworks that depict his stories or “Leela”.

Pichwai Painting is closely tied to the temple town of Nathdwara of Rajsamand district in Rajasthan, which became one of the great centers of Krishna devotion in the 17th century. This particular art form has its origins in the relocation of the deity Shrinathji from the Braj region (present-day Uttar Pradesh) to Nathdwara during the period of Mughal political instability. This movement represented and protected the deity as well as imported a total devotional culture, such as rites, music, and visual arts, into a new geography. While many artistic traditions progress through aesthetic experimentation, Pichwai painting developed in an exceptionally regulated liturgical context.

The temple of Shrinathji serves as a living institution in which daily rituals (seva) necessitate the periodic reconfiguration of settings, thus creating a steady stream of Pichwai paintings. This transforms Nathdwara not simply into a point of departure but also a permanent production point of end-to-end consumption and ritual performance, the former of which means that art, like worship, becomes inseparable. Traditionally, patronage by the temple and the merchant communities (especially the followers of the Vaishnavite sect) also provided funding for the craft, often commissioning paintings for both temple use and private devotion. Nathdwara evolved into its own specialized artistic center, as workshops and hereditary artist families encouraged the tradition over the centuries. Pichwai paintings thus derive their geographical identity from a deeply spiritual geography, not just the one found in the natural world.

### **A. Research questions**

1. How does Pichwai painting qualify as a Geographical Indication within the framework of intellectual property law?
2. To what extent does GI protection effectively preserve the cultural and devotional essence of Pichwai paintings?
3. What are the major challenges faced by Pichwai artisans in the contemporary globalized market?

4. How can the GI framework be strengthened to ensure both economic sustainability and cultural authenticity?

## **B. Research objectives**

1. To examine the historical, cultural, and geographical foundations of Pichwai painting.
2. To analyse the scope and effectiveness of GI protection in preserving traditional art forms.
3. To identify contemporary challenges affecting the sustainability of Pichwai painting.
4. To evaluate the intersection of intellectual property law and intangible cultural heritage.

## **C. Research Methodology**

This study adopts a doctrinal legal research methodology, supplemented by a qualitative analysis of secondary sources. The doctrinal approach is employed to examine the legal framework governing Geographical Indications, particularly under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, and its interface with intellectual property law and traditional knowledge protection. In addition, the study engages with secondary materials including academic literature, government reports, and institutional publications to analyse the cultural, historical, and economic dimensions of Pichwai painting.

The research is primarily analytical and descriptive in nature, aiming to evaluate the effectiveness of existing legal protections while situating the art form within its broader socio-cultural context. The scope of the study is limited to doctrinal and literature-based analysis and does not include empirical fieldwork or primary data collection from artisans or institutions.

#### **D. Hypothesis**

The study hypothesizes that while Geographical Indication protection provides a significant legal framework for safeguarding Pichwai paintings as a product of specific geographical origin, it remains insufficient in preserving the intangible cultural, devotional, and knowledge-based dimensions of the art form. A more integrated and holistic approach, combining legal protection with cultural, institutional, and economic support mechanisms, is necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability and authenticity of Pichwai painting.

### **IV. MATERIALS, TECHNIQUE, AND ARTISTIC PROCESS OF THE TIMELESS ART**

Pichwai Painting is a discipline and a ritual practice; its artistry and ritual precision reflected in a very controlled process. The base material is usually handwoven cotton cloth, although silk and paper can come in various forms for smaller works as well. It is applied with a combination of starch (generally made from rice or wheat) and natural glue, and then burnished with smooth stones for a polished, non-absorbent finish suitable for detailed painting. The entire composition is planned for, with first sketches taken from charcoal or light pigments. They are often chitrakars who work in the shape of master artists and adhere to established iconographic norms.

The artwork represents this sacred landscape, with pigments derived from minerals such as lapis lazuli and malachite, plant-based sources, and precious materials including gold and silver leaf. Such materials are employed to not only improve visual richness, but to preserve the visual life of the painting. The execution is collaborative, involving multiple artisans who undertake outlining, colouring, detailing, and embellishment.

Fine brushes made from animal hair are used to render intricate details in facial features, textiles, jewellery, and background elements. The process is highly time-intensive and may take several weeks to months, particularly for large-scale temple backdrops. A hallmark of Pichwai technique is its complex and multi-layered compositional structure

within which the central deity is surrounded by complex and symbolic backgrounds. Symmetry, repetition, and spatial architecture combine to constitute a highly developed visual grammar that strikes a balance between aesthetic complexity and devotional clarity.<sup>3</sup>

## V. ICONOGRAPHY, SYMBOLISM, AND THEOPHANIC FUNCTION

The Pichwai art mainly originated from a spiritual sect of Vaishnavism established by Jagadguru Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya Ji, called as the Vallabh Sampradaya or Pushtimarg, which refers to “the path of grace”. Born into a Telugu Brahmin family, Mahaprabhuji studied Hindu philosophy from early age, then traveled throughout the Indian subcontinent, particularly the Braj (Vraja) region, for over 20 years. He became one of the important leaders of the devotional Bhakti movement. He began the institutional worship of Śrī Nāthajī on Govardhana Hill. He acquired many followers in the Gangetic plain and Gujarat. After his departure, the leadership of his sampradāya passed to his elder son Shri Gopīnātha Ji.

Mahaprabhuji’s philosophy promoted the householder lifestyle over asceticism, suggesting that through loving devotion to the deity Kṛṣṇa, any householder could achieve salvation. He authored many texts including but not limited to, the Aṅubhāṣya (his commentary on the Brahma Sutras), Ṣoḍaśa Grantha or sixteen tracts and several commentaries on the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.<sup>4</sup>

The art imbibes its symbolic values from such great ideals of Vaishnavism. The paintings include depictions of various events revolving around Lord Krishna’s mystical life such as, the grand celebration of his birth in Gokul, followed many righteous events performed by Nanda Maharaja, Krishna’s foster father, demigods and heavenly beings seeking Krishna's glimpse from the sky with Baby Krishna swinging in a golden cradle. The

---

<sup>3</sup> Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Pichwai Art of Rajasthan 4-8 (2015), <https://handicrafts.nic.in>

<sup>4</sup> Kavita Singh, Sacred Arts of Nathdwara, *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 74, No. 1 (2014), pp. 101-120, available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24392142>.

paintings also depict Rasa Leela of Lord Krishna with the Gopis, the cowherd girls of Vrindavan presided by Shrimati Radharani on the night of Sharad Purnima where we can see the full moon at the top with circles of dancing gopis surrounding Krishna with Shri Radha. And the unusual event of Krishna expanding himself to dance with all the Gopis gathered there. The formation of Rasakrida is based on “Dwai Dwai Gopi Bich Bich Madho” which means there is one form of Krishna dancing between two Gopis.

The paintings consist of intricate details like banana trees, peacocks dancing with their feathers open, flowers blossoming, cows surrounding the dark flute player, lotus motifs emerging from Yamuna, detailed borders and rich colour combinations to highlight the glories of their subject, Lord Krishna.

Every festival of Shreenathji has its own specific Pichwai. Such as a pichwai depicting Krishna breaking pots of Gopis to receive tax or Daan for walking their way to Mathura through his village, Nandagon, which is hung on Daan Ekadashi. Another form is where Lord Krishna is painted as Sudarshana Narayana, his powerful weapon in the form of a disc which is said to grant protection to the homes it is displayed in. Next is the famous Trinidhi Sawaroop Pichwai which consists of Lord Krishna as Shreenathji in the centre, with Goddess Yamuna dressed in a similar male attire like Krishna's and holding lotus flowers and garland to offer and on the other side there is Mahaprabhuji in chanting or worshipping posture. Special instantly made pichwais with organic colour powders are hung for 40 days on the occasion of holi.

Pure sandalwood paste is used to imprint flower motifs through stencils to make the Chandan Chaap Pichwai for summers, mainly on Akshay Tritiya. A deeply intricate and equally expensive pichwai is made where the artists paint in total 24 forms of Shreenathji which is known as the Chaubis Darshan Pichwai. Similarly paintings depict elaborate decoration and service of the whole day starting from Mangala; the first prayer, then Balbhog; the first offering, followed by Shirngar; the divine dress up, and Rajbhog Arati; the royal feast; after which the temple closes for noon and is reopened at Utthapan Arati,

the divine reawakening followed by Sandhya Darshan i.e evening prayers and concluding with Shayan Arati where the divine is put to sleep with lullabies.

A significant and rare form of pichwai is “Dooj Ko Chanda”; which means the crescent moon of the second lunar day. This Pichwai is quite significant in winter, especially in the month of Marshirsha (November - December). In which a half-moon is showcased in the night sky with shimmering stars and trees in the forest with Gopis standing beside the deity in service.

An interesting fact about the Pichwai art is that it preserves the temple rules of decorating the Lord that vary every single day. Mahaprabhuji initiated these paintings highlighting the Shringar order for every single day of the year to ensure its continuity by the upcoming generations, even today, there is no kind of photography allowed inside the temple and Shreenathji is only accessible through his Pichwais outside the temple threshold.

The form of Lord Krishna depicted in Pichwai is quite different from his stereotypical form, i.e standing in bent posture with a flute in hands. The reason being that the form of Shreenathji appeared from the Govardhan hill in Braj and the pose made by Krishna to lift the hill is the one seen in the paintings. His left hand known as the “Urdhva Bhuja” is seen lifted up in the air gesturing to hold the hill with the tip of the nail of his smallest finger. And the other hand is on his waist symbolising authority and firmness. His eyes are always painted to look downward, which means that the lord always sees his devotees.

The attire of the Lord also includes feminine elements like a braid, anklets, Sheeshphul, Mathapatti which is called Alkawali and so on to depict oneness of Radha Krishna. Near his feet there is a pot of water and a box of snacks known as Jhari Ji and Banta Ji respectively that symbolise even the divine feels thirst and hunger out of devotion. The flute is never seen in his hands or near lips as devotees believe that it may strain the lord if he holds it the whole day.

## **VI. DEMAND, COMMERCIALIZATION, AND GI RECOGNITION**

A tradition of the demand for Pichwai Painting is traced back to this very ritual function at places such as the Shrinathji temple at Nathdwara (the paintings used are cycled, for example, to keep up with the liturgical calendar). This guarantees a sustained institutionalized demand for the works with demand from temple authorities and wealthy Vaishnavite patrons who ordered Pichwais in prayer and for their private shrines. This system of patronage increasingly expanded in the late 20th and early 21st centuries to include use beyond religious institutions, as Pichwai paintings became seen in international and national art markets as collectible pieces of devotional art. As cultural tourism flourished in Rajasthan, particularly around Nathdwara and around heritage spots nearby, Pichwai paintings found their way further into commercial circuits, from the galleries to the exhibitions to the export markets.

It represented a transition from strictly ritual objects to hybrid cultural products prized for their spiritual and aesthetic properties. But this expansion also resulted in uniformity within the market and segmentation of the market, as high-quality hand-painted Pichwais and the reduced prices of adaptations and reproductions for mass consumption have coexisted. To accommodate this wider appetite, smaller media, minimal designs, and faster production methods have evolved. Furthermore, when the Pichwai paintings became popular, there was rampant copying and commodified methods, such as the use of machine printed reproductions and nontraditional Pichwai versions created from outside Nathdwara. It was cheapening of the genuineness, and a compromise with the economic viability of craftsmen.

To address these concerns, the art form was granted Geographical Indications (GI) status on August 1, 2023, under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. The registration process under Section 11 of the Act requires an application establishing the uniqueness of the goods, their geographical linkage, and proof of origin, all of which are satisfied in the case of Nathdwara Pichwai Craft through

its historically rooted production practices and cultural specificity.<sup>5</sup> This acknowledgment has cemented an official connection of the art form to its site of origin, and provides a legal shield against misuse of the name 'Pichwai' under Section 22 of the Act, which prohibits unauthorized use of registered geographical indications in a manner that misleads consumers or constitutes unfair competition.

The GI registration functions as a shield for legal protection and a mechanism for differentiation of goods in the market, supported by specific enforcement mechanisms under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. In particular, Section 17 of the Act provides for the registration of Authorized Users, enabling individual artisans and producers to legally use the GI and seek protection against infringement. Such authorized users are entitled to initiate infringement actions, thereby decentralizing enforcement and strengthening protection at the grassroots level. The framework also promotes consumer trust by establishing authenticity and enables artisans to command premium pricing in niche markets.

The GI framework also helped with efforts such as certification, the issuance of awareness, and participation in government-subsidized handicraft promotion programs. However, the success of these interventions remains uneven due to weak enforcement mechanisms and limited consumer awareness, allowing counterfeit and machine-produced imitations to persist in the market. Although the Act provides for civil remedies such as injunctions, damages, and accounts of profits, as well as criminal sanctions under Section 67, enforcement in practice is constrained by procedural delays and limited institutional capacity. Additionally, artisans may rely on common law remedies such as passing off to protect the reputation of authentic Pichwai works, particularly in cases where misuse does not strictly fall within statutory infringement.

---

<sup>5</sup> GI Registry, Nathdwara Pichwai Craft, Registered August 1, 2023 (India); Press Information Bureau, Government of India, GI Tag Granted to Nathdwara Pichwai Craft under NABARD Initiative (August 2023).

This is why, although GI recognition constitutes an important legal step, its effectiveness remains contingent upon the practical enforcement of statutory provisions such as Sections 22 and 67, as well as the ability of stakeholders to meet the evidentiary and procedural thresholds established under Section 11, thereby necessitating a more robust integration of legal safeguards with cultural preservation efforts.

## VII. CHALLENGES, GENERATIONAL TRANSITION, AND SUSTAINABILITY

Despite its cultural significance and growing market presence, the Pichwai painting tradition faces several challenges. One of the most pressing issues is the declining interest among younger artists, who often perceive the craft as less lucrative compared to modern design or digital art professions. The highly disciplined nature of the craft, requiring years of training and adherence to traditional norms, can be a deterrent in a rapidly changing economic landscape. Conventional iconography plays a crucial part in keeping an artist authentic, yet too rigid an approach can hinder the artist from pursuing their own creativity. The rise in materials costs, especially for natural pigments and precious metals, has been another factor influencing production economics. Moreover, the absence of systemic institutional support and the lack of awareness of GI certification prevent the full utilization of this asset.<sup>6</sup>

Pichwai Painting represents a unique convergence of art, religion, and geography, where the value of the product lies not only in its aesthetic qualities but also in its spiritual and cultural significance. Its evolution from a temple-based ritual object to a globally recognized art form reflects broader transformations within the Global South's engagement with heritage and intellectual property. Their recognition as a GI underscores the importance of protecting not just tangible products but also the intangible cultural practices and knowledge systems that sustain them. Ultimately, the

---

<sup>6</sup> GI Registry Chennai, *Registered GI Details: Pichwai Painting* (2012).

future of Pichwai painting depends on its ability to navigate the challenges of commercialization, generational transition, and cultural preservation.

Pichwai painting, though culturally and spiritually valuable, contends with the structural, economic, and cultural forces that jeopardize its sustainability. For one, the interest of younger generations of artisans is waning. The craft requires years of painstaking training following strict iconographic guidelines and offers relatively uncertain financial returns. Consequently, many young members of traditional artisan families are leaving the profession for more stable and lucrative employment, resulting in a slow erosion of intergenerational learning. More important is commercialization and market pressure. As the number and demand of Pichwai in both the domestic and international markets increase, mass-produced, machine-printed versions are being produced. These cheaper alternatives detract from the art's authenticity and create competition for traditional artists. As high-quality handcrafted works compete with inexpensive alternatives in the market, consumer confusion increases, resulting in the devaluation of authentic Pichwai paintings.

The weak enforcement of the Geographical Indication (GI) protection as a problem only adds to these problems. Pichwai painting has GI status, but enforcement is poor. Unauthorized producers' use of the name Pichwai outside Nathdwara continues, and inadequate consumer awareness weakens the effectiveness of GI to differentiate products from competitors of both brands. This discrepancy between an offer of legal protection on one hand and its enforcement on the other makes its objectives in the GI registration less than advantageous. There's also the fact that the economic limitations of cost of both traditional materials and manufacture increase with time, and the costs of the production methods.

When natural pigments, gold leaf and silver leaf, handcrafted cloth are employed, production costs rise sharply, and authentic Pichwai paintings lose relevance in more price-conscious markets. This often compels artisans to substitute traditional materials or adopt faster, less traditional production methods. Additionally, the lack of institutional

backing and formal market access restricts the development potential of the practice. Most artisans are unable to access global markets directly and must rely on intermediaries, often without receiving proportionate financial returns. The combined effect of inadequate dissemination, limited exposure initiatives, and insufficient integration with contemporary design platforms restricts innovation and broader perception of the art form. This combination of constraints underlines the need for more comprehensive approaches than just legal protection; those should also include economic incentives, cultural preservation strategies and actively promoting the traditions of knowledge.

## **VIII. FUTURE OUTLOOK OF THE TIMELESS PICHWAI ART**

And that is where you can see the future of Pichwai painting, at the beautiful crossroads of tradition and transformation that the devotional core is guiding the growing cultural and commercial relevance. Long known for its temple spaces, Pichwai has been incorporated into high-end interior design, where its complex compositions (with all their symbolic weight) are reimagined for wall installations and textile panels and curated heritage-inspired décor. Beyond cultural aesthetics this transition of practice represents not only an elevation of Pichwai in its own right as a new cultural luxury asset not merely seen for its aesthetics but also its authenticity and narrative depth. There is also increasing acceptance of the artisanal worth in Pichwai paintings, in particular the labour, time, and discipline that goes into each painting.

As mass production gains momentum, such handcrafted works epitomize a kind of “slow art,” at which artisanal man-hours take on both reputational and economic value. Collectors are not only buying the works on paper anymore, but the process (historical and technical) intergenerational learning, the accuracy of precision, and devotional intent bolstering the cultural credentials of traditional craftsmanship. The impact of Pichwai has seeped into fashion as well, where its sacred symbols like cows, lotus images, Krishna figures and so on form part of sarees and textiles, and collections, by designers. When handled sensitively, these adaptations allow the art form to evolve while maintaining its

symbolic integrity. This respectful incorporation of new fashion trends is indicative of a larger movement towards culturally inspired fashions derived from indigenous wisdom without commodifying them. Yet the arrival of digital Pichwai may usher in new frontiers of preservation and outreach.<sup>7</sup>

Digital reproductions, archives, and virtual exhibitions provide access to and documentation of rare objects on a global scale. Concerns of diluted items remain but thoughtful digitalisation can increase awareness, allow for artisan-led marketing and protect designs through documentation. In a globalized cultural economy, this integration between tech and tradition provides one of the vital means to remain ahead. Pichwai thus remains as a potent medium of devotion and meditation, beyond its economic and aesthetic dimensions. As such, creating/viewing these paintings becomes a form of meditation on the divine presence of Shreenathji transforming artfully produced art into a medium of spiritual experience. Thus is Pichwai, beyond the physical, a visual theology, with the divine being worshipped, but produced aesthetically.<sup>8</sup>

Shreenathji grows even more prominent in this context as not only a god but as a creative and cultural icon, stimulating a cross time, cross space artistic expression. To which end, our future for Pichwai painting must depend on how well it reconciles the preservation to the innovation. Such a tradition can remain strong through strengthening GI enforcement, supporting artisan welfare, developing responsible design adaptations, and adopting new technologies. Pichwai is both an institution of reverence and a cultural industry that demonstrates how geographical indications can provide economic value and also culture to a civilization where it has been preserved.

---

<sup>7</sup> Ritu Kumar, *Costumes and Textiles of Royal India* 112–18 (Christie’s Books 1999), available at <https://archive.org/details/costumestextilesofroyalindia>.

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, Annual Report 2018–19, Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), available at <https://texmin.nic.in>.

## **IX. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In light of the challenges identified, several legal and policy interventions are necessary to strengthen the protection and sustainability of Pichwai painting.

1. Enforcement mechanisms under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 should be strengthened through strict monitoring of unauthorized use and the imposition of effective penalties to deter infringement.
2. There is a need to develop a sui generis framework for the protection of traditional knowledge that extends beyond product-based recognition to include intangible cultural and devotional elements embedded in the art form.
3. Institutional support mechanisms, including government-backed certification systems, artisan cooperatives, and direct market access platforms, should be enhanced to reduce dependence on intermediaries and ensure fair remuneration.
4. Awareness initiatives aimed at educating consumers about authentic GI-tagged products can improve market differentiation and reduce the circulation of counterfeit works.
5. Integration of digital documentation and archival systems should be encouraged to preserve traditional designs while enabling controlled and ethical dissemination in global markets.

These measures, collectively, can contribute to a more robust and holistic protection framework that balances legal enforcement with cultural preservation and economic sustainability.

## **X. CONCLUSION**

But Pichwai painting – as it has evolved in Nathdwara – constitutes a rare and enduring convergence of art, devotion, and geography. Unlike many artistic traditions which develop through the practice of experimentation alone, Pichwai is rooted in a ritualistic and theological tradition, which places an extreme emphasis on devotional intention, in

the making of works in ritualistic and theological terms. A living tradition which translates metaphysical philosophy into a visual language and through which the formless divinity of divine images is converted into a well-defined, perceivable and recognizable form. Shrinathji's migration from the Braj region to Nathdwara was not just about relocating a deity; it was a transplantation not just of a deity, but of an entire cultural and devotional ecosystem.

This led to a specific style of art maintained through temple patronage, merchant patronage, and legacy across generations to come and laid the groundwork for a distinct community art practice. Nathdwara became an elite center where not only did artistic production, ritual performance and cultural consumption come inextricably linked with one another, but also where they solidified the continuity of indigenous knowledge systems. In terms of craftsmanship, Pichwai painting reflects discipline, exactness, and co-creation. Its incorporation of natural materials, conformity to convention for icons, and careful and organized production have combined artistry and spiritual intent.

It is this disciplined creativity that makes Pichwai distinct from the predominantly decorative art, and, hence, a discipline where aesthetic and devotional aspects are blended in unison. Pichwai painting, therefore, is in today's world recognized under the system by which the Geographical Indications system, or the international art system that gives us recognition and identification around its geographical and cultural character. This legal cover has significantly increased its visibility and commercial potential, but it has also brought with it issues of commodification, copying and changing customer habits. The appearance of real handcrafted works and a homogeneous factory mass-produced reproductions symbolize the tension for conservation versus expansion in the market.

Meanwhile, a community-based view of tradition is closely related to the socio-economic realities of craftspeople. The continued decline of interest among generations younger than theirs, the rising price and limited support provided by institutions, for example, present some very serious challenges to their existence. Meeting these challenges requires

a comprehensive approach that links legal protection with cultural awareness, financial incentives, and opportunities for innovation within traditional frameworks. But in the end, Pichwai painting is about more than a region; it is also a living emblem of India in religion and in culture, spirit and history. Its power endures because it continues to be grounded in faith in the face of changing circumstances. Achieving a balance of authenticity and accessibility will be paramount to the future in Pichwai as there will be question marks that remain over whether or not Pichwai will grow as a sacred art and into an evolving expression of culture.

## XI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Bhagavad-gītā As It Is ch. 9, v. 26 (A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada trans., Bhaktivedanta Book Trust 1972).
2. Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, Annual Report 2018–19, Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), available at <https://texmin.nic.in>.
3. Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Pichwai Art of Rajasthan 4–8 (2015), <https://handicrafts.nic.in>
4. Kavita Singh, Sacred Arts of Nathdwara, *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 74, No. 1 (2014), pp. 101–120, available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24392142>.
5. GI Registry, Nathdwara Pichwai Craft, Registered August 1, 2023 (India); Press Information Bureau, Government of India, GI Tag Granted to Nathdwara Pichwai Craft under NABARD Initiative (August 2023).
6. GI Registry Chennai, Registered GI Details: Pichwai Painting (2012).
7. Ritu Kumar, *Costumes and Textiles of Royal India* 112–18 (Christie’s Books 1999), available at <https://archive.org/details/costumestextilesofroyalindia>.