

Why students must know about IP

Filing for intellectual property rights not only helps innovators protect their invention, but also provides better collaboration and funding opportunities, reports **Sheetal Banchariya**

India's research output had an annual growth rate of 9% from 2013 to 2017. This was considered to be one of the most productive periods in the Indian research scenario. In 2019, India's position rose to 36 from 44 in 2018 in the International Intellectual Property (IP) Index. Ironically, increased research did not amount to increase in IP applications, which continued to be limited. In 2017-18, 3,50,546 applications were received by the IP offices under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, which was slightly better than 2016-17, when the total applications were 3,50,467.

The annual review of the international patent system, administered by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) claimed that only 6% of Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) applications originating from India were filed by universities in 2018. This implies that young researchers need to know more about IP rules and rights.

INCREASED NEED FOR IPRS

With the increasing focus on innova-

tion, research and cross-border collaborations, the need to learn about intellectual property rights (IPRs) to safeguard their inventions has increased among the students. "As countries turn to innovation and creativity for sustainable development, the need to understand the importance of IPRs has increased. The demand for IP is increasing, especially in developing countries," says a spokesperson from WIPO.

In contemporary times, the research is translational and transforms into services or products. IPRs help in protecting as well as commercialising the inventions. "If the innova-

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tions are patented and taken up for commercialisation by the startups, it will give a competitive advantage to the inventors and entrepreneurs," says Nithin V George, TEOCO chair associate professor, Electrical Engineering, IIT Gandhinagar.

INTEGRATING IPRS IN CURRICULUM

IPRs have various verticals including patent, trademark, design and copyright, where some aspects are more talked about in the academic community than others. Experts believe that the foundational awareness regarding the rights of a creator needs to be developed in students from the school level.

Vikas Dhar, CEO and founder, TekIP Knowledge Consulting, a technology and patent consulting firm, calls for the need to have a culture of respec-

ting the rights of a creator and giving due credit while using someone else's creation. "Students will grow on to get into the professional world where they will develop and exercise IP rights, hence it must be made a part of the academic curriculum at school and university level with increasing sophistication in the pedagogical approach," he adds.

Echoing Dhar, Ashutosh Kumar Srivastava, who specialises in IPR laws and teaches at the Delhi University's Faculty of Law, says that the UGC can introduce a compulsory 2-credit course on IPRs, similar to the Environmental Studies course in all the higher education institutions (HEIs).

THE WAY FORWARD

The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) continue to file maximum pa-

