

# Property matters

## The national IPR policy is well-timed

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**T**he national intellectual property rights (IPR) policy is a step in the right direction. It will help consolidate the efforts of multiple agencies associated with the national IP ecosystem.

It also proposes measures to ensure that the Indian system is responsive to the changing needs in the area of IPR, as India engages itself with new technologies, trade environment and international negotiations.

Highlighting issues related to technology transfer and licensing, the policy would provide a strong framework for the Make in India programme.

It would generate a positive environment for multiplying innovations and entrepreneurship and generate more jobs in newer areas of technology.

The Government recently announced certain measures for promotion of startups in the country and reorganisation of IPR related departments even before the announcement of the policy.

### A positive framework

The Government promises to provide a positive environment and framework for technology transfer and IPR licensing especially in clean and green technologies which need to be imported.

Similarly, there is a special mention of licensing of standard essential patents. The terms and conditions of licence are better left to the trade and the parties involved rather than regulating them unless one is faced with a situation of compulsory licence.

Laudably, the policy lays emphasis on enhancing the IP stock of MSME and startups. The Government needs to set up a functional mechanism for funding for protecting IP startups. MSMEs are in need of engaging in R&D and new knowledge to become and remain competitive.

The need for anti-counterfeiting and anti-piracy measures, including measures against online piracy, has been duly spelt out in the policy.

This can attract investment into the country. To reduce counterfeiting and piracy, coordination among different agencies including international agencies would be essential. This is missing at the moment.

The policy's push for awareness and capacity building would strengthen the ongoing efforts in the country in this sector. It would be essential to have the right faculty to teach IPR as these rights impact trade, business and technology directly, while paying due attention to the pedagogy.

The policy puts the responsibility on the academic and other publicly funded institutions to generate IP and have necessary systems to license them to industry. A careful approach is needed to be followed so that mere numbers of filings do not overtake the quality of inventions.

### Research and funds

Conducting research on IPR-related subjects is a fresh theme articulated by the Government. It is now the responsibility of all stakeholders, especially the academic sector, to take the lead in conducting research through PhD programmes and sponsorship from different funding agencies.

It would be desirable that the Government earmarks separate funds for this. It is good that the policy has left the area open and is not prescriptive.

The question that will always remain is how to achieve these goals and when would one start seeing results? The next step is to have an action plan with various measurable milestones and a definite timeframe. Without an action plan some of the laudable goals may not be fulfilled.

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