

and amended and was called "The Indian Patents and Designs Act, 1911". After Independence a comprehensive bill on patent rights was enacted in the year 1970 and was called "The Patents Act, 1970".

Specific statutes protected only certain type of Intellectual output; till recently only four forms were protected. The protection was in the form of grant of copyrights, patents, designs and trademarks. In India, copyrights were regulated under the Copyright Act, 1957; patents under Patents Act, 1970; trade marks under Trade and Merchandise Marks Act 1958; and designs under Designs Act, 1911.

With the establishment of WTO and India being signatory to the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), several new legislations were passed for the protection of intellectual property rights to meet the international obligations. These included: Trade Marks, called the Trade Mark Act, 1999; Designs Act, 1911 was replaced by the Designs Act, 2000; the Copyright Act, 1957 amended a number of times, the latest is called Copyright (Amendment) Act, 2012; and the latest amendments made to the Patents Act, 1970 in 2005. Besides, new legislations on geographical indications and plant varieties were also enacted. These are called Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, and Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001 respectively.

Over the past fifteen years, intellectual property rights have grown to a stature from where it plays a major role in the development of global economy. In 1990s, many countries unilaterally strengthened their laws and regulations in this area, and many others were poised to do likewise. At the multilateral level, the successful conclusion of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) in the World Trade Organization elevates the protection and enforcement of IPRs to the level of solemn international commitment. It is strongly felt that under the global competitive environment, stronger IPR protection increases incentives for innovation and raises returns to international technology transfer.

DEVELOPMENT OF TRIPS COMPLIED REGIME IN INDIA

The establishment of WTO as a result of institutionalization of international framework of trade calls for harmonization of several aspects of Indian Law relating to Intellectual Property Rights. The TRIPS agreement set minimum standards for protection for IPR rights and also set a time frame within which countries were required to make changes in their laws to comply with the required degree of protection. In view of this, India has taken action to modify and amend the various IP Acts in the last few years.

Patents Act, 1970

After India became a signatory to the TRIPS agreement forming part of the Agreement establishing the World Trade Organization (WTO) for the purpose of reduction of distortions and impediments to international trade and promotion of effective and adequate protection of intellectual property rights, the Patents Act, 1970 has been amended in the year 1995, 1999, 2002 and 2005 to meet its obligations under the TRIPS agreement. The Patents Act has been amended keeping in view the development of technological capability in India, coupled with the need for integrating the intellectual property system with international practices and intellectual property regimes. The amendments were also aimed at making the Act a modern, harmonized and user-friendly legislation to adequately protect national and public interests while simultaneously meeting India's international obligations under the TRIPS Agreement.

Subsequently the rules under the Patent Act have also been amended and these became effective from May 2003. These rules have been further amended by Patents (Amendment) Rules 2005 w.e.f 01.01.2005. Thus, the Patent Amendment Act, 2005 is now fully in force and operative.

Trade Mark Act, 1999

The law of trademarks is also now modernized under the Trademarks Act of 1999. A trademark is a special

symbol for distinguishing the goods offered for sale or otherwise put on the market by one trader from those of another. In India the trademarks have been protected for over four decades as per the provisions of the Trade and Merchandise Mark (TMM) Act of 1958. India became a party to the WTO at its very inception. One of the agreements in that related to the Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). In December, 1998 India acceded to the Paris Convention.

Meanwhile, the modernisation of Trade and Merchandise Marks Act, 1958 had been taken up keeping in view the current developments in trading and commercial practices, increasing globalisation of trade and industry, the need to encourage investment flows and transfer of technology, need for simplification of trademark management system and to give effect to important judicial decisions. To achieve these purposes, the Trademarks Bill was introduced in 1994.

The Bill pointed towards the changes which were contemplated and were under consideration of the Government of India, but it lapsed in 1994. A comprehensive review was made of the existing laws in view of the developments in trading and commercial practices, and increasing globalization of trade and industry. The Trademarks Bill of 1999 was passed by Parliament that received the assent of the President on 30th December, 1999 as Trade Marks Act, 1999 thereby replacing the Trade and Merchandise Mark Act of 1958. The important salient features of the Act *inter-alia* include:

- It broadens the definition of infringement of a registered trademark to include action against the unauthorized use of a confusingly similar mark, not only in respect of the goods and services covered by registration, as was previously the case, but also in respect of goods and services which are so similar that a likelihood of deception or confusion exists.
- An action for infringement will also be available against the unauthorised use of a mark in relation to dissimilar goods, if such mark is similar to a registered mark that is well known in India and the interest of the owner is likely to be affected adversely. The remedy for infringement of a trademark is also strengthened under the new law by authorising the police with the power to seize infringing articles without a warrant.

✓ The Designs Act, 2000

The Designs Act of 1911 has been replaced by the Designs Act, 2000. In view of considerable progress made in the field of science and technology, a need was felt to provide more efficient legal system for the protection of industrial designs in order to ensure effective protection to registered designs, and to encourage design activity to promote the design element in an article of production. In this backdrop, the Designs Act, 2000 has been enacted essentially to balance these interests and to ensure that the law does not unnecessarily extend protection beyond what is necessary to create the required incentive for design activity while removing impediments to the free use of available designs.

The new Act complies with the requirements of TRIPS and hence is directly relevant for international trade. Industrial Design law deals with the aesthetics or the original design of an industrial product. An industrial product usually contains elements of both art and craft, that is to say artistic as well as functional elements. The design law excludes from its purview the functioning features of an article and grants protection only to those which have an aesthetic appeal. For example, the design of a teacup must have a hollow receptacle for holding tea and a handle to hold the cup. These are functional features that cannot be registered. But a fancy shape or ornamentation on it would be registrable. Similarly, a table, for example, would have a flat surface on which other objects can be placed. This is its functional element. But its shape, colour or the way it is supported by legs or otherwise, are all elements of design or artistic elements and therefore, registrable if unique and novel.

Today, industrial design has become an integral part of consumer culture where rival articles compete for consumer's attention. It has become important therefore, to grant to an original industrial design adequate protection. It is not always easy to separate aesthetics of a finished article from its function. Law, however, requires that it is only the aesthetics or the design element which can be registered and protected. For example, while designing furniture whether for export or otherwise, when one copies designs from a catalogue, one has to ascertain that somebody else does not have a design right in that particular design. Particularly, while exporting furniture, it is necessary to be sure that the design of the furniture is not registered either as a patent or design in the country of export. Otherwise, the exporter may get involved in unnecessary litigation and may face claims for damages. Conversely, if furniture of ethnic design is being exported, and the design is an original design complying with the requirements of the definition of 'design' under the Designs Act, it would be worthwhile having it registered in the country to which the product is being exported so that others may not imitate it and deprive the inventor of that design of the commercial benefits of his design.

✓ The salient features of the Design Act, 2000 are as under:

- (a) Enlarging the scope of definition of the terms "article", "design" and introduction of definition of "original".
- (b) Amplifying the scope of "prior publication".
- (c) Introduction of provision for delegation of powers of the Controller to other officers and stipulating statutory duties of examiners.
- (d) Provision of identification of non-registrable designs.
- (e) Provision for substitution of applicant before registration of a design.
- (f) Substitution of Indian classification by internationally followed system of classification.
- (g) Provision for inclusion of a register to be maintained on computer as a Register of Designs.
- (h) Provision for restoration of lapsed designs.
- (i) Provisions for appeal against orders of the Controller before the High Court instead of Central Government.
- (j) Revoking of period of secrecy of two years of a registered design.
- (k) Providing for compulsory registration of any document for transfer of right in the registered design.
- (l) Introduction of additional grounds in cancellation proceedings and provision for initiating the cancellation proceedings before the Controller in place of High Court.
- (m) Enhancement of quantum of penalty imposed for infringement of a registered design.
- (n) Provision for grounds of cancellation to be taken as defence in the infringement proceedings to be in any court not below the Court of District Judge.
- (o) Enhancing initial period of registration from 5 to 10 years, to be followed by a further extension of five years.
- (p) Provision for allowance of priority to other convention countries and countries belonging to the group of countries or inter-governmental organizations apart from United Kingdom and other Commonwealth Countries.
- (q) Provision for avoidance of certain restrictive conditions for the control of anticompetitive practices in contractual licenses.

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

Until recently, Geographical indications were not registrable in India and in the absence of statutory protection, Indian geographical indications had been misused by persons outside India to indicate goods not originating from the named locality in India. Patenting turmeric, neem and basmati are the instances which drew a lot of attention towards this aspect of the Intellectual property. Mention should be made that under the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), there is no obligation for other countries to extend reciprocal protection unless a geographical indication is protected in the country of its origin. India did not have such a specific law governing geographical indications of goods which could adequately protect the interest of producers of such goods.

To cover up such situations it became necessary to have a comprehensive legislation for registration and for providing adequate protection to geographical indications and accordingly the Parliament has passed a legislation, namely, the Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. The legislation is administered through the Geographical Indication Registry under the overall charge of the Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks.

The salient features of this legislation are as under:

- (a) Provision of definition of several important terms like "geographical indication", "goods", "producers", "packages", "registered proprietor", "authorized user" etc.
- (b) Provision for the maintenance of a Register of Geographical Indications in two parts-Part A and Part B and use of computers etc. for maintenance of such Register. While Part A will contain all registered geographical indications, Part B will contain particulars of registered authorized users.
- (c) Registration of geographical indications of goods in specified classes.
- (d) Prohibition of registration of certain geographical indications.
- (e) Provisions for framing of rules by Central Government for filing of application, its contents and matters relating to substantive examination of geographical indication applications.
- (f) Compulsory advertisement of all accepted geographical indication applications and for inviting objections.
- (g) Registration of authorized users of registered geographical indications and providing provisions for taking infringement action either by a registered proprietor or an authorized user.
- (h) Provisions for higher level of protection for notified goods.
- (i) Prohibition of assignment etc. of a geographical indication as it is public property.
- (j) Prohibition of registration of geographical indication as a trademark.
- (k) Appeal against Registrar's decision would be to the Intellectual Property Board established under the Trade Mark legislation.
- (l) Provision relating to offences and penalties.
- (m) Provision detailing the effects of registration and the rights conferred by registration.
- (n) Provision for reciprocity powers of the registrar, maintenance of Index, protection of homonymous geographical indications etc.

Copyright Act, 1957

Copyright in India is governed by Copyright Act, 1957. This Act has been amended several times to keep pace with the changing times. As per this Act, copyright grants author's lifetime coverage plus 60 years

after death. Copyright and related rights on cultural goods, products and services, arise from individual or collective creativity. All original intellectual creations expressed in a reproducible form will be connected as "works eligible for copyright protections". Copyright laws distinguish between different classes of works such as literary, artistic, musical works and sound recordings and cinematograph films. The work is protected irrespective of the quality thereof and also when it may have very little in common with accepted forms of literature or art.

Copyright protection also includes novel rights which involve the right to claim authorship of a work, and the right to oppose changes to it that could harm the creator's reputation. The creator or the owner of the copyright in a work, can enforce his right administratively and in the courts by inspection of premises for evidence of production or possession of illegally made "pirated" goods related to protected works. The owner may obtain court orders to stop such activities, as well as seek damages for loss of financial rewards and recognition.

A vital field which gets copyright protection is the computer industry. The Copyright Act, 1957, was amended in 1984 and computer programming was included with the definition of "literary work." The new definition of "computer programme" introduced in 1994, means a set of instructions expressed in works, codes or in any other form, including a machine readable medium, capable of causing a computer to perform a particular task or achieve a particular result.

The greatest fear and challenges to the copyright industry is the piracy of works whether, books, musical works, films, television programmes or computer software or computer database. The special nature of infringement of copyrights in computer programmes has again been taken note of by the Copyright (Amendment) Act, 1994 by inserting a new section 63 B. The new section provides that any person who knowingly makes use on a computer of an infringed copy of a computer programme will be punishable with imprisonment for a term of not less than seven days, which may extend to three years and with a fine of not less than ₹ 50,000/- and which may extend to ₹ 2,00,000/-. Proviso to section 63 B, however, provides that where computer programme has not been used for gain or in the course of trade or business, the court may at its discretion and for reasons mentioned in the judgement not impose any sentence of imprisonment and impose only fine upto ₹ 50,000/-.

The Copyright (Amendment) Act, 1999 makes it free for purchaser of a gadget/equipment to sell it onwards if the item being transacted is not the main item covered under the Copyright Act. This means computer software which is built in the integral part of a gadget/equipment can be freely transacted without permission of copyright owner. This amendment also ensures fair dealing of 'broadcasting' gaining popularity with the growth of the Internet. With this amendment India has updated the Act to meet the concerns of the copyright industries mainly consisting of Book Industry, Music Industry, Film and Television Industry, Computer Industry and Database Industry.

The Copyright Act, 1957 amended in 2012 with the object of making certain changes for clarity, to remove operational difficulties and also to address certain newer issues that have emerged in the context of digital technologies and the Internet. Moreover, the main object to amendments the Act is that in the knowledge society in which we live today, it is imperative to encourage creativity for promotion of culture of enterprise and innovation so that creative people realize their potential and it is necessary to keep pace with the challenges for a fast growing knowledge and modern society.

The Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001

The concept of Plant Breeders' Rights arises from the need to provide incentives to plant breeders engaged