

In the panel discussion, the following suggestions emerged: There is a need to take up long-term multidisciplinary study on various coastal aspects and development of an integrated database. Dissemination of information with newer groups and creating awareness among the coastal

community about coastal hazards is essential. Coastal sand dunes, mangroves and coral reefs should be protected. There is an urgent need to have a map policy pertaining to easy access of database/maps. Formation of a research group consisting of scientists who are in the

forefront of tsunami research is the need of the hour.

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## MEETING REPORT

### Intellectual property rights: Himalayan context\*

The broad objectives of the workshop on intellectual property rights were: (i) to create awareness among researchers and stakeholders including the local communities of the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR), and (ii) to identify a mechanism for ensuring legal protection and benefit sharing in intellectual property rights (IPR) related issues in the IHR. The workshop attracted over 60 participants from all over the country, including distinguished scientists, academicians, government officials, research students and scientists. The 2-day deliberations covered three technical sessions and were centred around different themes, namely, Patent laws in India, Intellectual property (rights and management), Patenting and various issues like Biotechnology, Biodiversity, Indigenous knowledge, Geographical Indications, Protection of plant varieties and farmer's right, Benefit sharing mechanism, Patent co-operation treaty (PCT) and filing PCT application.

In the inaugural session, Upendra Dhar, G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development (GBPIHED) welcomed the delegates and the participants, and highlighted the objectives of the workshop; he indicated that the institute has already formulated an IPR policy which is being examined by MoEF and will be ready soon. S. K. Nandi (GBPIHED) spoke on the relevance of IPR and expressed the need for the workshop particularly in the Himalayan context. B. A. Wafai (Kashmir University, Srinagar) described the rich Himalayan biodiversity and the judicious and sustainable use of high value medicinal plants by the folklore and traditional knowledge over the ages.

He stressed that the ever-increasing demand in recent years has resulted in depletion of these highly valued plants. He emphasized that traditional knowledge must be protected in the context of the current day's IPRs. In his inaugural address, H. N. Chanakya (IISc, Bangalore) indicated that protection of IPRs plays an important role in boosting the inventive and innovative activities in any society and stressed that IPR is being well taken up in the country by publicly funded R&D institutions, universities and industries. He mentioned that for Indian enterprises to compete globally, we must maximise benefits and ensure legal protection for its IP to the researchers in particular and other stakeholders of the IHR. Recognition and reward of innovations and inventions is imperative.

H. S. Chawla (GBPUAT, Pantnagar) provided an overall picture of IP issues dwelling on rights and management. He also shared valuable information relating to IPR guidelines and the role of DST and other organizations in creating awareness, promoting IPR and providing information on benefit sharing. Rajesh Dixit (Patent Office, GOI, New Delhi) deliberated on the topic 'Patent laws in India: an integrated scenario'; he cited examples of different laws on issues related to regional, national and global level, and the changing scenario of IPR following the WTO membership of India. R. Dhobhal (Uttaranchal State Council for Science and Technology, Dehradun) elaborated on the current status of IPR focusing on different issues in the national and international context. He emphasized the protection of IPR for the country, particularly for deriving economic benefits.

S. V. Bhardwaj (YSPUHF, Solan) dwelt on patenting and biotechnology. After briefing on various biotechnology-based industries of the country, he emphasized the strategic management of IP policy

that includes disclosure plan, timing of disclosure, competing products, products to be commercialized, expected revenues, etc. B. N. Pandey (BHU, Varanasi) deliberated on legal aspects of patenting and IP licensing. He clearly brought into light the prevailing fallacies in the patent laws, education and the Indian society, and stressed on creating awareness on the subject.

B. Subramaniam (NISCAIR, New Delhi) dwelt on traditional knowledge digital library as a tool for defensive protection of India's rich traditional knowledge. He stated that the country's vast and rich traditional knowledge must be protected and benefits provided to appropriate people/communities. He mentioned that despite the immense popularity of modern medicines, traditional medicine still caters to the demand of about 80% of health care in developing countries. Saroj Kumar (Patent Office, New Delhi) dealt with drafting and filing of patents in India. While highlighting the commercial applicability of patents he stressed that a patent should contain novelty, inventive steps (non-obvious) and utility. He clarified that applications must be filed before public disclosure (written or oral), public use and offer of sale; otherwise, patent rights would be lost.

Following deliberations by various resource persons, Heads of all departments of GBPIHED briefed the audience about R&D activities being undertaken in the Institute. The results and achievements of various activities were discussed in the light of possible patents and/or copyright protection that could be achieved.

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