

INDIA WITNESSES 44% SURGE IN IP FILINGS - ECONOMY

NEWS: Recently, the *Minister of State for Commerce & Industry* informed the **Lok Sabha** that India has recorded a significant increase in **Intellectual Property (IP) filings** in recent years.

- Filings increased by **44%**, from *4.77 lakh in 2020–21* to *6.89 lakh in 2024–25*
- **Category-wise surge:** a 380% increase in **Geographical indications**, followed by **Designs** (266%), **Patents** (180%) , **Copyright** (83%), and **Trademarks** (28%).

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR): Overview

- Intellectual Property Rights are **legal entitlements granted to individuals or organizations** for their original creations, inventions, or innovations.
- These rights enable the creators to **control, use, and derive commercial benefits** from their intellectual assets for a specific duration.
- IPR fosters **creativity, innovation, economic growth**, and fair competition in the knowledge economy.

Categories of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

1. Copyrights

- Protects **original literary, artistic, musical, and dramatic works**, including books, films, songs, paintings, software codes, etc.
- In India, it is governed by the **Copyright Act, 1957** (amended periodically).
- Provides **exclusive rights to reproduce, distribute, perform, or display** the work.
- The protection generally lasts for **60 years** from the beginning of the next calendar year after the author's death (for literary works).

2. Trademarks

- Protects **logos, brand names, symbols, taglines, or any sign** that distinguishes goods or services.
- Ensures that consumers can **identify the source** of products and prevents misuse or imitation.
- Governed by the **Trademarks Act, 1999**.
- Registration grants **10 years of protection**, renewable indefinitely every 10 years.

3. Patents

- Protects **new inventions** that are **novel, non-obvious, and industrially applicable**.
- Grants the patent holder **exclusive rights to make, use, sell, or license** the invention for 20 years from the filing date.
- Encourages innovation by **disclosing technical knowledge** to the public.
- Governed by the **Patents Act, 1970**, amended in 2005 to comply with TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights).

4. Industrial Designs

- Safeguards the **visual, aesthetic, and ornamental aspects** (such as shape, pattern, or color) of a functional article.
- Applies to **mass-produced products** like bottles, furniture, or mobile phones.
- Governed by the **Designs Act, 2000**.
- Registration is valid for **10 years**, extendable by **5 more years**.

5. Trade Secrets

- Refers to **undisclosed information** such as **formulas, techniques, customer lists, and processes** that give a business a competitive edge.
- Widely used in the **technology, chemical, and pharmaceutical sectors**.
- There is **no specific legislation** in India; protection is through **contractual obligations** and **common law principles**.

6. Geographical Indications (GI Tags)

- Used on products that originate from a specific **geographical location** and possess **unique qualities or reputation** due to that origin.
- Examples: Darjeeling Tea, Mysore Silk, Kanjeevaram Sarees.
- Governed by the **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999**.
- Registration is valid for **10 years**, and can be **renewed indefinitely** every 10 years.

7. Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights

- Recognizes the rights of **plant breeders** for developing new plant varieties and **farmers** for conserving traditional varieties.
- Provides **exclusive commercial rights** to the breeder for a period (generally 6 to 15 years depending on the crop).
- Governed by the **Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPV&FR) Act, 2001**.
- Balances the interests of **breeders, farmers, and researchers**.

Drivers of the Surge in IP Filings in India

1. Procedural Reforms

- **Time-bound processing** of patent applications has been introduced to reduce pendency.
- **Simplification of trademark filing**: Number of trademark application forms reduced from 74 to just 8.
- Streamlined procedures for filing of **patents, trademarks, and copyrights**.
- Introduction of a **Certificate of Inventorship** to officially recognize inventors.
- Substantial **fee concessions**:

- **80% fee reduction** for startups, MSMEs, and educational institutions (for patents).
- **75% fee concession** for designs.
- **50% fee concession** for trademarks.
- **Discounts on advance patent renewals.**

2. Digitization and Technological Integration

- Launch of a **real-time IP Dashboard** offering public access to filing and examination data.
- Use of **AI-powered Trademark Search Tools** for enhanced accuracy and search efficiency.
- Implementation of a **fully online system** for filing, tracking, and processing of IP applications.
- **Digital issue of certificates**, conduct of hearings, and real-time application status tracking.
- Introduction of **‘IP Sarthi’ chatbot** to offer instant guidance to applicants and stakeholders.

3. Programs and Support Schemes

- **National Intellectual Property Awareness Mission (NIPAM):** Over 25 lakh students, faculty, and professionals sensitized about IPR.
- **Startups Intellectual Property Protection (SIPP) Scheme:** Provides **free-of-cost IP facilitation support** to registered startups.
- **IPR Internship Programme:** Offers hands-on training to students and young researchers in IP laws and practices.
- **National IP Awards:** Recognizes outstanding contributions in IP creation, commercialization, and awareness.

4. International Alignment

- India adopted the **Locarno Classification system** for industrial designs, in line with the **1968 Locarno Agreement** under **WIPO**.
- These steps enhance **international compatibility**, promote **ease of doing business**, and attract **foreign investments**.

Source: <https://www.msn.com/en-xl/news/other/india-witnesses-44-surge-in-ip-filings-over-5-years/ar-AA1J4Px7>