



Gujarat National Law University

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GNLU: Panel discussion, "IP and SMEs—Taking your ideas to Market"

Gandhinagar, April 28, 2021: Gujarat National Law University (GNLU) organized a panel discussion, **"IP and SMEs—Taking your ideas to Market"**, to mark World Intellectual Property (IP) Day 2021. The distinguished panelists were

1. Mr JOE BRADLEY, Head, Academic Institutions Program, World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) Academy (a specialized agency of the United Nations)
2. DR S. RAMA RAO, GNLU-Microsoft Chair Professor and Ex-Director, WIPO Coordination Office, New York
3. Mr JATIN TRIVEDI, Senior Partner, Y. J. Trivedi & Co.

GNLU-Microsoft Chair Professor DR. S. RAMA RAO said that Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of the global economy. SMEs account for 90% of all companies worldwide and 70% of global employment. In India, there are 63 million SMEs which is more than the population of small countries. They account for 95% of all industrial units, 45% of total industrial production and 50% of the country's exports. However, there is a lack of knowledge about how IP tools like trademark, patent, copyright can enhance the value creation for SMEs. Dr Rama Rao said that academic institutions like GNLU could step in here to help SMEs. Their expert faculty and researchers can guide SMEs to enhance their understanding of intellectual property as a tool for growth. He suggested that GNLU should collaborate with World Intellectual Property Organisation to offer awareness programmes about the IP.

The Chief Guest for the event, Mr Joe Bradley, took the participants through the concepts of IP licensing and its relevance to SMEs and startups. He emphasized the importance of IP training to SMEs, stating that such training would enhance the innovation and sustainability of a country and lead to more employment. Mr Bradley highlighted that WIPO offers several programs that provide practical training and portfolio discourses to entrepreneurs and small sale industrialists to make them aware of IP's relevance. He denied the notion that IP is only used as a developmental tool by developed countries and said that, on the contrary, intellectual property is a more relevant tool for the least-developed, developing and countries in transit to attain self-sufficiency in terms of the latest innovations.

Mr Jatin Trivedi said that intellectual property is omnipresent and stated that IP could play a major role for SMEs and startups in this knowledge-driven economy. If SMEs have a monopoly in terms of intellectual property, it would be easier for them to attract new investments for upscaling their



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businesses. IP would also give them an added advantage in expanding their businesses in different jurisdictions. SMEs can also commercialize their IP through IP licensing and assignment.

Mr Trivedi said that **many SMEs consider the expenses of protecting their intellectual property as a wasteful expenditure. It is not an expense; it is an investment that creates a property in terms of a protected IP.**

Mr Trivedi added that **awareness about IP is also essential for a different reason too. He said that in his practice, he has come across cases wherein SMEs have unintentionally infringed the intellectual property of others purely out of sheer ignorance!**

Dr Annamma Samuel, DPIIT-IPR Chair Professor, GNLU, gave a welcome address, and Dr Nidhi Buch, Assistant Professor of Law and Head, GNLU Centre for Intellectual Property Rights, proposed a vote of thanks.

The panel discussion was organized under the DPIIT IPR Chair, Microsoft IPR Chair and GNLU Centre for Intellectual Property Rights.

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