

WELCOME CHANGES TO THE IP SYSTEM IN INDIA

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The Government of India's push towards a digital economy has been embraced wholeheartedly by the Office of the Controller General of Patents, Designs & Trade Marks (CGPDTM) which has taken several progressive steps to implement the objectives of National IPR Policy launched by the Government of India on 12th May 2016, one of the objectives being Administration and Management of IP, in particular, modernization and strengthening of a service-oriented IPR administration.

In a bid to achieve this objective, the Office of the CGPDTM has launched recruitment drives to expand its staff of Examiners of Patents and Designs. Additionally, Trade Mark Examiners and Patent Consultants of the rank of Deputy Controller and above, are being engaged on contract basis.

The digitization of the IP system has already increased efficiency in areas such as filing of applications, receipt of examination reports by email, online generation and dispatch of patent grant and trade mark registration certificates, and transparency by way of availability of all filed documents online for Patents and Trade Marks. Further, patent applications are being allocated for examination across all patent offices to reduce pendency.

Conducting patent hearings via video-conferencing has vastly improved ease of access to stakeholders. A very welcome initiative is introduction of video-conferencing as a mode of conducting trade mark hearings.

Further, the IP Office has been regularly holding meetings with IP stakeholders where the stakeholders put forth their suggestions of changes necessary to the IP system, many of which the IP office has agreed to implement.

The Office of the CGPDTM has recently invited Expression of Interest from national and international organizations for making use of current technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain and Internet of Things in the Patent processing system. With implementation of these technologies, the speed, quality and consistency of processing of applications is bound to improve radically. According to the DIPP, the think-tank of the Government of India, NITI Aayog, is working on a blockchain-enabled platform called 'IndiaChain' for Indian enterprise and government which once implemented will be world's largest blockchain implementation program in governance.

These innovative measures once implemented will transform the functioning of the IP office and lead to an improved IP system in India.