

## OPPI facilitates a panel discussion on the recently announced National IPR Policy

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As part of its Golden Jubilee Celebration and in line with the theme of 'Healthy India, Innovative India', the Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India (OPPI) facilitated a discussion on the recently announced IPR Policy, specifically for the media.

The discussion focused on interpreting the role of the Policy in fostering a culture of innovation. Experts on the panel opined that the key to the success of the Policy lies in its effective enforcement and implementation.

The discussion covered several important aspects of the Policy such as its practical impact, generation of knowledge capital and the need for specialised patent courts to hear patent cases, among others. The panel comprised of Prof Ramakrishna Head- IPR Research Centre, National Law School, Bengaluru, , Ms. Krishna Sarma Managing Partner, Corporate Law Group, , Ms. Komal Kalha Sr. Counsel, U.S. Patent & Trademark Office, and Dr Rca Godbole Scientist and IP Advisor. The discussion was moderated by Amit Mookim, Country Principal, IMS Health. Dr Swati Piramal, Vice Chairperson, Piramal Enterprises Ltd delivered a short address that set the context to the discussion. The event was well attended with representatives from law firms/ trade and members from the pharmaceutical industry.

In his opening remarks, Dr Shailesh Ayyangar, President of OPPI, said, "Innovation enormously impacts human life. Today, the emergence of lifestyle-related diseases, pose a grave threat to the country's healthcare system. The research-based pharmaceutical industry continues to bring in the fruits of years of research, for the benefit of Indian patients. We welcome the positive intent of the National IPR Policy but the real challenge lies in the implementation of this policy and in its adherence to the spirit of innovation."

Kanchana TK, Director General, OPPI said, "We welcome the release of this long-awaited National IPR Policy, which signals respect for all forms of intellectual property and the intent to foster a culture of innovation. The research-based

pharmaceutical industry is driven by innovation and therefore dependent on patents and other intellectual property rights. We hope that the policy will lead to an interpretation of the Indian Patent Act that respects innovation, encourages research and facilitates effective enforcement mechanisms. While a previous draft recognised the need for patent cases to be adjudicated expeditiously, this policy does not cover the earlier recommendation of specialised benches in the High Courts of Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and Madras, neither does it suggest designated district level IP courts. We wish to reiterate here that a strong & meaningful IP regime is critical for fostering innovation without which it will be difficult for companies to develop new medicines to address the unmet medical needs of India."

Ms Krishna Sarma opined, "The Policy is a welcome step in creating a robust IPR regime which encourages innovation. Enforcement of patent continues to remain a challenge and we hope that the Policy will help address this with effective and timely enforcement mechanisms."

Ms Komal Kalha, said, "The Policy is positive and good first step towards creating an innovation culture in India. Implementation of the Policy, in the right spirit, is a key to transforming this Policy into a reality. It would have been more effective if the Policy contained clearly defined long-term and short term approaches to it."

Prof Ramakrishna said that the Policy will need to address gaps between issues related to biodiversity and patents. More importantly he pointed out that "The policy signals implementation of IP as a strategic tool for the country's economic growth and development."

Dr Rca Godbole added , "The Policy expresses good intent. The creation of knowledge capital is the beginning of innovation. Continued efforts need to be taken to build awareness of innovation and benefits of research to human life."