

Awareness of the Intellectual Property Rights among the Undergraduate Students of Affiliated Colleges under Dibrugarh University, Assam: An Analytical Study

Marajul Hussain Bordoloi

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Borholla College, Borholla, Jorhat, Affiliated to Dibrugarh University, Assam, India

Abstract:

Intellectual Property is the creations of the mind which can be in form of inventions, brand names and images used in commerce, designs, literary and artistic works, and symbols. According to World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), there are six types of intellectual properties that include copyright, patent, trademarks, industrial designs, trade secrets, and geographical indications. The study is undertaken to investigating the knowledge about the Intellectual Property Right among the undergraduate students of different colleges affiliated to Dibrugarh University, Assam, India. As a stakeholder, the undergraduate students of the university should have the required knowledge about the Intellectual Property Rights and they should be aware about the IPR policy of the country as a whole and the university in particular. The present study is based on the primary data collected from sample respondents. For explanation of policy related aspects secondary data are also used. The limitation of the study is that because of limited timeframe only a small amount of respondents of few colleges could be contacted. But it is expected that the sample population will give a general idea about the objective of the study.

Keywords: Intellectual Property Rights, Undergraduate Students, Awareness, Copyright.

1. Introduction:

Intellectual Property Rights in short IPR is a very important matter of discussion these days as in the twentieth first century appropriate comprehension and awareness are becoming crucial instruments in the processes of the expertise economy. When we focus on this particular aspect it comes to our mind the concept of intellectual property. Intellectual Property is a legal field that refers to creations of the mind such as musical, literary, and artistic works; inventions; and symbols, names, images, and designs used in commerce, including copyrights, trademarks, patents, and related rights. According to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) a special agency created by United Nations, Intellectual Property is the creations of the mind which can be in form of inventions, brand names and images used in commerce, designs, literary and artistic works, and symbols. The same agency mentions that there are six types of intellectual properties such as copyright, patent, trademarks, industrial designs, trade secrets, and geographical indications. From the descriptive explanation provided by the world body we can have

an idea that intellectual property arises from four different fields namely literary, scientific, artistic and industrial arenas. In today's technologically advanced global world IPR has lots of importance and significances. It is true that IPR seek to protect the creators, the inventors and the innovators. Such protection would also encourage research and development, innovation and inventions. Scholars are of the opinion that IPR is the subject of multinational trading activities and livelihoods around the world under the new scenario of globalization. These rights improve the creative climate by granting the founder or designer acknowledgement and economic benefits, whereas the lack of knowledge of IPR and its inadequate application can impede the nation's economic, technological and societal developments. Considering the importance of IPR in various fields India as a participating country in global trade has complied with its obligations related to intellectual property rights and adopted National Intellectual Property Rights Policy on 12th May, 2016. It recognizes India's well established Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) compliant legislative framework to safeguard IPRs, and seeks to balance her developmental concerns by utilizing the flexibilities provided in the international regime. The Policy especially focuses on generating awareness about IPRs, and highlighting the importance of IPRs as a marketable financial asset and an economic tool. Nirmala Sitharaman, the then Minister of State, Commerce and Industry, Government of India mentions that The Intellectual Property Rights Policy approved by the Union Cabinet is a giant leap by the Government of India to spur creativity and stimulate innovation. In the 21st century, nation's progress catalyzes through its knowledge economy which is driven by the creative capabilities and leverage of its innovation. The policy reinforces the strength of IPRs to acquire both economic and social benefits on a bigger and higher scale for India. A vibrant Intellectual Property ecosystem will not only enhance the economic development of India, but also promote public welfare by protecting the rights of all its citizens. The policy will also reinforce the IPR related service – delivery mechanism of the Government, besides encompassing research and development organizations, educational institutions, corporations, MSMEs, start – ups and other stakeholders in the creation of an innovation – conducive ambience. According to Madhu Bala, Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, DAV College for Girls, Yamuna Nagar, Haryana, India and Deepak Verma, Senior Manager, ISGEC Heavy Engineering Limited, Yamuna Nagar, Haryana, India the rationale for the National IPR Policy lies in the need to create awareness about the importance of IPRs as a marketable financial asset and economic tool and accordingly the vision and mission statements of IPR Policy are framed to achieve this goal. The guiding principles of the policy are explicitly elaborated in its Vision and Mission statements. The scope of the policy encompasses all legislations related to intellectual property protection for the inventors, creators, designers and entrepreneurs in the country. The main objective of the policy is clear from its Vision and Mission Statement. It envisions creating an India where creativity and innovation are stimulated by intellectual property for the benefit of all; an India where intellectual property promotes advancement in science and technology, arts and culture, traditional knowledge and biodiversity resources; an India where knowledge is the main driver of development, and knowledge owned is transformed into knowledge shared. The mission is to stimulate a dynamic, vibrant and balanced intellectual property rights system in India to foster creativity and innovation and thereby, promote entrepreneurship and enhance socio-economic and cultural development, and focus on enhancing access to healthcare, food security and environmental protection, among other sectors of vital social, economic and technological importance. In the same policy document there is the mention about the implementation. The present IP Policy aims to integrate IP as a policy and strategic tool in national development plans. It foresees a

coordinated and integrated development of IP system in India and the need for a holistic approach to be taken on IP legal, administrative, institutional and enforcement related matters. While the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion shall be the nodal point to coordinate, guide and oversee implementation and future development of IPRs in India, the responsibility for actual implementation of the plans of action will remain with the Ministries/Departments concerned in their assigned sphere of work. Public and private sector institutions and other stakeholders, including State governments, will also be involved in the implementation process. Following the guidelines and considering the importance of IPR Dibrugarh University, Assam, India also adopted its Intellectual Property Rights Policy, 2020. In its preamble it has been mentioned clearly that the university is committed to providing an atmosphere where innovation can flourish and innovators can duly be rewarded for their efforts. To enable the proper utilization of innovations and recognition innovators' efforts and to give justifiable ownership of such innovations, university is adopting the policy. The policy shall govern the Intellectual Property Rights of the University, faculty members, employees, students and others for their work, product, ideas and innovations developed in connection with the activities of the university, for the furtherance of its goals and objectives. The present study aims to examine the perception and awareness of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) among undergraduate students of different colleges affiliated to the university.

2. The Significance of the Study:

The study is undertaken to investigate the knowledge about the Intellectual Property Right among the undergraduate students of different colleges affiliated to Dibrugarh University, Assam, India. As a stakeholder, the undergraduate students of the university should have the required knowledge about the Intellectual Property Rights and they should be aware about the IPR policy of the country as a whole and the university in particular. It will enhance their knowledge about the importance of the intellectual property for their academic curriculum and at the same time the proper utilization of intellectual property right and laws. Hence, in this present study an attempt has been made to understand the awareness of Intellectual Property Right among them.

3. Objective of the Study:

1. To study the degree to which the students are aware about the Intellectual Property Rights.
2. To understand in what context the targeted students are engaged with IP and how they engage.
3. To know the necessity of Intellectual Property Rights among the undergraduate students.
4. To discover what aspirations students have to learn more about the IP policies.

4. Limitation of the Study:

The present study is based on the primary data collected from sample respondents. For explanation of policy related aspects secondary data are also used relying upon related literature, journals, published policy documents and internet. It is explorative in nature and restricted geographically to the sample population of only undergraduate students of different colleges affiliated to Dibrugarh University of Assam state. Because of the time constraint and other relevant matters only a small amount of respondents of few colleges could be contacted. But it is expected that the sample population will give a general idea about the objective of the study.

5. Methodology:

Research methodology is the most important aspect of research work and is a way to systematically solve research problems. It facilitates the research work and provides reliability and validity to it. The study is based on both primary and secondary data sources. The survey method of research has been applied. Structured Questionnaire was used as data collection tool for collecting required information from the study population. Questionnaire was devised according to the objective and available literature on the topic. Later, structured questionnaire was distributed among the undergraduate students of few colleges affiliated to Dibrugarh University, Assam. The data so collected was analyzed and tried to interpret. Secondary data have been obtained from related literature, articles, published policy documents, related websites etc. It is analytical and descriptive in nature.

6. Discussion on Findings:

As stated above, Intellectual Property is all about the creations of ideas, like inventions, literary and artistic works, designs, symbols, names, and images. They are used in commerce and play a significant role in driving innovation and creativity. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) grants legal protections to the creators or owners of intellectual property, allowing them to have control over their creations and enjoy the benefits they bring. These rights are crucial in fostering innovation and creativity across various industries. Higher education is not different from it because lots of research, innovation and invention occur in the domain of higher education and higher educational institutions. When we talk about Intellectual Property, there comes the concept of the Intellectual Property Rights. IPR is customarily divided into copyright, patent, trademarks, industrial design, trade secrets and geographical indications. Copyright is the right to protect original written or published works. The creativity may be in the form of a book, literary or artistic work, music, etc. Copyright thus protects the creator of his works to safeguard these from copying without consent. Then there are the patents. The patents give the rights to protect useful novel technical inventions such as new business products or processes to their creator. Thirdly there come trademarks. A trademark is a distinctive logo or sign assigned to a particular item that is created by a specific person or enterprise or industry. These trademarks distinguish the product or services from similar products or services created by the competitors. Fourthly there are the industrial Designs. This constitutes the aesthetic or ornamental features of a product. These features may be two-dimensional for example patterns or three-dimensional for example, the shape of a product. After that there are the trade Secrets. Those rights are related to confidential information which may be licensed or sold. At last there are the geographical indications. Geographical appellations are signs used for products that are related to specific topographical origin and its related characteristics attributable to that geographical origin. Goutam Biswas, Librarian, Nagar College, Nagar, Murshidabaed and Prodip Das, Librarian, Krishnanagar Women's College, Krishnanagar, Nadia, WB mention in their scholarly article that Intellectual property rights (IPRs) are the spine of innovation and new thoughts. They inspire potential researchers and defend their hobbies. Those rights supply innovators an exclusive property over their creations for a certain length. India being a member of the world exchange business enterprise has complied with its duties related to intellectual belongings rights. In India, IPRs are divided into the following classes as Copyright, patents, designs, and logos. The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 places essential emphasis on potential enhancement and ability development with an era-pushed approach to teaching-mastering methods accompanied through creativity and innovation. The purpose of IPR is to provide protection for the outcomes of investments of people and stimulate innovation thereby

profitable and inspiring creative work in the development of NEP 2020. In today's technology, it's very vital to create IPR focus within educational institutions among school members and college students to patent their revolutionary studies paintings and therefore gain the stakeholders. IPRs have additionally won substantial significance with the arrival of facts generation. IPR is of high significance in sustaining the global business environment and subsequently subsistence all around the globe. Those rights uplift the inquisitive mindset by duly acknowledging and offering benefits to the originator. The absence and insufficient execution of those rights may also hinder the social, technical, and monetary boom of a nation. Therefore appropriate propagation of IPR understanding and its implementation is of paramount significance in present day scenario. On the basis of the perception the structured questionnaire were distributed. The study reveals that most of the undergraduate students of different colleges affiliated to Dibrugarh University have heard about Intellectual Property Rights but they are not concerned about the details and its implications.

As mentioned above the study was conducted through a self administered survey method and the study sample included undergraduate students. It shows that the respondents are to some extent aware about the general IPR policy but they are not aware about the IPR policy of the university. The best known IP type is copyright and maximum students are aware about it. Patent was the second best known type followed by design and logos. In terms of industrial design the students did not show any awareness and in terms of geographical indications few students could answer only about the indication mark provided to goods that have specific geographical origin. When the students were asked whether the intellectual property is a right or a matter of ownership, they provided mixed responses. According to fifty percent students it is a right and thirty percent voted for ownership and the other students are not sure about it. As maximum students are aware about copyright so few questions are asked to understand about their knowledge of infringement of copyright. For the respondents under study plagiarism and piracy are the main concern regarding infringement of copyright. Most of them are not aware about the copyright laws, about the registration of copyright, its duration and other relevant aspects.

The above study was conducted within a limited time frame and with limited tool. From the study we can have a general idea that the undergraduate students of the study area are not fully aware about intellectual property rights. The important fact is that in today's knowledge ridden society IPR is a very significant and crucial aspect which should be given proper importance. Various previous studies have been carried out that focuses on the importance of IPR in business and academic fields. According to Spinello (2007), copyright laws give the owner full ownership of his or her original thoughts and even the right to make duplicates for distribution. As a result, a complete absence of awareness and information on intellectual property (IP) among lawmakers and their governing bodies will indeed impede the development and execution of IPR (Said, 2010). Therefore, the importance of property rights education, communication, and understanding ensures the rights to accomplishments resulting from a range of innovative industrial activities and safeguards the authors' ownership of their accomplishments over a certain length of time. According to Ogiya et al. (2018), intellectual property is distinguished by the fact that it is not tangible information but rather an object with a property value. Information is easily copied, does not deplete when used, and may be used by a huge number of individuals at once. IP derived from these areas of expertise was valuable financially. Therefore, education and knowledge of IP will increase understanding of their presence and preserve the correct use of IP (WIPO, 2004). As concluded in the study by Ong et al., (2012), enhancing IPR awareness includes the supply of appropriate documentation, public engagement among governmental agencies and institutional

administrations, and IPR education initiatives. Bollen, Vergauwen and Schnieders (2005) stressed that it was necessary to integrate IPR when formulating a firm's strategy because a firm's performance depended on intellectual capital as well as physical capital. Farhadi and Tolvstiga (2010) agreed and further explained that IPs should not be addressed in isolation but be attended to concurrently with other business applications, strategies and road maps. Therefore the lack of knowledge and understanding on IPs among policy makers and governing authorities would then obstruct the formulation and implementation of IPR (Said, 2010). Cheema et al. believed that due to the unawareness of copyright infringement, plagiarism became a common phenomenon among students. Hence, they conducted a study to find the conceptual awareness of research students about specific terminologies of, types of and penalties of plagiarism at a university in Pakistan. Starkey et al. surveyed technology teachers and students in New Zealand schools to assess their understanding of IP process. Their findings reflected an awareness of relevant concepts, but there was confusion among some IP key terms such as registered design, copyright and patents. There are lots of such studies that mainly lay emphasis on the importance about awareness of students and academicians regarding IPR.

The present study conducted within the limited timeframe and other previous studies mentioned above clearly shows that the awareness about IPR among the students of different categories is not satisfactory. But in this present global scenario the knowledge of IPR is very crucial and for that all the stakeholders should take some special measures. Scholars are of the opinion that for generating awareness about IPR all the competent authorities should take special steps so that the information is available in different networking sites which are easily accessible. On the other hand active participation of the government bodies and higher education institutions also promote IPR awareness among the students. For that purpose the competent authorities should organize seminars, popular talks, workshops, training camps etc which will cater to the vast publication of the IPR policies of government bodies, universities and other higher educational institutions.

7. Conclusion:

In conclusion, it can be opined that Intellectual Property Right is a generic term that means creations of the intellect that is minds. Just as tangible property is capable of being protected, intellectual property is also similarly can be protected. There are lots of initiatives by international bodies like United Nations, different countries and other institutions. Government of India has adopted its own IPR policy on 12th May, 2016. It recognizes India's well established Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) compliant legislative framework to safeguard IPRs, and seeks to balance her developmental concerns by utilizing the flexibilities provided in the international regime. Following the guidelines of the national policy the university under study also adopted its IPR policy in 2020. But the awareness about these policies among the undergraduate students of the university is not satisfactory. There are lots of measures should be taken by different bodies for generating the awareness among the undergraduate students which is the urgent need of this present day scenario. Therefore, provisions for availability of adequate information, active participation of government bodies, universities, and higher educational institutions as well as other stakeholders are very necessary. Initiatives for IPR awareness activities should be taken which will encourage IPR awareness among the students.

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