

FICCI CASCADE
Seminar on
“Curbing Counterfeiting and Smuggling – An Imperative for Indian Economy”
Chennai on 22nd February, 2013

FICCI CASCADE with a view to engage all relevant stakeholders like government representatives, enforcement agencies, excise and customs, consumer activists, media as well as industry and legal experts, to sensitize them to fight against counterfeiting and smuggling organized a seminar in Chennai on “Curbing Counterfeiting and Smuggling – An Imperative for Indian Economy” on 22nd February, 2013. The seminar brought experts from different disciplines of life under one roof to raise the concern over the growing illicit trade and to create large-scale awareness among the impacted segments of the society.

Counterfeit trade has attracted considerable attention among trade associations, government and enterprises. Therefore to support the cause the seminar witnessed huge participation of over 100 delegates who were very enthusiastic to fight against this menace. Mr. M Rafeeqe Ahmed, Chairman, FICCI Tamil Nadu State Council welcomed the dignitaries and highlighted the objectives of the seminar like generating awareness, interaction with law enforcement agencies and sharing best practices. He also showed his concern over the increasing trade deficit due to increase smuggling of gold.

The seminar was inaugurated by Hon’ble Mr. Justice K N Basha, Judge, Madras High Court, he expressed his concern towards the subject and said that this organization and the cause cannot be neglected. He also stated that the problem of smuggling and counterfeiting is the worst evil faced by the economy of the country. He cautioned that the judiciary is very strict in dealing with these cases and every individual must take a pledge to shun counterfeit and smuggled good. Justice Basha also stated that such activities cause damage to the industry, loss to the exchequer, revenue and tax problem to the government and a huge loss to the public at large, he emphasized on the enlightenment of the society, “unless the mind set changes the society will not change”.

FICCI CASCADE advisor Mr. P C Jha pointed out that counterfeiting is the biggest scourge impairing the world’s economy at present and it accounts for almost 10% of the current global trade. He also discussed the magnitude of the problem, In India more than 10% of the liquor trade, 26% of computer hardware and 25% of fast moving consumer goods are spurious and the Indian industry are losing close to Rs. 73,000 crores owing to counterfeit products. He also stated that counterfeiting is treated as the number one crime of 21st century damages, it stakes the brand owner’s reputation, cause loss of revenue to the public exchequer, and pose a serious threat to the security nationally and internationally.

Ms. Mala Srivastava, Chief Commissioner of Customs, Tamil Nadu said that counterfeiting and smuggling continue to thrive globally due to the weakness of the consumers desire to acquire branded products at low cost and the lack awareness of the hazards adds to this menace. She emphasized on discarding the fake products and to awaken the spirit among all individuals and to take a pledge and work towards the common aim.

Inspector General SP Sharma, PTM, TM, Commander, Indian Coast Guard Regional (East), said that counterfeiting and smuggling activities sponsor terrorism and cost guard can play a vital role in curbing smuggling. He emphasized on dumping cheap and poor quality products and also promised to find a strategy to curb this menace and come up with resounding results.

Mr. P Murari IAS (Retd.) Advisor to FICCI President & Former Secretary to President of India appreciated FICCI CASCADE for its initiative and advocated to have Fast Track Court to solve this menace. Recalling Mahatma Gandhi he quoted his words "There is enough in this country to satisfy man's need but not enough to satisfy man's greed".

Seminar observed editorial support from three leading newspapers, Mr. K. T. Jagannathan, Deputy Business Editor, The Hindu raised his support to the cause and asked for the support of the masses to fight this evil. Mr. R Bhagwan Singh, Consulting Editor, Deccan Chronicle shared his experiences and pledged for the editorial support. He emphasized on "ask for the bill" and also address the youth and said that media will be your platform. Mr. G Babu Jayakumar, Deputy Resident Editor, The New Indian Express quoted counterfeiting and smuggling as a crime and seek information from the industry to eliminate unscrupulous activities.

Seminar also marked the enthusiastic and encouraging support of the Consumer activists Mr. R Desikan, Founder Trustee, Consumer Association of India and Mr. Bejon Misra, Founder, Partnership for Safe Medicines (PSM) India Initiative. Mr. Desikan emphasized on the role of organizations like FICCI and appealed to the industry to kindly protect us as a "Consumer". Mr. Misra put forth loss faced worldwide due to production of counterfeit products and also brought its ill effects before the audience. He also pointed out that the fake and counterfeit medicines have a direct impact on the health and safety of consumers, with the use of technology one can trace and track the counterfeit and maintain the supply chain integrity.

The subject of counterfeiting and smuggling is very vast and complex and there is a need to target and educate the masses to buy genuine products

Ms. Kalpana Reddy, First Secretary, US Patent & Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce highlighted various legal options - civil, criminal and administrative for the enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights. She presented various dimensions of IP crimes. IP Crimes lead to economic harm to rights holders, revenue loss to the states, consumer confusions, public health and safety etc. She further put forth counterfeiting as a national priority and a threat to the nation's economy. She emphasized on the role of public and government to curb the challenge.

The seminar witnessed vigorous interaction with delegates demonstrating an active interest in the issue. The session had dignitaries from the enforcement, legal experts and the industry to emphasize and highlight the aspects of Counterfeiting laws, enforcement techniques and the role of technology. Mr. Deep Chand, Advisor FICCI CASCADE and retd. Special Commissioner Delhi Police; Ms. J Gauri, SP, Tamil Nadu; Mr. P Sanjai Gandhi, Additional Government Pleader, Government Pleader Office, High Court, Chennai; Ms. Nina Engineer, Brand Protection Consultant, Beiersdorf underlined the fact that the problem of counterfeiting and smuggling needs consumer support and active involvement towards the cause, they also stressed on registering the complaints with the police and customs. Mr. Gandhi stated

that there are adequate safeguards in the law but we need to put this evil under the agenda of the government for the enforcement of the laws and regulations. Ms. Gauri affirmed the support and the engagement of the police department to the problem of counterfeiting and smuggling since this problem is manifold and needs strict and urgent actions. Ms. Engineer also emphasized on the use of technology and customs seizures to drain the fake products from the market. Mr. Deep Chand emphasized on awareness among the stakeholders as a very important aspect in the enforcement of laws and appreciated FICCI CASCADE for its move to make a dent in this vast field which has remain unexplored so far.

The seminar ended with a common view that the problem of counterfeiting and smuggling is multifaceted and complex and need to be discussed time and again, with government, to emphasize on effective and adequate laws and enforcement; increasing engagement with the industry and most importantly creating awareness in the society to curb the menace of counterfeiting and smuggling.