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"India witnesses patent surge"

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Intellectual property rights initiatives are developing rapidly all over the world and it is now an established phenomenon in the West. With the conformance to Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) patent regime and increasing competition from the MNCs, Indian companies have now realized the importance of innovation and have understood the need to protect those innovations. Patent rights play an important role in giving such protection to all research based organizations and promote the free trade between companies and countries. As an observation from the exercise that we conducted, we have presented our report on the filing trends of patent applications in India with a special focus on life sciences industry.

Patent filings at the Indian Patent Office (IPO) have been increasing for the past 10 years. Last year the raise in patent filings at Indian Patent Office was 12.97 percent. This is clearly evident from the charts shown that there is a gradual increase in the filing of applications per year in India. This marks an increased awareness in filing of patent applications in India in all domains.

Patents are being filed in all sectors; however biotechnology, pharmacy chemistry, and medical devices have taken a lead in patent filing area. Following are some of the graphs that indicate the filings in various sub-sectors of life sciences industry.

Although the graphs briefly indicate the increasing filings in life sciences areas in India, but they are still significantly lower compared to international averages (especially on the biotech side). The gap is diminishing but it will still take some time before we are there. Does this mean lack of opportunities and optimism for life sciences industry in India?

The answer is no. To put things into right perspective and see the importance of Indian life sciences industry on a worldwide scale, let us consider another important industry, popularly known as hi-tech industry (it covers electronics, computer sciences, and telecom). The industry currently leads the number of patents filings worldwide. One simple reason for such high patent filings in this sector and high turnaround of innovations is relatively lower investments and negligible gestation periods, as compared to life sciences area where innovations require long gestation period and very high amount of investments. However, let us look at the number of patent filing in this industry in India:

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We can impressively conclude that in our country, life sciences sectors (including biotechnology, pharmacy/chemistry and medical devices) have done enormously better than fast moving sectors like hi-tech.

All the above observations definitely indicate the importance of life sciences sector in India, growing dominance of India companies and interest of various MNCs in Indian market.

Further, looking at strengthening of patent portfolios in the life sciences industry in India, it is evident that India is going to be a deciding ground for life sciences industry in the years to come leading to a lot of opportunities and value creation for Indian professionals engaged in this sector.

About the author:

Mr Tarun Kumar Bansal has spent six years in intellectual property rights services, one year as microbiology researcher, manager at Evalueserve, where he provided global patent search services to corporates/law firms from Asia, Europe, and North America. He also had a stint at Central Drug Research Institute, Lucknow as research associate, microbiology. At present, he provides patent services through his firm, Sagacious Research that was co founded by him.