

FICCI CASCADE
Seminar on
“Curbing Counterfeiting and Smuggling – An Imperative for Indian Economy”
Bangalore, 5th August, 2014

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, and to sensitize them to fight against counterfeiting and smuggling, organized a seminar in Bangalore on “Curbing Counterfeiting and Smuggling – An Imperative for Indian Economy” on 5th August, 2014. The seminar brought together experts to raise concerns 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, as a support to the cause, the seminar witnessed huge participation of over 100 delegates who were united in their fight against this twin menace.

The seminar was inaugurated by Mr. Dinesh Gundu Rao, Hon’ble Minister of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Government of Karnataka. He said that there was the need to make the penal laws more stringent, and deterrent actions must be taken against counterfeiters and smugglers. Mr. Rao informed that his Ministry was working on creating a separate Consumer Affairs Department to bring about greater focus on consumer related issues. In this regards, he invited FICCI to work with all stakeholders and propose necessary actions that the government could initiate to combat the twin menace of smuggling and counterfeiting.

Mr. J. Crasta, Member, FICCI National Executive Committee, welcomed the dignitaries and highlighted the objectives of the seminar like generating awareness, interaction with law enforcement agencies and the need for sharing best practices. He observed that smuggling and counterfeiting was a rapidly growing industry which hampered innovation, trade, the environment and, most importantly, the health of the consumers. He also said that the growing incidence of smuggling and counterfeiting was affecting Brand India globally.

FICCI CASCADE advisor, Mr. P C Jha, pointed out that counterfeiting and smuggling was the biggest scourge impairing the world’s economy currently, and that in the last ten years, the volume of counterfeiting activity had increased 100 times. Referring to a FICCI CASCADE study to highlight the magnitude of the problem, he informed that the sales loss incurred by the industry owing to counterfeiting and smuggling in seven specific industry sectors alone was Rs. 72,969 crores, while the revenue loss to the government was Rs. 26,190 crores. He also stated that counterfeiting and smuggling financed terrorist activities and was responsible for insurgency in the country.

The seminar also marked the enthusiastic and encouraging support of the consumer and media organizations. Mr. Y G Muralidharan, leading consumer activist and Director, Consumer Rights, Education and Awareness Trust (CREAT) emphasized on the fact that consumers were the ultimate victims of counterfeiting and smuggling, and their rights were being violated by counterfeiters and smugglers. He invited industry to join hands in a sustained manner in the various awareness generation

campaigns that are underway. Mr. Tyagaraj Sharma, Chief of Bureau, The Statesman, extending his support to the cause, assured editorial support from all the newspapers and electronic media collectively to enhance the coverage on the subject, and to bring about the desired impact on the society. He emphasized that counterfeiting and smuggling, which was the cause of black money generation of an enormous magnitude, was having a crippling effect on the economy.

The subject of counterfeiting and smuggling is both enormous and complex, and there is a need to target and educate the masses to buy genuine products. Ms. Sudha Koka, Additional Commissioner of Customs, Karnataka, emphasized on information sharing as being a key to curb this menace. She said that importers must record their IP in the Customs IPR gateway. Mr. Abhishek Goel, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Karnataka, underlined the fact that the problem of counterfeiting and smuggling needed consumer support and active involvement towards the cause. He also stressed on the need for registering the complaints with the police authorities, which was currently lacking.

The seminar witnessed lively interaction with delegates demonstrating an active interest in the seminar subject. The discussions concluded with a shared view that the problem of counterfeiting and smuggling was multifaceted and complex. Addressing the issues would call for a regular interface among the stakeholders in areas like government policy, laws and enforcement; increasing engagement with the industry and, most importantly, creating awareness in the society on the need to curb counterfeiting and smuggling.