

**FICCI CASCADE Seminar**  
**on**  
**“Curbing Counterfeiting and Smuggling – An Imperative for Indian Economy”**  
**Chennai, 07<sup>th</sup> July, 2015**

“The State Government is committed to the cause of curbing the menace of smuggling and counterfeiting and is a high priority for police in Tamil Nadu”. This was stated by Mr. Sunil Kumar, Additional Director-General of Police (ADGP) – Crime, Chennai, the Chief Guest at the FICCI CASCADE Seminar on Curbing Counterfeiting and Smuggling held in Chennai. Mr. Kumar also urged industry and consumers to come forward and help the Government and police in preventing illicit trade and called for a combined effort by all stakeholders.

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 this seminar in Chennai on “Curbing Counterfeiting and Smuggling – An Imperative for Indian Economy” on 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2015. 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. Illicit trade has attracted considerable attention among trade associations, government and enterprises. Consequently, as a support to the cause, the seminar witnessed huge participation of around 130 delegates who were united in their fight against smuggling and counterfeiting activities.

Mr. Ashok R. Thakkar, Convener, Infrastructure Panel, FICCI Tamil Nadu State Council 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 India was at the world's spotlight with a most dynamic economy. Hence, safeguarding the rights of legitimate industries is imperative. Mr. Thakkar added that the growing illicit markets undermined the business environment and restrained development of the country's much anticipated growth trajectory.

FICCI CASCADE advisor, Mr. Deep Chand, who is also a former Special Commissioner of Police, New Delhi pointed out that as illicit trade had become an economic problem of international importance and has been growing dramatically across the globe. Strict legislations, enforcement, protection of intellectual property rights are required to curb the peril. Mr. Chand further emphasized that in order to completely eradicate of this global menace, demand side of counterfeiting should be fought first. Genuine brand owners, media and other government agencies should join hands to educate consumers and to make them aware of the need to shun counterfeit and smuggled products willfully. Mr. Chand also shared his thoughts on how high rates of taxation on products are aggravating the problem of counterfeiting and smuggling. For example an increase in excise and VAT rates on products such as tobacco and alcohol incentivizes counterfeiting, thereby, causing heavy losses to the ex-chequer. Thus, enforcement of high taxed goods should be of high priority for governments to avoid tax evasion.

Ms. Komal Kalha, Senior Counsel – Intellectual Property, US Patent and Trademarks Office in her address urged right holders to ensuring one's rights through formal registration of IPR. This is important before expecting the Government to ensure protection of rights. Ms. Kalha also highlighted the legal options available in the United States - civil, criminal and administrative - for enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights. She elaborated on the various dimensions of IP crimes, how such illegal activities harmed the rights holders, and led to revenue loss to Governments, public health and safety concerns etc.

The seminar also marked the enthusiastic and encouraging support of Ms. S. Saroja, Director - Consumer Advisory and Outreach Vertical, Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group. Ms. Saroja stressed on the fact that sustained awareness was required amongst consumers which should also include awareness on quality standards. Ms. Saroja complimented FICCI CASCADE on its initiatives which she said were not only in public interest, but in the larger interest of the nation.

Following the Inaugural Session, a panel discussion on Organized Crime Surge in India – Role of Enforcement Agencies in Combating Smuggling and Counterfeiting was held, which saw lively interactions of representatives from enforcement agencies and the audience. Panelists included Mr. M. M. Parthiban, Additional Director General, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Chennai and Ms. H. Jayalakshmi, Superintendent of Police, Video Piracy Cell, Chennai. All the panelists emphasized on information sharing among all stakeholders as being a key to curb this menace.

Mr. M. M. Parthiban, Additional Director General, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Chennai stated cases of cigarette smuggling had been predominant in the State along with consumer goods such as mobile phone, electronic goods and machinery products. Ms. H. Jayalakshmi, Superintendent of Police, Video Piracy Cell, Chennai said that the department worked actively to stop this menace and enhancing punishment was the key to deter counterfeiters and smugglers. Both the panelists cited live case-studies that their department had handled in Chennai recently.

Mr. P. Murari IAS (Retd.), Adviser to FICCI President & Former Secretary to President of India concluded the discussions 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.

In order to highlight the magnitude of illicit trade activities such as counterfeiting and smuggling, FICCI CASCADE organized a press conference, preceding the seminar, on 'Illicit Trade – A Threat to our National Interest' on July 6th, 2015. Mr. Karan Singha IPS, Additional DGP – Crime Branch, CID, Tamil Nadu was the key speaker at the press conference. Mr. Singha stated that the Tamil Nadu police was very serious about taking action on such unlawful activities and urged the consumers to not only boycott illicit products but to cooperate with police to tackle the issue. Both the events were well covered my media.