

FICCI CASCADE
Seminar
on
Combating Counterfeiting and Smuggling
An Imperative to Accelerate Economic Development
20 April, 2017 – The Oberoi Grand, Kolkata

Illicit networks are infiltrating and undermining licit markets, jeopardizing public health and safety, discouraging research and development, and eroding government revenues, thus hurting the economic development of the country.

FICCI CASCADE with a view to engage all relevant stakeholders, including government representatives, enforcement agencies, consumer activists, the media, industry, legal experts, and to sensitize them to fight against counterfeiting and smuggling, organized a seminar in Kolkata on “Combating Counterfeiting and Smuggling– An Imperative to Accelerate Economic Development” on 20 April, 2017. The seminar brought experts in this field on a common platform to raise the concern over the growing illicit trade and to create large-scale awareness among the impacted segments of the society.

Shri Sadhan Pande, Minister-in-Charge, Consumer Affairs Department, Government of West Bengal, was the chief guest at the seminar. He stated that illicit trade was an increasingly growing global concern and could not be neglected. Hon’ble Minister added that such activities threaten India's legal industry, adds social cost to consumers and cause huge loss to the exchequer. Emphasizing on the need of making the society aware on this subject, he highlighted that in India, the situation was being further aggravated with counterfeit and smuggled products getting into the country through our borders. Lauding the CASCADE campaign against illicit trade practices, the minister invited FICCI for joint publicity campaigns with Consumer Affairs Ministry on TV and Radio to increase awareness on the threats posed by counterfeiting and smuggling.

Mr. Deep Chand, Advisor, FICCI CASCADE and Retd. Special Commissioner, Delhi Police outlined the impact of counterfeiting & smuggling while assessing the gravity of the problem. “8-15% of global GDP is impacted due to Illicit trade and criminal activities. It is time that we, as a national and as a part of the global economy, call for stern and resolute counterstrike force against such ill-intentioned activities. Smuggling of drugs, luxury goods, cigarettes are a major source of funding the extremist groups. Thus, steps such as greater vigil at the borders, bilateral and multilateral engagements between nations, punitive action coupled with the right policy framework that dis-incentivizes this entire activity and consumer awareness campaigns which highlights the detrimental impact of illicit products are much needed to combat this menace”, said Mr. Chand in his address.

The seminar also held a panel discussion on ‘countering the menace of counterfeiting and smuggling-resolutions and possible solutions’, where experts from various fields discussed about the issue at hand.

Mr. Gaurav Vutts, Regional Legal Manager, Hindustan Unilever Ltd. said that we need to find the best measures to be adopted to counter the challenges of the growing flow of illegal trade. He emphasized on the need for effective collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders to curb counterfeiting and smuggling. Mr. Siddharth Wanchoo, Executive Vice President, Marketing, ITC Ltd. highlighted the

problems faced by cigarette manufacturers, especially when the products are manufactured outside the country and smuggled into our country, tax arbitrage & counterfeiting. He also emphasized on the loss of revenue to the legal industry and government due to this illegal trade. Mr. Robin Mackenzie, Global Marketing Director, De La Rue emphasized on the need for innovation in overt & covert features, track & trace capabilities of the products along with increased education and legislation to counter illegal trade. Mr. Debanjan Mandal, Partner, Fox & Mandal spoke on the challenges faced to counter illicit trade such as inadequate manpower, leakage of information, corruption, slow prosecution and IPR crimes not given adequate importance etc.

The seminar also marked the enthusiastic and encouraging support of enforcement officers. Mr. Akash Magharia, IPS, Superintendent of Police (Operations), CID, West Bengal, sharing his experiences, explained how the police department recently solved few dealings of counterfeit cement, edible oil, milk etc. in West Bengal. He also stated that porous borders increased the challenge of the Police Department especially in West Bengal as smuggled cigarettes, alcohol, and many other products flooded the market easily. "Right holders must register with customs authorities for better enforcement" observed Mr. M. K Sharma, Deputy Commissioner of Customs (Port), Kolkata. He further underscored on the need of addressing the issue of dumping cheap & poor quality products and sought support of stakeholders in finding strategies to curb this hazard. Mr. Sharma in his address said that trucks headed to Nepal from Kolkata port will soon have RFID tags to prevent tampering and theft by diverting vehicles midway. Both the enforcement officials underlined the need for consumer support to curb the problem of counterfeiting and smuggling and their active involvement towards the cause, and stressed on their registration of complaints with the police and custom departments.

Over 115 delegates attended the programme and the seminar saw vigorous interaction with delegates demonstrating an active interest in the issue. Hon'ble Minister along with the esteemed dignitaries affirmed support and active engagement to counter counterfeiting and smuggling as it needs constant strict and urgent actions.

Ms. Mousumi Ghose, Assistant Secretary General & Head, FICCI West Bengal State Council proposed the vote of thanks. Ms. Ghose concluded the seminar by stating that the problem of counterfeiting and smuggling was multifaceted and complex and needed 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 illicit trade.
