

Khorakiwala says need to speed up process of granting patents

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India needs to fast-track patent and trademark approval mechanism as the time taken for the same in the country is much higher compared to other nations but the Centre's National Intellectual Property Rights policy is a welcome step, says Wockhardt Chairman Habil Khorakiwala.

The recently launched National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) policy is a step in the right direction and towards creating an ecosystem for innovation, and it also brings clarity on India's position on IPR framework, he said, adding that a 'not so friendly' clinical research environment prevails in the country. "There is enormous pendency of patent applications in India. It takes around 6-8 years to clear patent here while outside of the country the time taken is 2-3 years whether it's US, Japan or Europe. This is the situation

we are facing," Khorakiwala said in a conference call on Monday. The patent grant for a product is for 20 years and it hurts the industry if 8-10 years is taken to clear the application, he added.

"Weightage should be given to a product patents as compared to a process patent application. There should be a fast track system to clear such patents," Khorakiwala said. Giving example of his own company, he said that the drug firm has filed around 2,178 patents in the last 10-12 years and received just 79 approvals so far in India.

"If we talk about the recent filings, over the last 12 months we filed 217 patent applications. We got 121 cleared abroad while only 8 were granted by authorities in India," Khorakiwala said. He added that there is a problem of delay in granting trademark approvals as well.

"In the last two years we have 400 trademark applications pending. Globally such

Recent National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) policy is a step in the right direction and towards creating an ecosystem for innovation, and it also brings clarity on India's position on IPR framework, and adding that a 'not so friendly' clinical research environment prevails in the country. There is enormous pendency of patent applications in India. It takes around 6-8 years to clear patent here while outside of it the time taken is 2-3 years whether it's US, Japan or Europe. This is the situation we are facing
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applications are cleared in 1-1.5 years while in India the time taken is over three years," Khorakiwala noted.

Recently, talking about steps to reduce pendency of applications, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said the ministry is recruiting people and giving

them training and also modernising offices. The total number of patent applications and trademark registration requests pending as on February 1 were 2,37,029 and 5,44,171, respectively.

Commenting on the difficulties faced by the industry in conducting clinical trials in India,

Khorakiwala said: "Our current system is not friendly towards clinical research work and that is why we prefer getting it done outside the country. Here the DCGI takes six months just to clear the protocol while it's just few weeks outside the country."

On the newly launched National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) policy he said it will help in 'Make In India' initiative and also provide clarity on the country's position on IPR. The Government has announced the comprehensive national IPR policy with a tagline of 'Creative India, Innovative India' to incentivise entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation and curb manufacturing and sale of counterfeits.

The seven objectives of the policy include stimulation of generation of IPRs, need for strong and effective laws and strengthening enforcement and adjudicatory mechanisms to combat infringements.