

Khadi fights back to prevent misuse of its Trademarks Internationally

In the recent days, Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has taken various initiatives for protection and promotion of Khadi as a brand in India and internationally and are the registered proprietors of over a hundred trademarks registrations including the symbol of 'Charkha' in India and other countries like Russia, China, Germany, Australia, UK and Bhutan. These trademark and symbols, however have been misused time and again by private players for material benefits. In an initiative to prevent such misuse any further, for the first time KVIC has taken up the matter with the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Commerce and Permanent Mission of India at UN, Geneva seeking International Trademark protection of symbol of 'Charkha' under the article 6ter of the Paris Convention.

Article 6ter of the Paris Convention for the protection of Industrial property of 1883 (1967 Stockholm Act) protects armorial bearings, flags and other State emblems as well as official signs and hallmarks of the States party to the Paris Convention. The signs published with World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) under this act are prevented from being registered or used as trademarks, across the world, without authorization. Quite noticeably, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has been endorsing Khadi and due to his appeals the sale of Khadi has gone up manifolds.

Speaking about the initiative, Chairman KVIC Shri VK Saxena said, "KVIC is one of those unique institutions in India that links the nation's past, present and future on its functional plane, through – self-reliance and sustainability. Ever since the pre-independent era, Khadi has been considered as the national symbol for Swadeshi. The word marks "KHADI", "KUTIR", "SARVODAYA" and the logo of Khadi India and Charkha are the harbinger of this spirit of Swadeshi, hence, must be protected at all cost".

Considering historical and national importance of the trademarks, Shri Saxena has written to Commerce Minister Shri Piyush Goyal seeking his intervention so as to expedite the matter pending with the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) which comes under the Ministry of Commerce.

KVIC is fighting cases in several countries for violation of the Khadi Mark Regulations. The regulations issued in 2013 by the Ministry of MSME, empowered KVIC to grant 'Khadi Mark' registration and take royalties from any producer using the Khadi Mark. In continuation, KVIC has issued notices against 600 entities in India, including a

renowned garment chain and 3 entities in the International market for misusing these symbols and indulging in unfair trade practices in the recent past.

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