

## **The Spirit of Patenting - Form 27**

### **What is the issue?**

\n\n

\n

- A PIL in Delhi HC has sought for better disclosure of 'local working requirements' for pharma patents in India through 'Form 27' .

\n

- This might open another avenue for 'compulsory licensing' of products and also facilitate innovation in the country.

\n

\n\n

### **What is the spirit of patenting legislations in India?**

\n\n

\n

- Countries like India signed up to the intellectual property bandwagon to maximise opportunities for technology transfer.

\n

- Part of this exercise involves allowing local firms to compete and improve innovation, especially on life-saving pharmaceuticals.

\n

- Patents are not for the benefit of companies but for the promotion of research and betterment of the health metrics of the public.

\n

- There is hence no wisdom in enacting patent laws that mainly enable foreign companies to import products, without helping in our scientific progress.

\n

\n\n

### **What is Form 27?**

\n\n

\n

- A PIL was filed before the Delhi High Court - stressing the importance of "Working requirements" in the patents Act, 1970 (mainly drugs & medicines)

\n

- In essence, it stressed the need for making '**Form 27**' (that seeks to ensure working of patented invention on a commercial scale) more rigorous.  
\n
- Patented invention needs to cater to the demands of the public and this is also mandated in the patent law (and Form 27 merely verifies compliance to this).  
\n
- If the demand is not met, then it can be a ground for '**compulsory licensing**' of the product within India for enhancing supply and protecting public health.  
\n
- Under a compulsory license, an individual or company seeking to use another's intellectual property can do so without seeking the rights holder's consent.  
\n
- While patent owners usually have the right to decide on granting licenses for their products, compulsory licensing route is an exemption to the general rule.  
\n
- A licence fee is paid to the rights holder as fixed by the licence granting authority (Controller General of Patents - under the Ministry of Commerce).  
\n

\n\n

### **What is 'working requirement' of patents?**

\n\n

- Patent law grants to the patentees the privilege of enjoying a limited monopoly in order to achieve the objective of public benefit.  
\n
- As part of the disclosures, patentees are required to disclose if they are locally working their patented invention in exchange for the conferred benefits.  
\n
- Patents are granted to encourage inventions and to secure that the inventions are worked in India on a commercial scale to the fullest practicable extent.  
\n
- Hence, it needs to be stressed that the monopoly granted to the patentees is not merely to import the invention but to make them locally too.  
\n
- Historically, India has considered that "working" the invention is important

for enjoying monopoly and non-working could enable compulsory licensing.

\n

\n\n

### **Will the working requirement violate WTO's TRIPS?**

\n\n

\n

- In streamlining the local working requirement, especially in the field of pharmaceuticals, India is in line with its international trade obligations.
- In fact, Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) provides flexibilities to countries in honouring trade commitments.
- Doha Declaration also outlines the right of national governments to compulsorily license patents as per their situational needs and discretion.
- Thus, lack of local working of a patent can be grounds for granting a compulsory licence, along with others such as high prices and lack of supply.
- Doha Declaration hence allows the exercise of sovereign rights to define when patent rights could be curtailed to achieve a larger public interest result.

\n

\n\n

### **What needs to be done?**

\n\n

\n

- The country is obligated to protect the right to life of its citizens under Article 21, and this duty is heavier than its commitments to the patentees.
- As monopoly holders, patentees should contribute to the promotion of technological innovation and balance their rights and obligations.
- Indian Patents Act through Form 27 requires a patentee (or licensee) to furnish statements of how the invention is being commercially worked in India.
- But as the Form is bereft of crucial details, there is a need to revise it to ensure the spirit of patenting is observed and innovation is promoted.
- Conversely, 'Controller General of Patents' also has the right to publish the

information received in the public domain.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

**Source: The Hindu**

\n\n

\n

