
IPR and Inclusive Growth: Opportunities for Youth and First-Generation Innovators

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Abstract-

India's development policy increasingly emphasizes inclusive growth, especially as the country seeks to harness its demographic dividend and achieve the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. Young people and first-time innovators play a vital role in driving innovation-led growth; however, they often face significant challenges such as limited access to finance, restricted market opportunities, and inadequate legal protection for their ideas.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) provide a strong framework to address these issues by safeguarding, recognizing, and enabling the commercialization of creative ideas and innovations. This study examines how a robust and accessible IPR system can enhance innovation participation, reduce entry barriers, and promote inclusive development.

Using a descriptive and analytical methodology based on secondary data, the paper explores the opportunities created by patents, trademarks, copyrights, and geographical indications for young entrepreneurs and grassroots innovators in India. The findings suggest that a well-developed and user-friendly IPR ecosystem can significantly expand participation in innovation, lower structural constraints, and contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

Keywords: Intellectual Property Rights, Inclusive Growth, Youth Innovation, First-Generation Innovators, Startups, India

1. Introduction-

India's objective for inclusive and sustainable economic progress is to place youth and first-generation innovators at the centre of national development ¹(*Annual_Report_2021_2022_(English)*, n.d.) With more than half of its population under the age of 30, India keeps an exclusive demographic advantage that can be transformed into an innovation dividend ² (World Bank, 2022). However,

inclusive growth requires equitable access to opportunities, resources, and institutional support. First-generation innovators—individuals without prior entrepreneurial background or inherited business assets—often rely solely on creativity and skills. In the absence of adequate protection, their ideas are vulnerable to imitation and exploitation. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) serve as a critical policy instrument that converts ideas into protected economic assets, thereby promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, and inclusive growth³(WIPO, 2023).

2. Objectives and Hypotheses of the Study

2.1 Objectives of the Study -The present study has the following specific goals: - To examine the role of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in endorsing inclusive economic growth in India. - To look into how IPR frameworks create opportunities for youth and first-generation innovators. - To understand how patents, trademarks, copyrights, and geographical indications empower young and grassroots innovators. - To assess the challenges that youth and first-generation innovators face in accessing and using IPR mechanisms. - To propose policy measures to strengthen the IPR ecosystem and support inclusive, innovation-led growth.

2.2 Hypotheses of the Study Based on these goals, the study has the following hypotheses:

H1: Intellectual Property Rights have a significant positive impact on inclusive economic growth in India.

H2: Effective access to IPR protection improves revolutionary opportunities for youth and first-generation innovators.

H3: Awareness and use of IPR mechanisms are positively connected to entrepreneurial success among young innovators.

H4: Insufficient IPR awareness and enforcement are major barriers to inclusive innovation.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design - This study uses a descriptive and analytical research design to explore the link between Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and inclusive growth, focusing on youth and first-generation innovators in India. The descriptive approach outlines current IPR frameworks and

innovation initiatives. The analytical approach helps interpret their role in promoting inclusive innovation.

3.2 Sources of Data- The study mainly relies on secondary data. Relevant data comes from government publications, policy documents, reports from international organizations, academic journals, books, and trustworthy online sources. Key sources include reports from the Government of India, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), OECD, Global Innovation Index, and Startup India initiatives.

3.3 Scope of the Study- This study is limited to India and focuses on recent years characterized by rapid digitalization, growth in startups, and IPR reforms. It highlights youth and first-generation innovators in the technological, entrepreneurial, and creative sectors.

3.4 Methods of Analysis- Qualitative content analysis has been used to review policy documents, research literature, and case studies related to IPR and inclusive growth. Comparative analysis helps understand how different types of IPR—patents, trademarks, copyrights, and geographical indications—offer innovation opportunities for youth and first-generation innovators.

3.5 Limitations of the Study- This study depends on secondary data, which may limit the ability to capture real-time experiences of innovators. The lack of primary survey data restricts empirical testing of hypotheses. Nevertheless, the study offers a solid conceptual and policy-oriented understanding of the topic.

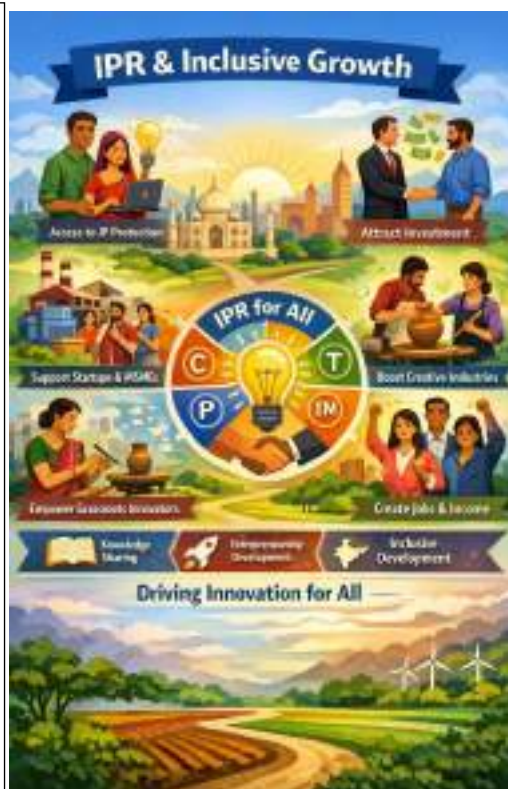
4. IPR and Inclusive Growth-

4.1 Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) are the legal rights given to people or organizations for creating original works. These rights give creators exclusive control over how their intellectual property is used and sold for a set period.¹The main forms of IPR include patents, trademarks, copyrights, industrial designs, geographical indications, and trade secrets. In today's knowledge-based economy, IPR is important for turning imperceptible ideas into appreciated economic assets. By offering legal protection, IPR lowers the risk of imitation, encourages investment in research and development, and rewards creativity and innovation. For young entrepreneurs and new innovators, IPR serves as official recognition of their work and improves their credibility with markets, financial institutions, and investors.³

4.2 Inclusive growth means widespread economic growth, fair, and creates opportunities for everyone in society. It differs from growth that only benefits a small group of people. Inclusive growth focuses on participation, access, and a fair distribution of economic benefits. It aims at creating jobs, reducing poverty, developing skills, and promoting social mobility. In India, inclusive growth is closely tied to demographic diversity, area balance, and communal fairness. Empowering youth, women, rural communities, and first-generation entrepreneurs is vital to confirm that economic development is both sustainable and socially comprehensive.¹

Linkage Between IPR and Inclusive Growth

The link between IPR and inclusive growth is found in how intellectual property systems can make innovation available to everyone. When innovators from different economic backgrounds can access IP protection, revolution becomes a way for many to improve their economic situation.⁴ IPR allows young people and first-time innovators to earn money from their ideas, reach markets, attract investments, and generate jobs. By supporting startups, MSMEs, creative industries, and grassroots innovations, IPR helps promote inclusive growth through spreading knowledge, developing entrepreneurship, and generating income. A balanced and accessible IPR framework catalyses innovation-driven inclusive development in India.⁵



5. Youth and First-Generation Innovators in India- Youth and First-Generation Innovators in India. Inclusive growth means economic growth that creates opportunities for everyone and ensures fair distribution of benefits. Innovation-led inclusive growth focuses on wide participation in innovation processes instead of concentration among large companies or elite institutions. IPR helps inclusive growth by formalizing creativity, dropping uncertainty, and allowing modernizers to gain value from

their ideas.⁶ When youth and first-generation innovators access IP protection, innovation becomes a real path for social mobility and economic empowerment.

5.1 Role of Youth in Innovation- Youth are more open to new technologies, digital tools, and varying business models. India's startup ecosystem, hackathons, incubators, and innovation challenges increasingly depend on young innovators to create solutions in fintech, health tech, edtech, agrotech, and climate technology.^{1,4,5}

5.2 First-Generation Innovators and Grassroots Creativity- First-generation innovators are individuals who initiate innovation or entrepreneurship without prior business background or inherited resources. In India, they often emerge from rural areas, the informal sector, and marginalized communities, offering frugal and locally relevant solutions in agriculture, healthcare, energy, and crafts^{7&8} (Honey Bee Network, 2018; WIPO, 2021).

Grassroots innovations are based on indigenous knowledge and practical experience but frequently remain informal due to limited legal awareness, financial constraints, and a lack of market access (Gupta, 2016). Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) empower these innovators by providing legal protection, formal recognition, and opportunities for commercialization. By safeguarding creativity and enabling innovators to capture economic value, IPR supports income generation, social mobility, and inclusive growth (OECD, 2020; UNDP, 2020).^{10&11}

6. Role of Intellectual Property Rights in Empowering Innovators -

6.1 Patents and Technological Innovation- Patents give exclusive rights over inventions. This encourages young innovators to invest their time and resources in research and development. Patent protection builds credibility and attracts backing from investors, incubators, and government programs.^{12&13}

6.2 Trademarks and Brand Building- Trademarks help young entrepreneurs create brand identity and build consumer trust. For first-generation business owners, trademark protection stops brand dilution and supports their long-term presence in the market.^{14&15}

6.3 Copyrights and Creative Expression- Copyright protection supports youth involved in digital content creation, software development, design, music, and literature. It guarantees recognition and helps generate income in the growing digital and creative economy.^{16&17}

6.4 Geographical Indications and Community Innovation- Geographical Indications (GIs) protect products and traditional knowledge tied to specific regions. This creates job opportunities for

rural youth and artisan communities. GI protection improves market access and helps preserve cultural heritage.^{18&19}

7. Policy Initiatives Supporting IPR and Inclusive Innovation

India has rolled out several programs to boost the IPR ecosystem for youth and first-time innovators. Initiatives like Startup India, Digital India, Atmanirbhar Bharat, and innovation missions promote IP creation and commercialization. Fee discounts, online filing systems, and IP awareness programs have made access easier. Incubation centers at universities and technical institutions now offer IP support services. This helps young innovators manage complex legal processes.²⁰

8. Challenges in Leveraging IPR for Inclusive Growth Even with progress, challenges still exist. Knowledge about IPR is uneven, especially in rural and informal sectors. The costs and complexities of enforcing IP rights can discourage small innovators. Language issues, limited legal knowledge, and slow commercialization processes also limit inclusive participation. Moreover, finding the right balance between strong IP protection and public interest, especially in healthcare and education, is a key policy concern.²¹

9. Way Forward and Policy Recommendations- To unlock the full inclusive potential of IPR, we need focused interventions. Adding IP education to school and higher education programs can raise early awareness. Strengthening IP support centres in rural and semi-urban areas can help first-time innovators. Simplified enforcement processes and financial aid for commercialization are also important. Promoting partnerships between academia, industry, and local communities can further spread innovation and ensure fair growth.²²

10. Problems Regarding IPR and Inclusive Growth- **Low Awareness of IPR.** Many young people and first-time innovators lack basic knowledge about patents, trademarks, copyrights, and geographical indications, especially in rural and informal sectors. **High Cost of IP Protection** Filing, maintaining, and enforcing IP rights involves financial costs that many students, startups, and grassroots innovators cannot afford. **Complex Legal Procedures** The process of registering IP is time-consuming and legally complicated. This discourages young and first-time innovators from making their ideas official. **Limited Access to Legal and Technical Support.** Rural and semi-urban areas have few IP support centres, patent attorneys, and innovation mentors. **Weak Commercialization Linkages:** Many innovators secure IP rights but struggle to commercialize their work. This is often due to poor connections with industry, a lack of funding, and limited access to markets. **Implementation Challenges:** Small innovators find it hard to

enforce their IP rights against infringement. Costly legal battles and slow court processes add to the difficulty. Language and Digital Divide: Most IP-related information and filing systems are in English and require digital skills, which dismisses marginalized groups. Risk of segregation Strong IPR systems may favor large firms more than small innovators. If inclusivity is not considered, this could widen inequality. Balancing Public Interest and IP Protection. In fields like healthcare and education, strong IP protection may make services less affordable and limit access. Underrepresentation of Women and Marginalized Youth. Social, financial, and cultural barriers restrict the participation of women and disadvantaged groups in innovation ecosystems driven by IP.

11. Solutions to Problems Related to IPR and Inclusive Growth- Low Awareness of IPR. Many young people and first-time innovators lack basic knowledge about patents, trademarks, copyrights, and geographical indications, especially in rural and informal sectors. High Cost of IP Protection Filing, maintaining, and enforcing IP rights involve financial costs that many students, startups, and grassroots innovators cannot afford. Complex Legal Procedures The process of registering IP is time-consuming and legally complicated. This discourages young and first-time innovators from making their ideas official. Limited Access to Legal and Technical Support. Rural and semi-urban areas have few IP support centers, patent attorneys, and innovation mentors. Weak Commercialization Linkages: Many innovators secure IP rights but struggle to commercialize their work. This is often due to poor connections with industry, a lack of funding, and limited access to markets. Enforcement Challenges: Small innovators find it hard to enforce their IP rights against infringement. Costly legal battles and slow court processes add to the difficulty. Language and Digital Divide Most IP-related information and filing systems are in English and require digital skills, which excludes marginalized groups. Risk of Exclusion Strong IPR systems may favor large firms more than small innovators. If inclusivity is not considered, this could widen inequality. Balancing Public Interest and IP Protection In fields like healthcare and education, strong IP protection may make services less affordable and limit access. Underrepresentation of Women and Marginalized Youth. Social, financial, and cultural barriers restrict the participation of women and disadvantaged groups in innovation ecosystems driven by IP.

12. Conclusion- Intellectual Property Rights play a key role in promoting inclusive growth by supporting youth and first-generation innovators. By protecting creativity, lowering risk, and allowing for commercialization, IPR can transform innovation into a way for economic participation and social

mobility. As India moves toward the goal of Viksit Bharat 2047, a fair and open IPR system will be essential to ensure that innovation-driven growth benefits everyone in society.

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