

BUY GENUINE-NOT SMUGGLED

Some savings aren't worth it

FICCI Cascade

Illicit Trade is becoming a hugely lucrative business, with criminals relying on the continued high demand for cheap goods coupled with low production and distribution costs. The illegal activities related to smuggling and counterfeiting take advantage of unaware consumers and bargain-hunters, exploiting people's appetites for brands or simply their financial situation. Such activities affect everyone, with Governments, businesses and society being robbed of tax revenue, business income and jobs.

Despite various initiatives and crack downs, the menace is on the rise. Every effort, therefore, needs to be made to examine how these activities can be curbed. FICCI has been focusing on addressing this problem and accordingly has dedicated a forum CASCADE - Committee against Smuggling and Counterfeiting Activities Destroying the Economy.

FICCI CASCADE over the years has been successful in stirring an active debate on the menace of illicit trade nationally through various awareness programmes and initiatives engaging industry, policy makers, international institutions, law enforcement officials, voluntary organizations and consumer at large. The CASCADE journey of five years is about how significantly we have been able to bring about a change in opinion and how much we have been able to bring on ground preventive and remedial measures through collaborative efforts amongst stakeholders.

In pursuance of our agenda, CASCADE reached out to key stakeholders in the last couple of months to sensitize, build capacities, garner best practices and chart out a

corrective course.

In Bengaluru, CASCADE organized a seminar on 'Combating Illicit Trade - An Imperative to Accelerate Economic Development' on 24th June, 2016, with an objective to focus on spreading awareness on the alarming magnitude of smuggling and other forms of illicit trade. The event brought together experts from industry, police, Directorate of revenue intelligence, legal consultants and consumer organizations.

Shri Om Prakash, Director General of Police, Karnataka, chief guest at the event, highlighted the following key elements which were required to curb smuggling activities in the country:

Use of research and intelligence to better understand the extent of the problem

Educational and awareness generation campaigns that raise public knowledge on the problem and its impact on society

A policy regime that severely penalizes those involved in illicit trade

Provision for human and financial resources devoted to enforcement to ensure that laws are properly enforced and criminals are brought to justice

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● Using technology to distinguish between legal and illegal products

● It is clear that enforcement agencies play a pivotal role in prevention of the problem. However, collaborations with industry are imperative to facilitate effective enforcement. FICCI CASCADE in association with the National Academy of Customs, Excise and Narcotics, (NACEN) organized a capacity building programme on the 'Socio-Economic Impact of Illicit Trade' on July 15th at NACEN, Faridabad. The objective was to sensitize trainee officers of Indian Revenue Service (Customs and Central Excise) on the ill effects of illicit trade with special focus on the menace of smuggling on the economy, and on the society as a whole.

Ms. Reena Arya (IRS), Additional Director General, NACEN, was the Chief Guest at the programme. Ms. Arya remarked that illicit trade was a global problem of enormous scale, impacting human lives and virtually every industry sector around the world. This initiative of sensitizing IRS probationers was appreciated as FICCI, a premier trade body in the country, was organizing the event for the trainee officers, the future economic guardians of the country. Over 80 officers of Indian Revenue Service attended the programme in a day-long interactive event.

Some of the key issues discussed were as follows:

1. Developing local intelligence is key to address the challenges related to smuggling
2. Coordinated and serious enforcement is one of the best way to counter illegal trade in industry
- 3. Deterrence has to be created for

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Anil Rajput, Chairman, FICCI CASCADE

effective enforcement

- Industry to create and invest in variety of brand protection measures and anti-counterfeit programs.
- Industry should be committed to working with law enforcement to deter any and all attacks on its products and brand
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Youth is one of the key stakeholders for advocating socially responsible behavior. CASCADE believes that it is important to bring today's youth onboard the awareness campaign and through them influence the society as a whole.

'Fight Smuggling & Buy Genuine in the Larger Interest of the Nation'; this message was highlighted at the seminar on Combating Illicit Trade – An Imperative to Accelerate Economic Development, which was followed by a Candle Light Congregation with enthusiastic participation of students and consumers, in Lucknow on September 15, 2016.

Shri Ravidas Mehrotra, State Minister (Independent Charge), Family

Welfare, Women and Child Welfare, Government of Uttar Pradesh was the Chief Guest at the seminar and candle light congregation. Hon'ble Minister congratulated FICCI CASCADE for initiating this youth and consumer movement against illicit trade. The Minister emphasized that activities involving illicit trade, like smuggling, curbed the economic independence and one must pledge to not use such illegal products. The candle light congregation was organized in association with Department of Consumer Affairs, under the 'Jago Grahak Jago Campaign' and Lucknow University. More than 200 students and consumers with candles in their hand and banners stating 'Buy Genuine Not Smuggled' participated in this congregation. ■

ILLICIT TRADE IS ASSUMING ALARMING PROPORTIONS RESULTING IN TREMENDOUS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DAMAGE FOR INDIA AND THE WORLD. THE MANUFACTURERS OF SUCH PRODUCTS ARE TOTALLY UNCONCERNED WITH THE OUTCOME DUE TO THEIR UNSCRUPULOUS AND IMMORAL MODUS OPERANDI. ILLICIT TRADE IS DRIVEN BY ANTI-SOCIAL ELEMENTS AND THERE IS AMPLE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE FACT THAT MAJOR TERROR OUTFITS LIKE AL-QAEDA, HEZBOLLAH AND ISIS ARE ENGAGED IN THESE ACTIVITIES IN A BIG WAY. IT IS CRITICAL FOR THE POLICY MAKERS TO TAKE NOTE AND DRAW LESSONS SO THAT INCENTIVES FOR SUCH ELEMENTS TO EXPLOIT THE ARBITRAGE OPPORTUNITIES ARE ELIMINATED. FAILURE IN IMPLEMENTING SUCH MEASURES WILL DAMAGE THE LEGAL INDUSTRY ALONG WITH COMPROMISING OF NATIONAL INTERESTS