

## South Asian Intellectual Property Knowledge Network – promoting intellectual property rights education in India and other countries

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All the SAARC countries (except Maldives and Afghanistan) have intellectual property right (IPR) laws in place and there is also a lack of proper awareness in the sub-continent. Understanding the above need and growing use of massive online open courses (MOOCs), we have developed an e-portal 'South Asian Intellectual Property Knowledge Network (SAIPKN)' which provides nine basic IPR course modules in English for enrolled users. This commentary outlines how MOOCs have been used for promoting IPR education and awareness in India, neighbouring SAARC and other countries.

Developed and developing countries deeply support a global move towards stronger intellectual property (IP) protection in order to promote creativity and innovation. These are the top wealth creators in an economy<sup>1</sup>. However, they need protection from theft that is rampant. The research and development

(R&D) made by academia, industry and orphan grass-root inventors need to be better protected in order to prevent piracy and recoup research investments that will translate research to commercially viable products and processes that ultimately integrate into supply value chains to reach society. Overall, strong

intellectual property rights (IPRs) may act as a catalyst and promote safe investments in well-developed and developing economies.

SAARC is the largest regional cooperation in the world covering 1.5 billion people, mostly belonging to developing nations. Eight member countries

**Table 1.** Ranking of SAARC nations in global innovation index

Year	India	Sri Lanka	Bangladesh	Nepal	Pakistan	Afghanistan	Maldives	Bhutan
2011	62	82	97	N/A	105	N/A	N/A	N/A
2012	64	94	112	113	133	N/A	N/A	N/A
2013	66	98	130	128	137	N/A	N/A	N/A
2014	76	105	129	136	134	N/A	N/A	N/A

**South Asian Intellectual Property Knowledge Network**

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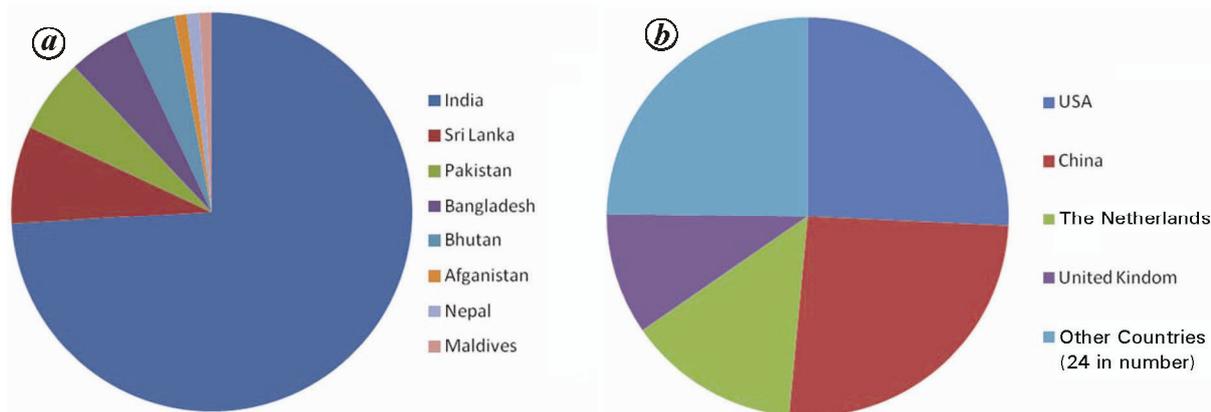
*What is Innovation?*

**The SAIPKN Programme**  
World Wide Web as the name suggests has develop its roots in every sphere. We have moved on from days of blackboard to virtual classroom. From book reading to e-Learning, Internet not only provides us with seamless knowledge but it also connects many nations irrespective of boundaries. Using this attribute of web we have developed SAIPKN. [Read More](#)

**What do we do?**  
The following activities under this project are being offered to researchers, academics, technologists and policy planners of SAARC countries with mutually supportive terms.  
1. Prior Art Search  
2. Patent Informatics  
3. Training [Read More](#)

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**Figure 1.** SAIPKN home page.



**Figure 2.** Content access infography by (a) SAARC member countries and (b) non-SAARC member countries.

(Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) of SAARC nurture subtle knowledge on IPR. India is the largest member in terms of economy, demographics, size, population and political influence among the SAARC member countries. Despite being the largest member, the expenditure on R&D as percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) by India is not encouraging and so is the output in terms of patents<sup>2</sup>. The situation has not improved in other IPs (i.e. copyrights, designs, trademarks, geographical indications, plant variety farmers rights, etc.) as well. If we are serious about making the sub-continent a growth engine, we have to protect IP in letter and spirit.

All the SAARC countries (except Maldives and Afghanistan) have IPR laws in place, but proper awareness is lacking in the sub-continent. Since 2011, the global innovation index (GII) of SAARC nations has been constantly decreasing down in the global rankings (Table 1).

The decrease in GII coupled with lack of awareness on IPR may cause a deteriorative environment in the SAARC nations, that limits investment in them. Understanding the above need and growing use of massive online open courses (MOOCs), we have developed an e-portal 'South Asian Intellectual Property Knowledge Network (SAIPKN)',

<http://picb.niscair.res.in/saipkn/>, which provides nine IPR course modules in English<sup>3</sup>.

It is a common platform (Figure 1) where grass-root orphan inventors, students, scientist technologists and techno-entrepreneurs of SAARC nations can get virtual training in the field of IPR for protecting their inventions and helping others to do the same. The user can self-enroll for the courses after registering with SAIPKN. There have been regular views and accesses of the IPR modules (Figure 2). However, the study material is available only for registered users.

Thirty-six countries viewed tools and accessed modules. Among SAARC member countries, maximum content access was from India (74%), followed by Sri Lanka (8%), Pakistan (6%), Bangladesh (5%), Bhutan (4%), Afghanistan (1%), Maldives (1%) and Nepal (1%; Figure 2a). Among the non-SAARC member countries, it was the United States of America (25.70%) and China (25.70%), followed by the Netherlands (13.86%) and the United Kingdom (9.9%) (Figure 2b). Twenty-four other countries mainly from Asia, Africa, Europe, Iceland, Antarctica and Pacific Islands accessed 25% of the content.

In order to overcome the language barrier, our next plan is to translate these

modules into regional languages of SAARC countries and develop multimedia/audio-visual modules to remove monotony of the reading method; but poor net penetration remains an issue at present. Technology has the power to transform the lives of people and there are many cost-effective solutions in education using information communication technology as a tool<sup>4</sup>. This note outlines how MOOCs have been used for promoting IPR education and awareness to override borders, race, gender, class and income, and create a rippling effect in the eight SAARC member countries and 28 other non-SAARC countries.

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