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Patent office has 70,000 patent applications to be disposed of: P H Kurian

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Controller General of Patents, Design and Trade Marks P H Kurian said that about 70,000 patent application examinations are in pipeline for process and examination in the country and it might take a long time to grant a patent under the Intellectual Property Rights Act in India for Patent offices as they need more examiners to clear the backlog and expedite the new filings.

Speaking at the CII's 7th IP Summit here, Kurian also said that there is need of at least 260 people in patent offices to examine applications and various other processes. "Currently we have only 150 officers and it is also not possible to increase the manpower overnight," he said adding that the problem is being addressed and might be resolved by 2012-13.

According to Kurian, the capacity of current set up is of processing 15,000 applications per annum and 70,000 are in pipeline and process of examination. He also informed that since 2005, about 13,000 patents pertaining to chemicals and pharmaceuticals alone have been issued. The increased growth of patent filing in India is due to timely amendments of the Patents Act of 1970. Since 1995 after India signed the WTO, there were sweeping changes in the IP administration and legislation culminating in the introduction of product patent regime in 2005.

However, the law enforcement on piracy in the states of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Kerala are stricter in the country. "The law is even stricter than other developed countries. In the USA, only Federal Police is empowered to take action in piracy related cases but in India the police is empowered to not only take action but also preventive detections in piracy cases," Kurian said adding that there is also need of increasing awareness on IP issues.