

Report on the Outreach Program at the Eri Silk Village, Umden-Diwon, Ri-Bhoi District, Meghalaya on December 04, 2024

The DPIIT-IPR Chair and Centre for Advanced Research in Intellectual Property of National Law University and Judicial Academy, Assam on December 4, 2024 organised an outreach program at the Eri Silk Village, Umden-Diwon situated at Ri-Bhoi district of Meghalaya. The program aimed to raise awareness about the significance of protecting Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) and related concepts, specifically in the context of the unique and traditional practices employed by the local community in the creation of Eri Silk products. The



programme was also attended by some of the officials of Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. The outreach program succeeded in fostering knowledge amongst the people about the rights that they enjoy with reference to the knowledge that they have had since generations. The primary objectives of the program were:

- i. To educate local weavers about Intellectual Property laws and their benefits.
- ii. To emphasise the importance of safeguarding their traditional methods of weaving Eri Silk through legal protections.
- iii. To provide guidance on the registration processes for Patents, Geographical Indications (GI) and other forms of IPRs.
- iv. To inculcate a sense of awareness amongst the weavers of the benefits of protecting other traditional arts through legal protection.

Key highlights of the Programme include the following:

Session on Intellectual Property Rights:

Dr. Pankaj Kumar, IPR Chair Professor, DPIIT-IPR Chair, NLUJA, Assam provided an informative session focusing on various aspects of Intellectual Property, including Designs, Patents and Geographical Indications. Dr. Kumar informed about the possibility of patenting both the process and the product of Eri silk weaving. This would grant legal monopoly rights, enabling the community to exclude others from commercialising



Dr. Thywill Susngi, Guest Faculty of Law, NLUJA, Assam translated the entire session into the local language (Khasi) of Meghalaya for better understanding amongst the local populace, thus affirming that each attendee left with ample and useful information about their IP rights.



Visit to the Eri Silk Weaving Centre and Interactive Discussion:

The Staff of DPIIT-IPR Chair, NLUJA, Assam and the students also visited the Eri Silk Weaving Centre situated in the village wherein they were provided a guided tour of the production facilities of Eri Silk garments, including the rearing, weaving and dyeing process of the textile. The methods of traditional weaving and dyeing were also put on display. The local artisans shared insights into their traditional methods. The need for preserving biodiversity and sustaining eco-friendly practices in Eri Silk production was also discussed. The outreach program successfully increased awareness among the local artisans about the importance of Intellectual Property protection for their unique weaving practices. The program marked a significant step in bridging the gap between Intellectual Property laws and their practical application in protecting traditional crafts. It reaffirmed the need for legal frameworks to safeguard indigenous knowledge and practices, ensuring sustainable development for the artisan community in Meghalaya.

The session concluded with an optimistic outlook toward the registration and protection of Eri Silk products, fostering a sense of pride and empowerment among the local weavers. The programme underscored the potential of Intellectual Property Rights in transforming traditional crafts into sustainable and competitive market products. It highlighted the collaborative efforts required to protect and promote indigenous knowledge systems for future generations.



