



# Indian Reprographic Rights Organisation

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

Indian Reprographic Rights Organisation (IRRO) is the sole and exclusive collective Copyright Society (a not-for-profit organisation) in India, as defined under the Copyright law of India, in published copyrighted literary works. It is duly approved and registered with the Copyright Board, Ministry of Commerce, India, and the International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organisations, Brussels, Belgium. Its main objective is to issue licenses and collect license fees from Indian and foreign establishments, including public institutions that indulge in the reproduction (photocopying) of published works of our members.

It is my proud privilege and honour to extend a hearty welcome to the 17th Annual General Meeting of the Indian Reprographic Rights Organisation (IRRO). I present to you the IRRO's Annual Report for the year 2023-24.

Notable achievements and strategic initiatives have marked the year 2023-24. We have focused on strengthening our international presence, enhancing our digital infrastructure, and engaging with policymakers to shape the future of copyright in India.

### Overview of IRRO Activities

#### **Bilateral Agreements with International RROS**

The signing of bilateral agreements with various RROs from different countries indicates IRRO's efforts to establish mutually beneficial relationships for managing copyright licenses.

IRRO has already signed 24 bilateral agreements with RROs from countries such as the UK's Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA), CLL of New Zealand, JAACC of Japan, and KOPINOR of Norway, among others. Additionally, negotiations are underway for further agreements with RROs from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, the United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, South Korea, Australia and China. Furthermore, we intend to enter a substantial bilateral agreement with the Copyright Clearance Centre (CCC).

## Copyright awareness events/campaigns

Copyright education is crucial in today's digital age, where content sharing and distribution are widespread. As much as it is essential to exercise laws, it is also vital to provide the right messaging. Many people still need to learn about the illegality of copying books. IRRO, through social media, seminars, webinars, and one-to-one interactions at events, tries to inform as many people as possible about the ill effects of piracy inflicted upon the literary industry. By fostering discussions and creating interactive experiences, IRRO helps individuals understand the significance of copyright protection in safeguarding creators' rights and fostering a culture of respect for intellectual property.

During the New Delhi World Book Fair 2024, IRRO promoted copyright awareness through innovative initiatives. The IRRO stall was designed using wall designs depicting a discussion between a mother and child to effectively convey messages about copyright's importance and engagingly educate people.

On the sidelines of the New Delhi World Fair 2024, IRRO, in collaboration with the Federation of Indian Publishers, hosted an event on the theme of "Transformative Trends in Publishing: Shaping the Future through IP, Tech, Data, and AI" on February 10, 2024, at The Dome, The Taj Ambassador, New Delhi. Nielsen BookData supported the event.

The event brought together key stakeholders in the publishing industry, including professionals, academics, and policymakers, to explore and discuss the profound impact of intellectual property, technology, data, and AI on the future of publishing.

The President of the International Publishers Association, Ms. Karine Pansa, was the special guest for the evening. Dr. Subhas Sarkar, Union Minister of Education, Government of India, was the Chief Guest, and Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs and Education, graced the event by joining virtually.

The first panel at the event featured industry stalwarts Ms. Karine Gonçalves Pansa, Shri Vikrant Mathur, and Shri Pranav Gupta to discuss the pivotal role of data and statistics in shaping the publishing landscape.

The panel discussion on the future of IP and publishing through the lens of AI featured insightful talks led by Shri Ankit Sahni, Partner, Ajay Sahni Associates LLP; Shri Amit Rajput, Managing Director at PwC, Leader-Digital Products & Transformation; and Ms. Neha Jain, Partner, Regulatory & Public Policy, Deloitte. The panellists explored the intersection of technology and IP in publishing, from AI-driven transformations to regulatory perspectives.

On this occasion, Ms. Karine Gonçalves Pansa, President of the International Publishers Association, was honoured with the 'Global Ambassador of Publishing and Education' award for her remarkable dedication to the publishing industry. Another event highlight was the launch of the International Publishing Data Report 2023 in India.

## Royalty Distribution

IRRO distributes the royalties received under bilateral agreements from international RROs every year for the reprography usage of published work of various rights owners. The distribution procedure is lengthy because it entails numerous steps, including locating the rights holders and their contact information and contacting them to confirm that they are the copyright owners.

In the fiscal year 2023–24, a total amount of INR 3,776,492 was earmarked for distribution. Out of this, INR 215,545 has been successfully distributed to copyright holders. Work is currently being done to distribute the remaining balance.

Last year, for the first time since its inception, IRRO successfully paid its bilateral partners for licence fees collected in recent years through licence sales in India. This had a very positive impact, and we will continue to distribute small amounts to our bilateral partners year after year.

## Representations to the Government of India

IRRO has constantly communicated with the Government of India to seek support to overcome the roadblocks under the existing Copyright Act. Through participation in meetings, events and representations, IRRO continues to share feedback and suggestions for advancing copyright/IP protection. Some of the recent submissions include the following:

- **Inclusion of Copyright/IP Education in School Curriculum:** Recognizing the imperative of cultivating a culture of respect for intellectual property from an early age, IRRO advocates for incorporating comprehensive copyright and intellectual property education into the curriculum starting from the 6<sup>th</sup> standard.
- **Formulation of Copyright/IP Policies in Higher Education Institutions:** Acknowledging the pivotal role of academic institutions in shaping intellectual discourse and innovation, IRRO proposes advising bodies such as the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), University Grants Commission (UGC), and the Ministry of Education to mandate the formulation and publication of Copyright/IP Policies by all higher education institutions.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Launching targeted advertising and social media campaigns to raise public awareness about copyright and intellectual property rights, emphasising the importance of respecting these rights and the consequences of infringement.
- **Representation on the upcoming amendments to the Digital India Act:** The focus is on intermediaries and AI's role in publishing.

## Licensing update

Selling licenses is a complex task, but with proper bilateral agreements and continuous government engagement, the correct repository can facilitate license sales. As we advance, our approach will involve selling licenses to the Central Government for all educational institutions under their jurisdiction and to State Governments for their respective institutions, similar to how other Reprographic Rights Organizations (RROs) operate globally. Therefore, we aim to collaborate with the Ministry of Education at the Government of India for Central Universities and with state governments for their institutions.

Due to the Delhi University case, IRRO has also faced challenges in retaining and selling licenses to educational institutions. To address this, IRRO plans to pivot towards the corporate sector and implement targeted strategies. This approach aims to diversify revenue streams, reduce reliance on the educational industry, and position IRRO for long-term growth and sustainability within the copyright licensing market.

**International Collaborations:** IRRO has actively engaged in various international platforms, participating in numerous meetings and collaborations to strengthen its global presence and foster international partnerships.

IRRO has been represented at WIPO meetings, contributing to discussions of intellectual property rights, copyright issues, and reprographic rights. These meetings provide a platform for IRRO to align with global standards and practices.

As a member of IFRRO, IRRO regularly participates in its annual general meetings and other events. These interactions help IRRO stay updated on international developments and best practices in reprographic rights.

IRRO representatives have attended and presented at international conferences and seminars on intellectual property rights, copyright, and publishing.

**IFRRO Asia-Pacific Committee:** IRRO will host the IFRRO Asia-Pacific Committee (APAC) Meeting in 2025. This significant event will coincide with the silver jubilee of IRRO, marking 25 years of its establishment. The meeting is scheduled towards the end of April 2025 in New Delhi.

Delegates from various countries within the Asia-Pacific region will attend this meeting, providing a platform for sharing insights and best practices and fostering stronger relationships between member organisations.

**IFRRO Mentorship Programme:** The IFRRO mentorship programme aims to help RROs achieve business goals and secure funding. The programme, supported by IFRRO and CCC, involves assigning consultants to RROs for 12 to 24 months. The ASEAN RROs have benefited significantly from the Mentorship Programme. IRRO has initiated discussions with IFRRO regarding possibly engaging a Consultant for six months. While this programme has no financial obligations, potential costs related to his presence in New Delhi will be incurred if necessary.

**WIPO Connect IT Solution for IRRO:** IRRO is looking to use WIPO Connect to manage and distribute Rights and Repository for the IRRO. We have taken the demo from the Geneva WIPO team and found it very useful. To deploy this, a formal request from the Government of India needs to be sent to the WIPO stating that they can work and shall support IRRO with the toolkit. A formal request to deploy WIPO Connect has been submitted to DPIIT. The solution offered by the WIPO for this is free of cost and does not involve any commercials.

### **Objectives: 2023-24**

IRRO has been diligently working towards safeguarding the publishing ecosystem. Our goals for the fiscal year 2024-25 encompass several key initiatives. These include:

- Fair Distribution of Royalties: Ensuring all royalties are distributed among our members on time.
- Expansion of Membership Base: Increasing the number of members to strengthen our community and enhance our collective influence.
- Establishment of Bilateral Agreements with Fellow RROs: Collaborating with other Reprographic Rights Organizations to foster international cooperation and mutual support.
- Significant Boost in the Collection of License Fees: Enhancing our efforts to collect license fees more effectively to support our members and sustain our operations.
- Elevation of Awareness Regarding Reprographic Rights: Raising awareness about Reprographic Rights to ensure broader recognition and respect for intellectual property.
- Enhancing digital infrastructure.

Before I conclude, I would like to thank the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, other Office Bearers and Members of the Governing Body and the staff of IRRO, who gave me their full support and cooperation in performing my duties.



PRANAV GUPTA  
SECRETARY GENERAL, IRRO