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THE AWARE CONSUMER

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FOCUS ON QUALITY

HORIZONS
Codex:
A Code For
Consumer
Food Safety

IN FOCUS
Building A
Quality DNA

RESEARCH FEATURE
A Comprehensive
Quality Infrastructure

WORLD QUALITY DAY 2019

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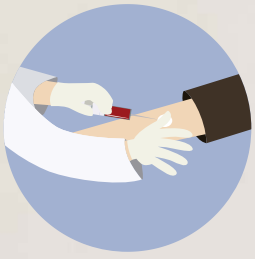

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QUALITY IN PATIENT CARE

VIEW  POINT

BEJON KUMAR MISRA | bejonmisra@theawareconsumer.in

Quality Is Dictating The New Market Reality Of India

The push to integrate the concept of quality into the functions of the service industry takes a slightly different path from manufacturing. Quality aspects of the service provider's output are intangible and fleeting.

AS THE WORLD celebrates 100 years of quality, in India a move is afoot to build a strong national ecosystem of standards and certifications to ensure the Indian consumer gets the best deal. But what is quality?

Quality is an amorphous term, difficult to define and with no clearly conceptualized benchmark. Each product, category, business or service has to develop its own quality goals commensurate with the technical parameters developed by international and national standards bodies. For, quality is what satisfies the stakeholders.

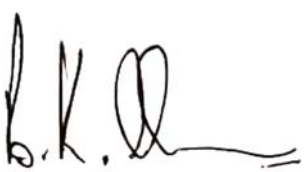
ISO 8402-1986 standard defines quality as "the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bears its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs." While needs can be satisfied even by inferior quality product what marks a good quality product is the level of satisfaction it provides the end user. Apparently, quality is an evolving and dynamic term.

The Wikipedia definition of quality wraps up the divergent aspects: In business, engineering, and manufacturing, quality has a pragmatic interpretation as the non-inferiority or superiority of something; it's also defined as being suitable for its intended purpose (fitness for purpose) while satisfying customer expectations. Quality is a perceptual, conditional, and somewhat subjective attribute and may be understood differently by different people. Consumers may focus on the specification quality of a product/service, or how it compares to competitors in the marketplace. Producers might measure the conformance quality, or degree to which the product/service was produced correctly.

Indian consumers have traditionally been price conscious. The middle classes that make up the larger bulk of consumers had to by necessity overlook quality for a price bargain. For some elite pockets, higher price was symbolic of status and here too quality was not the primary concern. At both the ends of the spectrum, it was more price than quality of goods dictating the choice.

Things, however, are changing. Globalization, opening up of the market and the internet have brought a wide variety of choices at the fingertips of the consumers. Rising incomes have meant more purchasing power and there is no longer any need to compromise on quality.

This is the new market reality of India and companies must deliver QUALITY.



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Message from the Editor-in-Chief

POOJA KHAITAN
pooja@theawareconsumer.in

DESKTALK

INDIAN CONSUMERS DEMAND QUALITY, UNMOVED BY DISCOUNTS

INDIA'S 1.3 BILLION strong consumer market is undergoing rapid transformation. A most varied market in the world, it is the Mecca of marketers the world over. Yet, as the Indian economy rapidly transforms, it is essential to understand the Indian consumer.

India's Digital India drive has ensured a much more informed consumer than before. Access to a plethora of e-commerce platforms has brought a wide variety of goods within reach. More brands are entering the market and setting up shop here. From budget brands to premium high street and designer goods, all jostle for space in the same marketplace. Indian consumer is hence no longer quintessentially Indian. He/she is a global consumer looking at the same product and services as their counterpart in the developed markets. He/she is slowly but certainly waking up to what quality means and is seeking world class quality from the marketers.

The initial phase of digital market transformation saw an era of deep discounts and sale that would generate a shopping frenzy among the price conscious Indian shoppers. However, there is a rising awareness that substandard and last season goods are moved via sales. The Indian consumer is as much following the fashion seasons and trends as those in the developed countries. Hence, the sale euphoria is fast giving place to a quality consciousness that demands the best and the latest.

Gone are the days when a manufacturer could employ different parameters for a product for Indian market. Indian consumers are becoming aware of the distinctions and demand that they we provided similar quality goods as the US or Europe.

No business can hope to get away with treating the Indian consumer shabbily. They are not shy of making their sentiments public at the merest hint of being shortchanged. Online commerce platforms have provided the opportunity to consumers to air their grievances over poor service and quality of goods. Indian consumers are boldly bombarding platforms with poor reviews if the quality is below expectation.

In short, the Indian consumer has finally arrived on the collective consciousness of the world. Those who wish to engage in the Indian market must ensure they satisfy the quality demands of the Indian consumer.

INSIDE

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NOVEMBER 2019 • Vol. 5 • Issue 8

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Pooja Khaitan

EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS
Sangita Thakur Varma
Praful D. Sheth
Bina Jain
Suman Misra
Manisha Bhatla
Pyush Misra
Shashank D. Sudhi
Shashi Bhushan

MANAGER CIRCULATION
Nirmal Dayal

DESIGNER: Galaxy
DESIGN CONSULTANT: Maanav Khaitan

WEB DESIGNER:
Manish Mohan
Ebrahim Bhanpurawala

Owner, Printer, Publisher & Editor:
Bejon Kumar Misra

Published at:
B - 306, 1st Floor,
C.R. Park, New Delhi-110019

Printed at:
M/s. Swastika Creation
19, D.S.I.D.C. Shed, Scheme 3,
Okhla Phase II, New Delhi - 110020

For any queries, please contact us at
contact@theawareconsumer.in
Phone: 9885564767

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ADIL ZAINULBHAI
CHAIRMAN, QUALITY COUNCIL OF INDIA

"Over the time we wanted to create a quality culture and a pull for quality from consumers, government and business. Having tasted good quality in some sectors in India – e.g., 2 wheelers, TVs, mobile phones, we know the consumer wants quality if they can get it."

ROUNDUP

Companies may stop innovations and value additions in products like sanitary napkins, hand washes or even withdraw products from the market

IMAGE: PIXABAY

Price Cap On Hygiene Products Could Be Counterproductive

DATA BRIEFING

138

- India's score as it topped the global consumer confidence index in April-June 2019

THE GOVERNMENT'S NOBLE intent to bring essential hygiene products such as sanitary napkins and hand wash agents under its price control regime may backfire if reports are to be believed. As per reports, a list of essential hygiene products is being finalized and these categories could come under price control. While the government's objective is to make such products affordable to a large number of people in order to promote basic hygiene standards and consequently health standards in the country, experts opine that the method suggested to achieve this aim is out of sync. They fear that a price cap imposed on a product can make it unprofitable for its manufacturers to sell and hence they may end up pulling it out of the market.

The apprehensions are not unfounded. According to media reports, hygiene product makers have said they will have to stop pushing premium value-added products and innovations within segments such as sanitary napkins, hand washes, disinfectants and adult diapers if the government puts a cap on their prices.

According to these companies, premium items though they are costly to manufacture compared with basic versions are still being sold at lower margins. This is unlike the practice adopted by pharmaceutical companies that use similar technology and raw materials but have different pricing. These manufacturers argue that the analogy with pharmaceutical companies hence is not valid for hygiene products. Moreover, the companies must be profitable to be able to spend on advertising, new launches and even innovation. The margin on such products is not very high since these are nascent categories and the focus of the companies is on promoting usage by squeezing margins. Also, it is still not clear whether all price points will be covered. Using cheaper raw materials to maintain pricing is also not an option as this will impact the quality of the products.

The government is in the process of revisiting the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) to make relevant additions and omissions and is also preparing separate lists for medical devices, disposables and hygiene products, according to media reports. Currently, the government regulates prices of about 384 essential medicines, including medical devices such as stents, by imposing a cap on their maximum retail price.

Some experts raise the example of coronary stents used in heart surgeries to caution the government against price cap on hygiene products. According to reports, makers of specialized and other premium stents withdrew their products from the market in response to a state-ordered price ceiling, as selling at lower rates was not commercially viable. As a result, according to medical sources, patients who need superior stents have to now rely on cheaper alternatives and risk exposing themselves to health complications.

IMAGE: PIXABAY

Paswan Pitches For One Nation, One Standard To Ensure Quality Products

UNION MINISTER RAM Vilas Paswan recently called for "One Nation, One Standard" on the lines of "One Nation, One Constitution" and "One Nation, One Ration Card". The minister said it was time to ensure that consumers had access to quality products across the country. Paswan is the Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution. He was chairing a meeting on the standard formation process of Bureau of India Standard and their enforcement with senior

IMAGE: PIXABAY

As regards the price cap on drugs, drugs manufacturers can raise prices by up to 10% annually for their products. There is also a cap of 30% on trade margins for 42 cancer drugs. Media reports that prices of adult diapers and feminine hygiene products in India are among the lowest in the world. Hence, companies manufacturing these are not making exorbitant profit in an open market. However, these products can be priced higher at institutions and hospitals, where these can be classified as essentials and patients may end up paying more due to monopoly of these hospitals.

Lowering prices can have a counterproductive effect in discretionary product segments as demonstrated about six years ago when the government brought condoms in the list of essential medicines and fixed their ceiling price in the Drug Pricing Control Order (DPCO). Instead of promoting sales, the price cap led to declining sales of the contraceptive as companies lowered marketing spends and halted innovations. In 2017, it led the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), an expert committee set up by India's drug pricing regulator, to the decision that prices for prophylactics be fixed in two broad categories — ordinary condoms and those with special features.

If the government goes about setting arbitrary maximum retail price, it would make manufacturing of innovative products that use expensive input materials unprofitable. If premium choices vanish from the shelves, it would spell a net welfare loss for Indians. For the poor who can barely afford the cheapest available sanitary pads, the government must find other ways. Indian pricing policy in short needs clarity on outcomes.

Currently, the government regulates prices of about 384 essential medicines, including medical devices such as stents, by imposing a cap on their maximum retail price.

Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution was chairing a meeting on the standard formation process of Bureau of Indian Standard

officials from 14 ministries. The meeting discussed how standards are set and what can be done to make their implementation better. Paswan exhorted that similar to 'One Nation One Constitution' and 'One Nation One Ration Card' there should be 'One Nation One Standard," an official release said.

According to the release, the meeting was held with all stakeholders, regulators and officials to review the process of making standards and also deliberate on improving the implementation and enforcement of the set standards.

The minister urged all stakeholders to come forward with their suggestions and inputs in this regard. He reiterated that the purpose of setting standards and enforcing them is not intended to bring back "inspector raj'" but to ensure that quality products are made available for all consumers across the country.

The minister said that Indian standards should be set in accordance with global benchmarks and just like other countries enforce their standards on imported products, similarly, foreign goods coming into India should also comply with Indian standards. He said that this should be done on a reciprocal basis for international goods and called for a system for effective monitoring and checking to ensure that they are effectively enforced.

According to media reports, Consumer Affairs Secretary Avinash K Srivastava said that detailed discussions were held on "One Nation, One Standard" and for that it is important that BIS is empowered.

Reports also quoted DK Paul, member of NITI Aayog, as saying that the top policy-making body was currently working on a draft Medical Devices Bill which will help to tackle the problem of nonstandard medical devices coming into the market. He stated that devices of 23 categories are regulated and notified under drugs and the attempt is to do this on a comprehensive scale.

He added that the standard set for bulletproof jackets in India is higher than global benchmarks and India is only the fourth in the world to have such a standard after the USA, Germany and UK. Paul added that the standard has been set after due consultations with stakeholders and it is now being exported to several countries under the "Make in India" initiative.

Romania Raises Concern Over Dual Quality Food Products

Identically marketed products found to be different in composition or characteristic

ROMANIA CONSUMER WATCHDOG, National Authority for Consumer Protection (ANPC) in September raised concerns that food giant Nestle was deliberately manufacturing dual quality products with unequal nutritional and compositional profiles for the Romanian market. It investigated the issue on the suspicion that the identically marketed products are in fact different in composition or characteristic. It investigated 79 products marketed in both Romania and other Member States of the European Union and found that 18 were either different in composition, proportion of ingredients used in the product or nutritional value declared for the product.

Earlier in June, the European Commission had published the results of a pan-European testing campaign of food products and had shown that some of the products though identically or similarly branded had different composition. The Commission had analyzed around 1,400 food products in 19 EU countries. The study had found 9% of the compared products differed in composition, although the front-of-pack was identical and 22% of products with a different composition but a similar front-of-pack.

Dual quality food refers to products that are marketed and sold in an identical or similar manner front-of -pack but differ significantly in composition or characteristics.

One of the products that the ANPC found with differences was Nestea Lemon. In Romania the company was using a recipe different from Spain. The product being marketed in Romania used 0.08% tea extract with sugar and fructose but in Spain the extract was 0.1% and had sugar only. Another product with marked differences was Nescafe 2in1 (Original). The proportion of instant coffee present in the product was found to be 14.5% in Romania, 10% in France 9% in the Netherlands and 7.9% in Germany and Spain.

But it is not just Nestle that is under fire. ANPC also studied the products of dairy giant Danone, The Coca Cola Company and Mondelez. Danone's Activa Nature, calcium accounted for 121% of the recommended dietary allowance (RDA), in Finland it was 168% RDA and in Poland 148% RDA.

Fanta marketed by The Coca Cola Company had just 5% orange juice in Romania while it was 12% in Italy, 10% in France and 8% in Spain.

Mondelez's Milka Whole Hazelnuts had 17% hazelnuts in Romania while in Germany it was 20% and in France 22%.

These are just some of the findings. Many MNCs pursue this hidden policy with their products in developing countries. India should also carry out a similar exercise to find out how widely is this agenda being practiced in India. ◗

Source: Secondary research & media reports

Consumers, Beware

Fake Food News: TIME TO TEST THE VERACITY

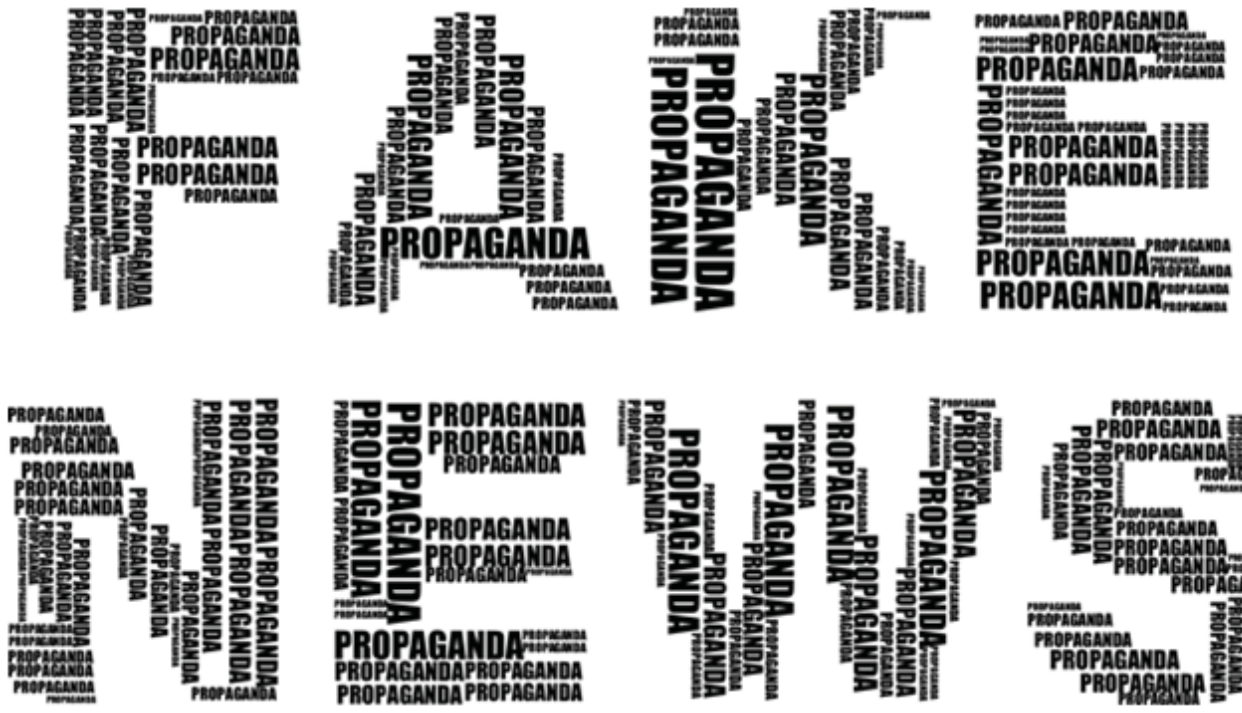


PHOTO: PIXABAY

Consumer ignorance regarding food is the root cause of fake news about food going viral and whipping up misplaced sentiments and concerns

IN THIS AGE of fake online content – WhatsApp videos and messages, Facebook posts, Twitter posts – you name it and it is there; as a consumer of not just product and services but also all this content, we need to be careful. Fake food videos and fake food alarms are a new constant. Such is the widespread practice that the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) had to launch a campaign to safeguard consumers against rampant misinformation. The government had to order Google and Facebook to take down 'false and malicious' content aimed at spreading canard about the safety and quality of food in India.

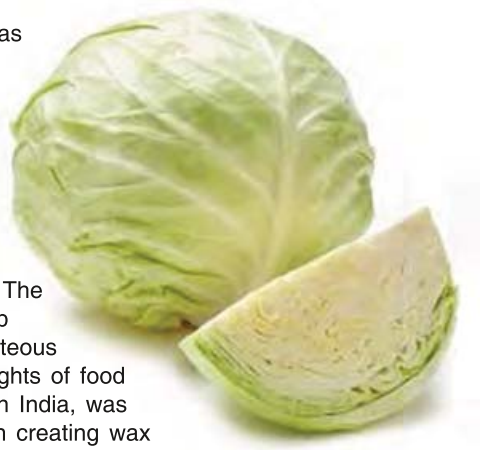
Some of the propaganda against food defied all belief.

For example, a viral news item claimed that the FSSAI CEO had permitted the use of melamine in milk. These reports also quoted a WHO advisory purportedly claiming that 87 percent of Indian citizens could be victims of serious diseases like cancer by the year 2025, if this adulteration of milk went unchecked. FSSAI later stated that no such advisory had been issued by WHO. In a worst oversight from the media, neither FSSAI nor WHO were approached before publishing this false piece of news.

Frooti, a popular juice-based drink that children love was another victim of a smear campaign. The message purportedly from the Delhi police warned people that a Frooti plant worker suffering from HIV/AIDS had added his contaminated blood to a batch of Frooti drinks. The message warned people to shun Frooti as no one knew which batch was contaminated.

The Delhi police refuted sending out any such warnings and the source of this message remains unknown. Parle Agro, the makers of Frooti also came out with a statement denying any such misdoing by any of its workers.

PHOTO: PIXABAY



Plastic cabbage was another scare that defied all sanity. A mobile video that went viral after some media houses picked it up showed a man shaping cabbage out of some substance in a bowl. The video that whipped up citizens' fury and righteous indignation at the heights of food contamination news in India, was actually that of a man creating wax cabbages in Japan for display outside restaurants, a common practice. The origin of this message was Ambala and the video in fact was a few years old.

Kurkure, a popular packaged savory came under the lens too with rumors that it contained plastic. The video showed a Kurkure stick burning when lit with a match and leaving a black sooty residue. PepsiCo, the owners of the brand, had to take legal action and a court order against Facebook asking it to censor all posts linking Kurkure to plastic. The explanation for burning Kurkure: It is fried at high temperatures forming a compound called acrylamide during the process which makes the final product burning turn black due to the unburnt carbon particles.

Then came the curious case of plastic rice. Twitter and Facebook were rife with rumors that rice in parts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana was plastic. The rumors were unsubstantiated as no lab could detect the presence of plastic rice. Rice Traders Association also issued a denial explaining that it was more expensive to manufacture plastic rice than grow paddy and hence it was simply unfeasible.

Twitter and Facebook were rife with rumors that rice in parts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana was plastic. The rumors were unsubstantiated as no lab could detect the presence of plastic rice.

Sabudana was another culprit of this misinformation campaign. An email campaign claimed that sabudana roots were processed in Salem district of Tamil Nadu. The claim was that roots were allowed to rot for many months in water, giving out a foul smell and a breeding ground of insects that were all ground together with the roots to make sabudana. Obviously, this was a vegetarian's worst nightmare especially as sabudana is eaten during religious fasts in India. The truth: It is true that the roots of the plant have to be washed as they contain toxins and the smell comes from the dumped fibers after the starch has been removed for making sabudana pearls. The plant has low shelf life and there is no question of leaving it to rot and breed insects.

A viral news item claimed that the FSSAI CEO had permitted the use of melamine in milk. These reports also quoted a WHO advisory purportedly claiming that 87 percent of Indian citizens could be victims of serious diseases like cancer by the year 2025, if this adulteration of milk went unchecked.

Fake news about food is rampant in India because of the ignorance of the consumers regarding the food that they eat. We are an emotive nation, and food especially has a high power of whipping of emotions. From making up stories to warn kids off sugary drinks to fictionalizing food facts to make people abstain from certain kinds of food, there is a lot of mythmaking attached to food. This is compounded by the lack of documented knowledge of those people who directly work with food. This gives rise to speculation on the part of the people regarding food. Adding to this ignorance about food is our growing disconnection from food production. Apart from textbook knowledge in schools, not many of us have taken an interest in it. Further food is now curated, packaged and sold either ready to eat or ready to cook. Gone are the days when our mothers would sieve rice and wheat, weed out the insects, wash and then grind it or cook it. We are divorced from the messy realities of food. Due to our modernized lifestyle we have perforce reposed our trust in the manufacturers and retailers of food. But this is not complete trust and hence any hint of wrongdoing and we pounce on it. This gives credence to the fake food news.

As consumers we need to beware as to where we must draw the line between fake and true.

Source: Secondary research & media reports

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A Comprehensive

Infrastructure

India's quality infrastructure is comparable to the best around the globe

INDIA'S QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE comprising prevailing systems for standardization, technical regulations, conformity assessment and support activities, is quite vast. The standards process in the country is largely government led and the majority of voluntary products and services related standards are published by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). There are, however, other specialist bodies that develop and publish standards in their domain areas. Standards are also published by some large public-sector organizations for their own use. Some of the important bodies part of the quality infrastructure are:

National standards body

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) was established under an Act of Parliament (The Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 1986, revised as The Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016) and is the National Standards Body of the country. Only standards published by BIS have the status of Indian Standards. The BIS follows the Code of Good Practice for the preparation, adoption and application of standards (Article 4 of WTO-TBT Agreement, Annex 3)'. It has 14 Division Councils that have in turn established over 650 Technical Committees that work on standards development. Many of these committees act as shadow or mirror committees of their international counterparts at the ISO/IEC.

Regulatory standards

Technical regulations are notified by regulatory bodies. These are developed either through specific technical requirements developed through consultative processes undertaken by the regulatory bodies or relevant Indian or other standards are adopted by them. However, when Indian standards are adopted, the regulatory body is involved in the work of the technical committee responsible for the development of the related standards. Stakeholders are also involved in the development of technical regulations or adoption of standards either through structured committees or through wide stakeholder consultation. Prior notification of the draft regulations in the form of public notifications as well as the WTO TBT/SPS notifications is done by all technical regulators. Relevant committees are also instituted in areas as food safety to carry out scientific risk evaluation.

Occupational standards

India's occupational standards is known as National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) and is a competency-based framework notified by the Ministry of Skills Development and Entrepreneurship development. It provides certification to individuals for vocational competencies. The National Skills Qualifications Committee (NSQC) is the implementing agency of NSQF and is responsible for approving National Occupational Standards (NOS) and Quality Packs (QPs). The NOS specify the standard of performance, knowledge and understanding of a particular activity in the workplace. Each NOS defines one key function in a job role. NOSs are developed by notified Sector Skills Council.

International Affiliations

BIS has set up National Mirror Committees to shadow the work of ISO, CASCO and COPOLCO. The IEC National Committee of India has its secretariat at the Bureau of Indian Standards and is a member of the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). Department of Telecommunications under the Ministry of Communications is the nodal agency for coordinating with ITU from India. Several Indian industry members and associations are also members of ITU. The National Codex Contact Point (NCCP) for India, Codex India, is located at Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare).

Recognition of Standards Developing organizations

The Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016 provides for accreditation of Standards Developing Organizations (SDOs). However, the Rules for the accreditation have not yet been notified. The Quality Council of India (QCI) has published a voluntary Scheme for Accreditation of SDOS.

Overseas Standards Bodies present in India

There are several overseas standards organizations with Indian offices in the country They help Indian industry in adoption of their standards in order to meet international trade obligations. Some of the notable ones are:

- Seconded European Standardization Expert in India (SESEI) set up by the European Standardization Organizations CEN, CENELEC and ETSI
- American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME)
- International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO)
- IEEE
- IEEE American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers

Indian voluntary Standards development organizations

BIS: Among the Indian voluntary standards development organizations, BIS is the most prominent one. It has published standards in all subjects excluding drugs & pharmaceuticals, environmental (ambient & emission)

norms, grading of agricultural products. More than 15000 standards have been published by it. BIS functions under the aegis of Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Government of India.

Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)

APEDA was established under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act passed by Parliament in December 1985. The Act (2 of 1986) came into effect from 13 February 1986. Some of the major functions of APEDA include:

- Development of industries relating to the scheduled products for export by way of providing financial assistance or otherwise for undertaking surveys and feasibility studies, participation in enquiry capital through joint ventures and other reliefs and subsidy schemes
- Registration of persons as exporters of the scheduled products on payment of such fees as may be prescribed
- Fixing of standards and specifications for the scheduled products for the purpose of exports
- Carrying out inspection of meat and meat products in slaughterhouses, processing plants, storage premises, conveyances or other places where such products are kept or handled for the purpose of ensuring the quality of such products
- Improving of packaging of the scheduled products and marketing of the scheduled products outside India
- Promotion of export-oriented production and development of the scheduled products

APEDA is also responsible for standards for organic production and systems (under the National Program for Organic Production (NPOP).

Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE): BEE was set up by the Government of India under the provisions of the EC Act, 2001. Its primary objective is to reduce energy intensity of the Indian economy. It has been engaged in developing energy performance standards for appliances and Energy Conservation Building Code. One of the major thrust areas of BEE is the Standards and Labeling Scheme (S&L) which was launched in May 2006. The objective of S&L is to provide consumers an informed choice about energy saving and thereby cost saving potential of relevant marketed products.

Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO): CDSCO is the Central Drug Authority for discharging functions assigned to the central government under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 2008. The chief functions of CDSCO include approval of new drugs and clinical trials, laying down the standards for drugs, control over the quality of imported drugs and coordination of the activities of State Drug Control Organizations. It also is mandated to provide expert advice with a view to bring about uniformity in the enforcement of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB): CPCB is a statutory organization. It provides technical services to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MOEFCC) under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. CPCB also advises the central government on any matter concerning prevention and control of water and air pollution and improvement of the quality of air. It lays down standards for the quality of air, water quality criteria from different sources, emission norms for vehicles, emission norms and sound levels for diesel engines and generator sets. It also prepares manuals, codes and guidelines relating to treatment and disposal of sewage and trade effluents as well as for stack gas cleaning devices, stacks and ducts. CPCB takes up development/revision of environmental standards, upgradation of Comprehensive Industrial Document (COINDS) and guidelines for environmental management in various industrial sectors.

Directorate of Marketing and Inspection (DMI) - AGMARK: Headed by the Agricultural Marketing Advisor, Department of Agriculture & Co-operation (DAC), DMI is responsible for implementing agricultural marketing policies and programs of the Government of India. It undertakes standardization, grading and quality control of agricultural and allied produce. Standards of various agricultural commodities prescribed under the provision of the Agricultural Produce (Grading & Marking) Act, 1937 are popularly called AGMARK standards. AGMARK standards differentiate between quality and 2-3 grades are prescribed for each commodity. DMI develops and publishes its AGMARK standards for different agricultural and allied produce in the form of Grading & Marking Rules of the commodities

under the scheme for Promotion of Standardization and Grading of Agricultural and Allied Produce. So far 222 commodities have been formulated and notified under the Agricultural Produce (G&M) Act 1937.

Export Inspection Council (EIC): The Government of India set up EIC in order to ensure sound development of export trade of India through quality control and inspection and related matters. EIC recognizes the national standards of the importing countries/international standards provided that such specifications are not below the minimum standard specification prescribed in the order/notification issued by Government of India for the product.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI): FSSAI is under the administrative jurisdiction of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India. It has been established under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, consolidating several legacy acts and orders related to food that were earlier handled in various ministries and departments under a single legislation. FSSAI:

- Oversees the entire food chain (farm to table)
- Provides assurance that only safe foods are placed in the market
- Relies on data-based intelligence of surveillance and monitoring – hence its predictive and preventive control system
- Promotes shared responsibility with food business by linking them to Public Health goals
- Enables compliance through improvement notices and by addressing training gaps
- Science based standards – minimum effective regulations

FSSAI achieves this through a safety assessment process and by establishing risk assessed standards and guidelines through the supply chain, namely production, manufacturing, import distribution and sale. Several bodies whose roles and functions are mandated under the FSSAI Act, 2006 work collaboratively under a scientific risk assessment framework.

Indian Road Congress (IRC): This is the apex body of highway engineers established by the Government of India. IRC works in close collaboration with Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH). The principal objectives of IRC are to provide a national forum for regular pooling of experience and ideas on all matters concerned with the construction and maintenance of highways, to recommend standard specifications and to provide a platform for the expression of professional opinion on matters relating to roads and road transport.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC): MoEFCC is the nodal agency for the planning, promotion, coordination and overseeing the implementation of policies and programmes for conservation of natural resources including lakes and rivers, biodiversity, forests and wildlife, ensuring the welfare of animals, and the prevention and abatement of pollution. While implementing these policies and programmes, the Ministry is guided by the principle of sustainable development and enhancement of human well-being and also a set of policies.

National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB): NMPB was set-up in November 2000 by the Government of India. Its primary mandate is coordinating all matters related to medicinal plants, support policies and programs for growth of trade, export, conservation and cultivation. The Board is located in the Department of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha & Homeopathy (AYUSH) of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. NMBP has developed the two India specific guideline voluntary standards on the pattern of Good Agriculture and Field Collection Practices (GACPs) developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) for medicinal plants – NMPB-GAPMP-01(FD) Standard for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and NMPB-GFCP-01(FD) - Standard for Good Field Collection Practices (GFCP). In collaboration with the Quality Council of India (QCI), it has launched a Voluntary Certification Scheme for Medicinal Plant Produce (VCSMPP).

Quality Council of India (QCI): QCI is a society registered under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860. It was set up to establish an accreditation structure in the country. QCI. It has developed the standards mainly for accreditation in two areas:

- Hospitals and other health care service organizations
- Educational Institutions

Tea Board: Tea Board India functions as a statutory body of the central government under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Department of Commerce. The objects of the Board are, inter alia, to regulate the production and cultivation of tea in India, to encourage research, to regulate the sale and export of tea, to provide training in tea testing and fixing grade standards of tea, and improving the marketing of tea in India and abroad through Tea (Marketing) Control Order, 2003 and the Tea (Distribution & Export) Control Order, 2005.

There are also three dedicated standardization bodies.

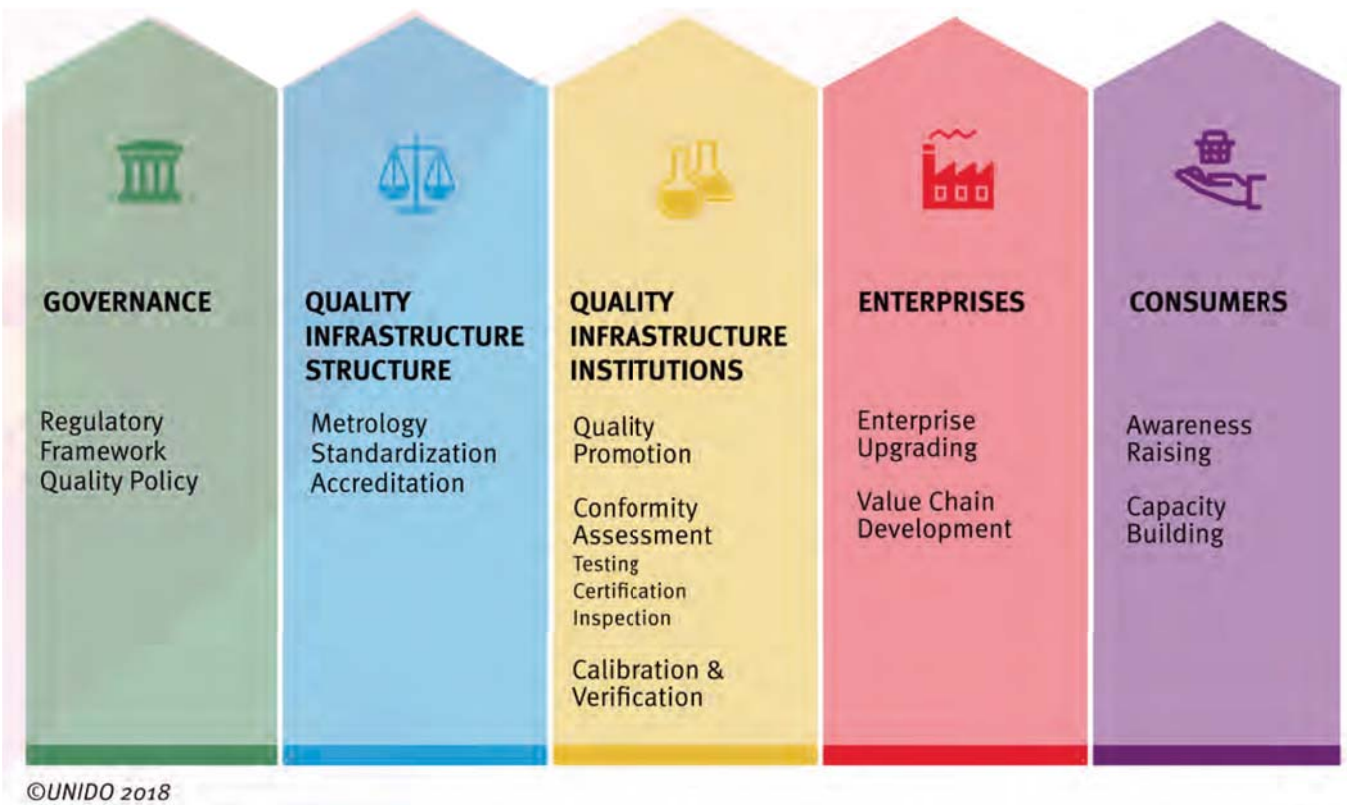
Directorate of Standardisation (DoS) – Ministry of Defence: DoS was established on 26 June 1962 under DRDO with the objective of controlling items proliferation within the defence services. DoS is responsible for conducting standardization activities in all fields in Ministry of Defence under the control of Department of Defence Production within the broad policies formulated by Standardization Committee. The Directorate's nine Defence Standardisation Cells and three Defence Standardization Detachments maintain a close liaison with all the concerned stakeholders to progress the codification and standardization activities.

IPSS Secretariat: It was created in 1975 to carry out the standardization work with a view to overcoming the difficulties arising from different set of standards used in different units of Steel Authority of India limited (SAIL), IISCO, TISCO, MECON, HEC, BHEL, and DASTURCO for the same equipment & hardware installed in these plants during that time.

Research Designs & Standards Organization: It is the sole R&D organization of Indian Railways working under the Ministry of Railways of India, which functions as a technical adviser to the Railway Board, the Zonal railways and the Railway production units in respect of design and standardization of railway equipment. To enforce standardization and coordination amongst various railway systems, RDSO take up for preparation of designs, standards and specifications. As a policy RDSO develops standards for those materials and products that will be used by Indian Railways only.

Source: Secondary research & media reports

QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEM

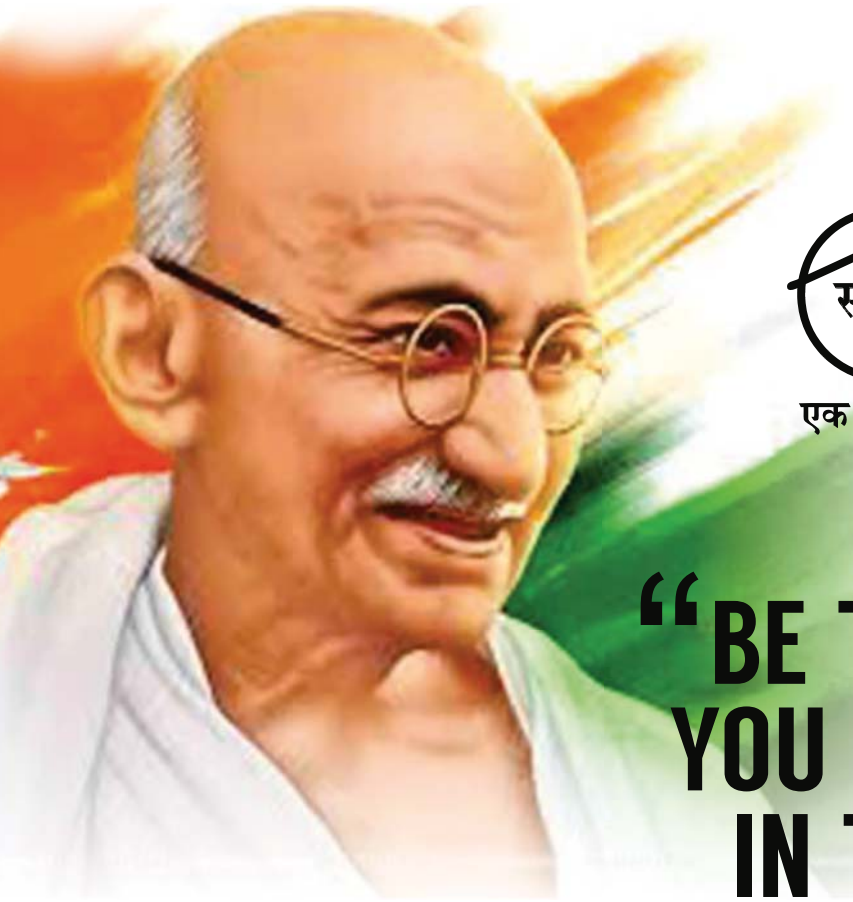


Consumer Conexion

Consumer Online Foundation

PATIENT SAFETY AND ACCESS INITIATIVE OF INDIA FOUNDATION
a Partnership for Safe Medicines India Initiative

Healthy You Foundation



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BASMATI

The Queen Needs Quality

Quality concerns around basmati rice are not new. Stringent quality parameters are set to hit its exports to Saudi Arabia. It is time to rescue the queen from ignominy

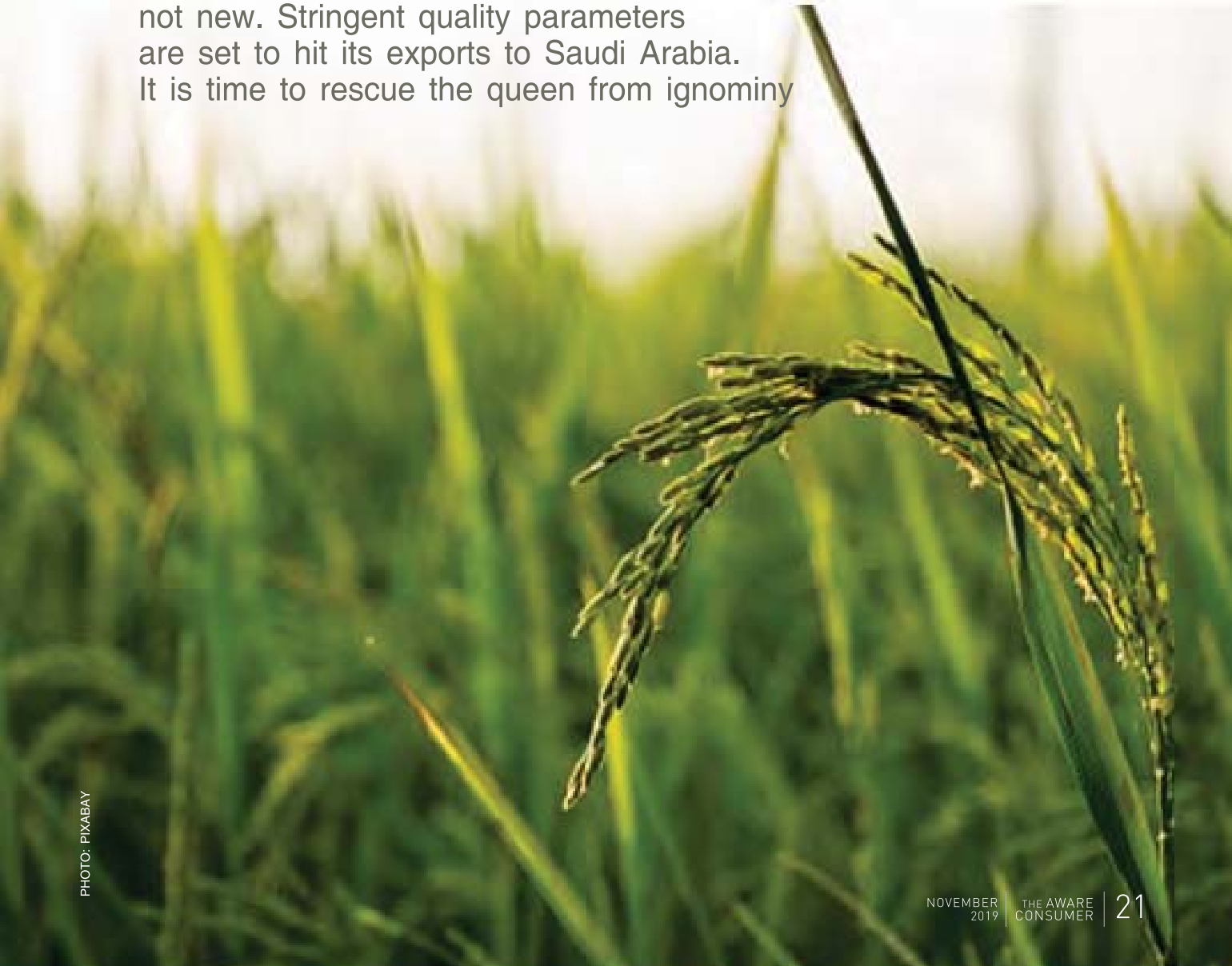


PHOTO: PIXABAY

INDIA'S RICE EXPORTS to Saudi Arabia received a huge setback recently with the latter imposing new quality certification rules for imported rice. From September 1, it is mandatory for each rice consignment to be accompanied by a Certificate of Conformity (COC) as mandated by the Saudi Food & Drug Authority (SFDA), its quality regulator. Indian rice exporters who were looking for a new market post US sanctions on Iran, now estimate rice exports to Saudi Arabia will witness a sharp decline from 2020 due to the stringent quality rules.

The exporters say that getting COC is not easy. Also, many exporters may be unable to meet the requirements laid down for COC certification.

Indian basmati exports to Saudi Arabia have been showing a declining trend and came down to below 20 percent in financial year 2018-19 from 26 percent in 2014-15.

Notably, India is a leading exporter of basmati rice to the global market. During 2016–17, the country exported 4,000,471.56 MT of basmati rice, worth Rs 21,604.58 crore (or US$3,230.24 million).

Basmati, the Queen

Basmati rice has been at the center of a storm over the years. It took India a battle in the WTO court over basmati patent to bring it back to India. From February 5, 2016, basmati rice became a registered GI (geographical indication) product and Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) the registered proprietor of the GI. It made APEDA the agency responsible for instituting a system for administration of GI and authentication of basmati rice. But how to distinguish genuine basmati from the pretenders to the throne?

Some time ago, Consumer Voice had undertaken an elaborate testing of 12 basmati rice brands in India. Basmati rice is grown in specific areas in the country and is renowned for its long grain and aroma. Since the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has no specific standard for basmati rice, and Agmark has standards for Dehradun and Saharanpur-grown basmati rice as well for basmati rice of export quality only.

It is a common practice for traders to mix inferior quality rice with basmati to increase their profitability. The lab tests threw up these differences amid the 12 brands. The tests were conducted at an NABL-accredited laboratory and as per requirements specified in Agmark rules (cereals grading & marking rules) and FSS regulations for rice.

According to the Consumer Voice study report, a crucial aspect of the test program was DNA analysis of the samples to detect any adulteration with non-basmati rice. The quality parameters included grain length/breadth ratio, average precooked grain length and elongation ratio. The samples were also checked for presence of broken and fragments grains, damaged/discolored grains, chalky grains, green grains, other grains, moisture, uric acid, aflatoxins and foreign matter (such as dust and stones). A major health-related parameter was presence of the heavy metals lead and arsenic, as well as pesticide residues.

In the absence of specific standards for domestic trade of basmati rice, the test took Agmark standards for export quality as benchmark standard for evaluation of the brands. However, none of the tested brands had Agmark grading.

Since none of the 12 brands had taken Agmark or declared their grade/origin of harvest, Consumer Voice considered the highest tolerance limit specified in Agmark standard – 20 per cent for Grade B. As per Agmark standard, in basmati rice (for Dehradun area) any non-basmati rice including red grains shall be a maximum 1.0 per cent, 2.0 per cent and 4.0 per cent for special, A and B grades, respectively; for Saharanpur area it shall be a maximum 3.0 per cent, 7.0 per cent and 10.0 per cent for special, A and B grades, respectively. For export quality, other rice including red grains in basmati rice shall be a maximum 10 per cent, 15 per cent and 20 per cent for special, A and B grades, respectively.

DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) testing was conducted for the brands to determine purity of the rice brand. DNA test can detect adulteration of non-basmati rice with inferior varieties of rice. The presence of common varieties of rice in basmati rice should not exceed limits prescribed in Agmark and the criteria had a weightage of 25/100 in Consumer Voice ranking. Only Golden

IMAGE: AMAZON.IN

Eating Basmati Rice Reduces Your Chances Of Diabetes.

Harvest and Lal Qilla scored full marks (25/25) as pure basmati as they had no trace of any other variety. All other brands were contaminated with a share of non-basmati rice varying from a low of 2.8 percent (Patanjali) to a high of 36.6 percent (Kohinoor).

Consumer Voice carried out 16 different tests to measure different physiochemical characteristics including quality of grains, energy and nutrition content, uric acid and aflatoxins among others. Safety tests included test for lead and arsenic as well as 37 pesticides. All the brands were within safe limits. The brand Organic Tattva contained pretilachlor pesticide which demolished its claim of being organic.

The 12 brands also underwent a sensory test conducted by an expert panel. For this, rice was boiled, and experts assigned scores out of 12 based on fragrance/ aroma, appearance, size of kernel, color, texture and taste. Tilda scored the highest at 10.49/12 while Heritage got the lowest of 7.8/12. Brands were also scored for packing, marking and net weight.

Consumer Voice does comparative tests based on ISO Guide 46 and Guideline of Consumer International. The modus operandi includes buying samples for the test from retail shops; informing manufacturers of test criteria prior to tests and the test results once they are out; and giving them an opportunity to object to the test results. The results are published only after giving due consideration to the objections of manufacturers.

In this test, Golden Harvest and Lal Qila (92/100 each) brands scored the highest followed by Patanjali (89/100), Tilda (88/100) and Asbah and India Gate (87/100 each). The lowest rankings were for Fortune (62/100) and Kohinoor (63/100). Rest of the brands were rated in between: Daawat (84/100), Organic Tattva (82/100), Aeroplane (81/100) and Heritage (76/100).

Golden and Lal Qilla were adjudged as top quality and Patanjali was adjudged as best value for money brand.

Source: Secondary research & media reports

CODEX

A Code For Consumer Food Safety

With 189 Member countries, Codex is a powerful standard on food safety issues and methods aimed at protecting the health of consumers. Though many among the members digress from the Codex standards, there is a growing global acceptance that could benefit the consumers at large

PHOTO: PIXABAY

NOT THAT LONG ago, food was mainly produced, sold and consumed locally. International food trade has existed for thousands of years, but it is only in the last century that the volume of food traded internationally has grown exponentially.

International food trade hence involves the movement large quantum and variety of food across the globe. This makes food trade a complex, technical and administrative operation. Modern logistics and technology have made it possible to transport a wide variety of food over long distances and since food production is scientifically based, it has made it possible for food to arrive at its destination in a wholesome condition, without an appreciable loss of quality. Also, consumers across the world can now access a vast variety of high-quality food in greater quantities than before.

However, this in itself is not an assurance of food quality for consumers worldwide. Herein Codex standards come into play. Codex makes consumers trust the safety and quality of the food products they buy. For importers too, Codex standards are an insurance that the food they are importing will be in accordance with their specifications.

The WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) provides the basic framework and standards for food safety, animal and plant health standards. According to a report in Financial Express online, the agreement though allows countries to frame own standards, emphasizes that the regulations must have a scientific justification, i.e. regulations should be implemented only to the extent necessary to protect animal, human or plant life or health.

The agreement also states that any such standards must not unjustifiably discriminate between countries where identical or similar conditions prevail. Further, though member countries may preferably use international standards, guidelines and recommendations, they can also use measures that result in higher

PHOTO: PIXABAY

standards if there is a requisite scientific justification. Besides, they can set higher standards based on an appropriate assessment of risks so long as the approach is consistent, not arbitrary.

However, the question here is which standards are practised globally for implementing food safety? Is it the Codex standards or individual country's standards?

What is Codex?

Codex Alimentarius International food safety standards are referred under the SPS agreement for practising and designing trade polices as these are scientifically justified.

The Codex process is an elaborate system involving international input and scientific support from expert panels. Codex food safety standards are designed to guide countries on standards and regulations to protect public health within their respective territories and promote fair practices in food trade.

It is the CODEX ALIMENTARIUS international food standards, guidelines and codes of practice that are supposed to ensure the safety, quality and fairness of international food trade. Food and Agriculture organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) coordinate these efforts internationally.

A Latin term, "Codex Alimentarius" means "food code". Codex standards comprise international food texts, i.e. standards, codes of practice, codes of hygienic practice, guidelines and other recommendations, established to protect the health of the consumers and to ensure fair practices in the food trade. The collection of food standards and related texts adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission is known as the Codex Alimentarius.

Codex Alimentarius Commission

The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) was established in 1962 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) to implement the joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Program. The purpose of the Program is to protect the health of consumers, ensure fair practices in the food trade and coordinate international food standardization work. The CAC is an intergovernmental body, with 189 Codex Members made up of 188 Member Countries and 1 Member Organization (The European Union). India became a member of Codex Alimentarius in 1964.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission is entrusted with the

PHOTO: PIXABAY

A Latin term, "Codex Alimentarius" means "food code". Codex standards comprise international food texts, established to protect the health of the consumers and to ensure fair practices in the food trade.

responsibility to establish sound internationally agreed guidelines for national food control systems. These guidelines are based on the criteria of consumer health protection and fair practices in trade and have been developed keeping in mind the needs and special concerns of all countries. The Commission provides a forum for member nations to meet and discuss ideas and information relevant to food safety and trade issues with the objective to elaborate food standards in order to facilitate international trade.

Several significant issues, vital to fulfilling the objectives of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, namely, protecting the health of consumers, ensuring food safety and promoting fair global trade practices are under discussion across several Codex Committees.

The Codex Alimentarius includes standards for all the principal foods, whether processed, semi-processed or raw, for distribution to the consumer. It requires that materials for further processing into foods should be included to the extent necessary to achieve the purposes of the Codex Alimentarius as defined. Provisions in respect of food hygiene, food additives, residues of pesticides and veterinary drugs, contaminants, labelling and presentation, methods of analysis and sampling, and import and export inspection and certification also come under its purview.

However, Codex standards and related texts are not a substitute for, or alternative to national legislation. Every country's laws and administrative procedures contain provisions with which it must comply.

Codex standards and related texts are basically requirements for food aimed at ensuring for the consumer a safe, wholesome food product free from adulteration, correctly labelled and presented.

Importantly, Codex standards and related texts are voluntary in nature. They need to be translated into national legislation or regulations in order to be enforceable.

National Codex Committee

In India, the National Codex Committee has been constituted by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India for liaising with the CAC. The core functions of the NCC include:

- Advising government on the implications of various food standardization, food quality and safety issues and on work undertaken by the CAC so that national economic interest is taken into account, or considered, when international standards are discussed;
- Providing important inputs to the government to assist in ensuring quality and safety of food to the consumers, while at the same time maximizing the opportunities for development of industry and expansion of international trade;
- Appointing Shadow Committees on subject matters related to the corresponding Codex Committees to assist in the study or consideration of technical matters; and
- Meeting as and when necessary to formulate national position.

Conclusion

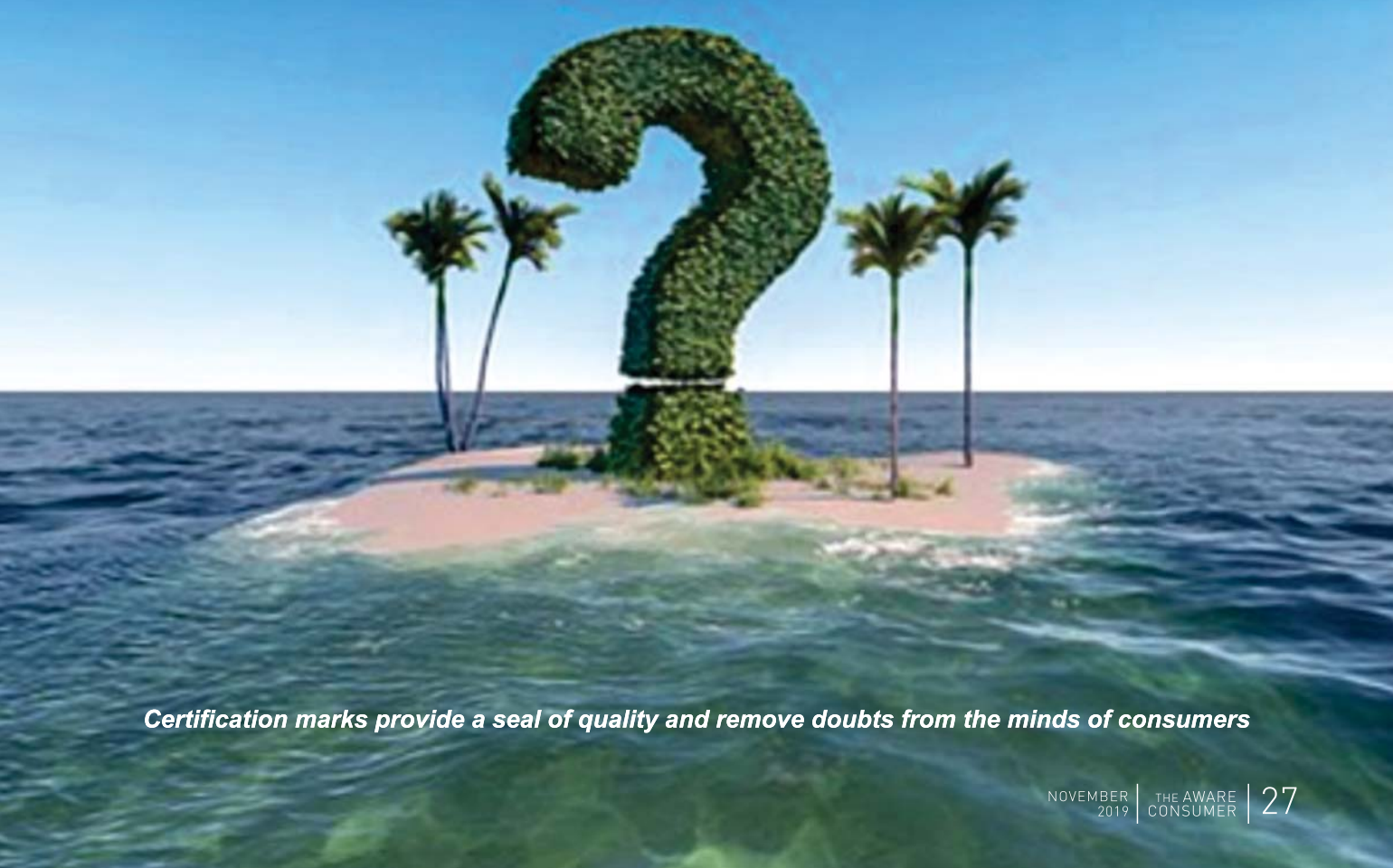
Harmonization in products can be achieved when all countries adopt same standards. The General Principles of the Codex Alimentarius only specify the ways in which member countries may “accept” Codex standards.

However, there is an emerging interest in all Codex activities among countries and this indicates a global acceptance of the Codex philosophy, embracing harmonization, consumer protection and facilitation of international trade; even though in practice, for many countries it is difficult to accept such standards in the statutory sense. Notwithstanding these, countries are increasingly aligning their national food standards, or parts of them (especially those relating to safety), with those of the Codex Alimentarius.

Source: Secondary research & media reports

Marks Of Safety

Different certification marks have been devised by the government to ensure consumers get quality products. It just needs a little effort on part of the citizens to safeguard their rights



Certification marks provide a seal of quality and remove doubts from the minds of consumers

WHAT DOES CERTIFICATION mark on a product mean to you? For many of us, these marks of quality are meaningless. Firstly, not many of us are aware what these mean and secondly, we are busy or lazy to be bothered. However, with quality not just of products but of life itself, of environment that we live in, air that we breathe and the water that we drink, suspect, it is time that we learnt about the standards and certifications and how they impact our lives and the planet.

There exists a certain standard for almost every product in the market to ensure quality goods to the consumers. They serve the purpose of minimizing health threats, protect the environment, and promote internal and international trade, among others. Certifications also provide an idea of the environmental impact, quality, safety and hygiene, production standards, the absence of additives or preservatives, etc.

A certification mark does much more. It tells us of the nature or origin of the goods or services, i.e. the region or location or origin, materials of construction, method or mode of manufacture or provision, quality assurance, accuracy of the goods or services or any definable characteristic of the goods or services, and even manufacture or provision of services by members of a union or other organization to certain standards.

What does certification mark do? It indicates that certain standards have been met.

Section 2(1) (e) of Indian Trade Marks Act defines a certification mark as "a mark capable of distinguishing the goods or services in connection with which it is used in the course of trade which are certified by the proprietor of the mark in respect of origin, material, mode of manufacture of goods or performance of services, quality, accuracy or other characteristics from goods or services not so certified".

Primarily, a certification mark on a product may tell us:

- The existence of a product certification agreement between the manufacturer and an organization with national accreditation for both testing and certification
- Legal evidence that the product was successfully tested in accordance with a nationally accredited standard
- Legal assurance that the accredited certification organization has ensured that the product that was successfully tested is identical to that which is being offered for sale
- Legal assurance that the successful test has resulted in a certification listing, which is considered public information and sets out the tolerances and conditions of use for the certified product, to enable compliance with the law through listing and approval use and compliance
- Legal assurance that the manufacturer is being regularly audited by the certification organization to ensure the maintenance of the original process standard that was employed in the manufacture of the test specimen that passed the test

The function of a certification mark is different from a trademark. It helps to specify the location of the origin, materials of construction, mode of production, characteristics of the good, etc. It tells the consumer that the goods or services are certified by the proprietor of the mark to indicate certain characteristics of the goods or services, and to indicate that the product or service being considered has certain characteristics, such as a specific level of product quality or a certain geographic origin. Thus, a certification mark certifies the nature or origin of the goods or the services to which it has been applied.

It is meant to guide the consumer and give the confidence to him/her on

Hence, certification marks on a commercial product are a mark of validity or an assurance of the fact that the manufacturer has tested the product and that it meets the given quality standard.

Some certification marks are mandatory while some are advisory.

Who sets these marks?

Certification marks are set by a special body – Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) – which comes under the aegis of the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO standards). It governs all the industrial standardization and the industrial product certifications in India. BIS is the national standards organization of India.

Standards exist for almost every product to protect the economic interests of all citizens. Some standards are as below:

1. ISI Mark

The most recognized mark for industrial products in India, ISImark is meant to certify that a product conforms to the standards laid by the BIS. ISI mark is mandatory for a number of products sold in the country, especially electronic goods. However, for other manufactured products, it is voluntary. ISI mark has been effective since 1955. AS consumers we must look for this mark

Image: https://www.jagranjosh.com

Setting the manufacturing standard

when purchasing an electronic item/industrial item from the market.

Issuing authority: Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS

Type of product: Industrial products

Effective since: 1955

2. BIS Hallmark

Image: bis.gov.in

India is second largest market for gold and gold jewellery. The nature of the product makes it open to manipulations and mixing of impurities by unscrupulous traders. To safeguard consumers against frauds, the BIS issued this standard. The BIS Hallmark is a hallmarking system for the sale of precious metal like gold and silver jewellery in India which certify the purity of the metal. The certification verifies that the jewellery conforms to the standards which are set by the Bureau of Indian Standards. For consumers, BIS Hallmark means an assurance of purity of the gold or silver ornament which is being bought. Certain numbers are engraved/stamped in the gold ornaments that imply the purity of the jewelry:

I. 23 carat 958
II. 22 carat 916
III. 21 carat 875
IV. 18 carat 750
V. 17 carat 708
VI. 14 carat 585
VII. 9 carats 375

The numbering system makes it easy for consumers to verify the quality of gold they are buying and leaves no ground for ambiguity.

Issuing authority: Bureau of Indian Standards

Type of product: Gold and silver jewellery

Effective since: It is applicable for gold since April 2000 and for silver since 2005.

IMAGE: PIXABAY

Ensuring you areget value for money.

Mark of quality for agricultural products.

IMAGE: PIXABAY

3. AGMARK

Image: Wikipedia.org

The Directorate of Marketing and Inspection of the Government of India issues this certification and it applies to agricultural products. The Agmark is legally enforced in India by the Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marking) Act of 1937 (amended in 1986).Currently, Agmark standards cover quality guidelines for 213 commodities ranging from a variety of pulses, cereals, essential oils, vegetable oils, fruits & vegetables, and semi-processed products like vermicelli. Apart from "Central AGMARK Lab, Nagpur" in India, there are also state-owned AGMARK laboratories in 11 nodal cities of the country.

If an agricultural product bears the Agmark, it assures the consumer that it conforms to a set of standards.Each of the fully equipped regional laboratories also specialize in the testing of products of regional significance. Hence, the product range that could be tested varies across the centers.

Issuing authority: Directorate of Marketing and Inspection of the Government of India

Type of product: Agricultural Products

Effective since: 1937 (amended in 1986)

4. FPO Mark

Image:wikipedia.org

All processed fruit products sold in India must mandatorily bear the FPO mark of certification. Products include packaged fruit beverages, fruit-jams, crushes and squashes, pickles, dehydrated fruit products, and fruit extracts, following the Food Safety and Standards Act of 2006, must be FPO certified. For the consumer, the FPO mark is the guarantee that the product was manufactured in a hygienic 'food-safe' environment and is fit for consumption.

Issuing authority: Ministry of Food Processing

Type of product: Processed fruit products

Effective since: 1955

IMAGE: PIXABAY

Making sure your juice is healthy.

5. India Organic

Organic has moved from being a fad to becoming a lifestyle statement. And with this, the need to bring in a certification to authenticate organic products became very important. Indian organic products are given the India Organic Certification, a label, after product validation. This label assures the consumer that the organic product or raw materials used in it were grown through organic farming – without the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, or induced hormones. 'India Organic' is the trademark which is granted to an organic food product that conforms to the National Standards for Organic Products established in 2000. The India Organic certification is issued by testing centers accredited by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) under the National Program for Organic Production of the Government of India.

Issuing authority: APEDA accredited centers

Making a healthy statement with organics.

IMAGE: PIXABAY

Type of product: Organically farmed food products

Effective since: 2000

6. Ecomark or Eco mark

Issued by the BIS, this mark certifies that the product conforms to a set of standards aimed at the least impact on the ecosystem. Introduced in the year 1991, this certification while not a mandatory quality mark, serves as an advisory to consumers. The Ecomark is given to products like soaps and detergents, batteries, leather, drugs, wood substitutes, etc.

Issuing authority: BIS

Type of product: Eco friendly products like soaps and detergents, batteries, leather, drugs, wood substitutes, etc.

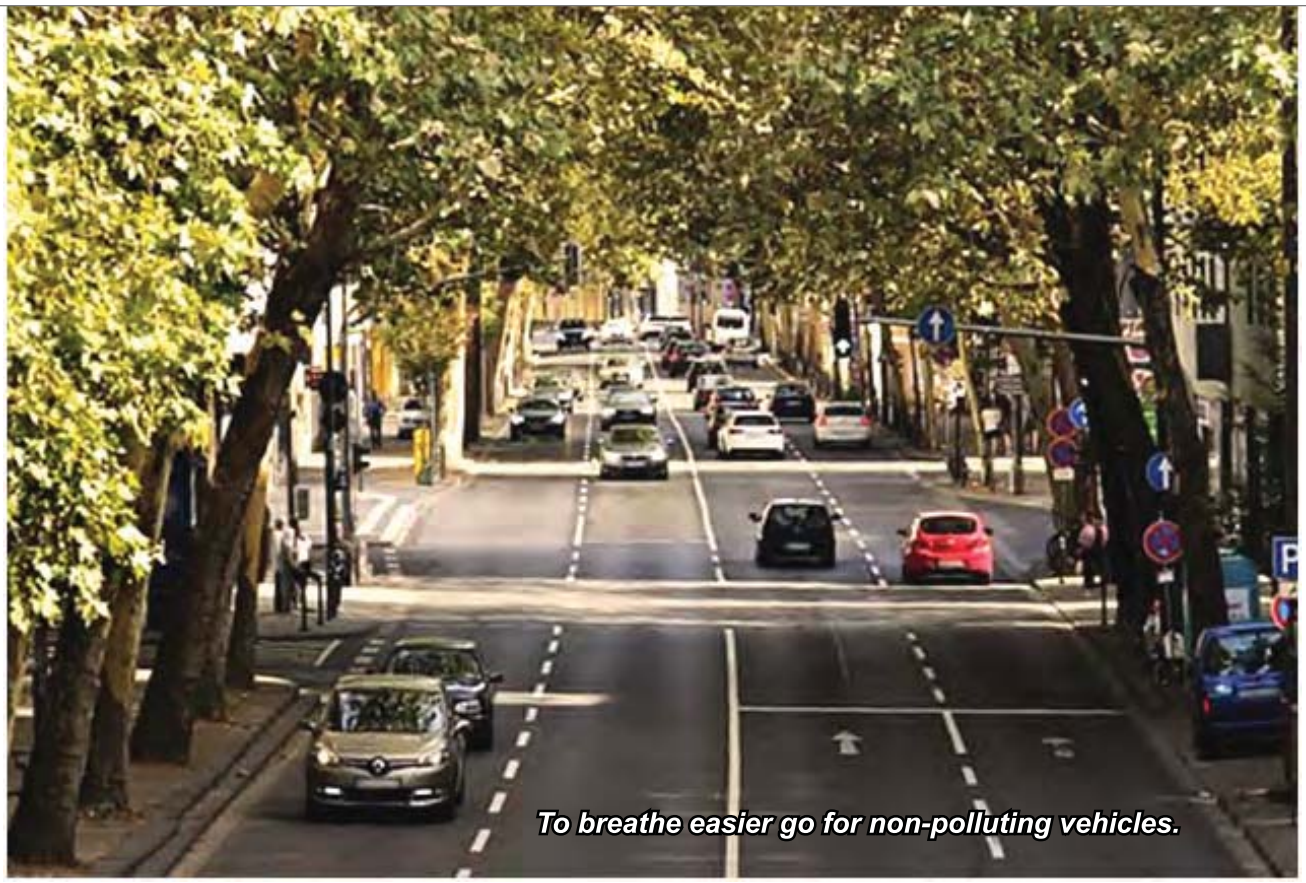
Effective since: 1991

IMAGE: PIXABAY

Doing their bit for the environment.

7. Non-Polluting Vehicle Mark

All new vehicles sold in India must bear the Non-Polluting Vehicle mark. This certification is mandatory under the Central Motor Vehicle Rule, 1989 (on September 1, 2019, the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019 came into force). This mark is the certificate of assurance for a motor vehicle that it conforms to the relevant version of the Bharat Stage emission standards. However, the Non-Polluting Vehicle mark is valid only for six months after which a fresh pollution check is to be done. If the vehicle is found to be pollution free, the mark is issued again. Under the amended MV Act, the violation of PUC norm now invites a penalty of Rs 10,000. Earlier, it was Rs 1,000 on first violation and Rs 2,000 for next offence. However, the



changes in the Motor Vehicle Act, which have been watered down by many state governments.

Issued by: Authorized motor service centres

Type of product: Motor Vehicles

Effective since: 1989

Some other important markers include:

Textile marks: These appear on clothes as labels. While the Handloom Mark signifies genuine handloom products and is issued by the Government of India; Silk Mark provides the consumer the assurance of pure silkand is issued by the Central Silk Board. Another important textile marker is the Woolmark, which indicates purity of woolen garments. It is issued by the Woolmark Organization—an Australian NGO.

There are certain marks or labels which bear Legal Status in India. These include:

- **Toxicity Label:** This is a mandatory marker that can be found be on containers of various pesticides sold in India. this label indicates the level of toxicity of the concerned pesticide in four levels.
- Vegetarian & Non-Vegetarian Marks: The Vegetarian Mark – a green dot symbol – and the Non-Vegetarian Mark – a brown dot symbol – are legally prescribed for use on packaged food products. They help consumers distinguish between the two.

There are also certain promotional markers with no legal status in India. Two of them are given below:

Ayush Mark: The Ayush mark is promoted by the Department of Ayush and is a marker of herbal products.

Geographical Indication Marks: This marker was introduced in 2003and indicates the geographical origin of a product. For example, Darjeeling Tea certification mark, a marker of this variety of tea being produced in Darjeeling and Basmati mark that indicates the location of basmati rice.

Handloom Mark

SILK MARK®

WOOLMARK

Conclusion

While the government has put in place an elaborate mechanism to ensure consumers get quality products, it is up to the consumers how they use these certifications and standards to ensure that they are not shortchanged. It requires just a little bit of awareness on our parts to arm ourselves with the right knowledge to safeguard our interests.

Source: Secondary research & media reports

Dr. Ravi P. Singh

Secretary General, Quality Council of India

throws light on India's quality infrastructure and how QCI is working to enhance quality of products and services in the country

"Mostly Quality Parameters, Wherever It Exists As An International Standard Of Quality, Is Either Adopted Or Modified As Per Requirement Of India Without Being Disruptive To Businesses"

Q What initiatives does the QCI undertake to ensure quality becomes a national movement in India?

QCI extensively works with industries, industry associations, consumer forums as well as Central and State Governments to promote adherence to quality in every walk of life. The constituent boards of QCI such as NABL, NABCB and NABH, which provide accreditation across industry sectors and which have international recognition and acceptance, facilitate quality in products and services meant for domestic and export markets. QCI has also created an exclusive board for quality promotion, NBQP, which conducts awareness programs in specific sectors as well as training programs to inform the industries how to implement quality in their processes and product development. However, reaching out to the citizens for identifying and accepting only quality products, processes and services is still a work in progress.

Q From quality in manufacturing to quality in clinical trials, QCI has a vast mandate. How are the quality parameters for different sectors developed?

It is true that QCI is working across sectors in areas of national Importance whether it is education, healthcare, manufacturing, services, natural resources construction food, etc. Mostly quality parameter, wherever it exists as an international standard of quality, is either adopted or modified as per requirement of India as a country without being disruptive to businesses. Sometimes the standards are provided by the ministry or the department or the state and QCI is only asked to do a baseline or in line assessment to gauge adherence to quality. However, when a new standard or quality parameter in a particular sector is created by QCI a standard protocol of multi stakeholder consultation process is adopted. Experts, associations and industries in those sectors are approached to take views on those standards, a pilot is conducted and then the quality parameters are either revised, modified or announced for implementation across the country.

Q India has generally not fared well with regard to the quality of its goods, be it drugs to manufactured goods. Why it is so and how is QCI helping India get international acceptance of its quality?

It is not true that India has not fared well w.r.t quality of its goods. In fact, India is one of the major players as far as export of drugs is concerned. Primarily, because of the quality and affordability in the international market. There is a concern, however, and it is that very few industries and organizations and that too in select few industry sectors such as pharma, automobiles have been able to achieve those standards of quality which is required in the international market. QCI provides a framework to implement, assess and certify products and processes as per internationally accepted standards and only upon certifications or test results through QCI accredited bodies these products are accepted in the international market. Therefore, QCI is an important body in the quality infrastructure in India for promoting trade of quality products and services, both for domestic and export markets.

Q How does QCI differ from BIS?

In every major economy, the three important pillars of Quality Infrastructure (QI) are standards, accreditation and conformity assessment, and metrology. In India, QCI is the national accreditation body and BIS is the national standards body, both having their defined roles as per their respective mandate. The standards body (BIS) lays down the standards of quality that any product, service or process must adhere to. QCI on the other hand provides the entire ecosystem on how conformity to those standards can be ascertained unless the standards are world class and the conformity assessment is also world class. No product or process will be accepted in the

international market. Therefore, the roles of QCI and BIS are distinctive in nature but supplement one another.

Q The awareness level in Indian consumers is still low. What steps is QCI taking to educate the Indian consumer on quality?

It is true that there is no singular mark of quality which Indian consumers can identify with and therefore lot of substandard products are placed in the domestic market for Indian consumers which may fulfil their immediate needs but in the long run may not be sustainable because of quality aspects, or in some cases due to health and safety hazards for citizens of the country. QCI's attempt has been to work with different government departments and ministries, both central and state, to disseminate this information and create models of certification which can be easily recognized as a mark of quality. A large effort goes towards disseminating quality consciousness amongst consumers, although the quality consciousness has increased over the last decade. However, quality vs cost, still plays a very important role in the choice of products by the consumers.

Q Please throw light on some of the important certifications and standards that the Indian consumer must be aware of.

Some of the most important certifications of quality are NABH accreditation/certification for hospitals and other health care organizations. Consumers must always ensure that they go for treatment only in NABH accredited/certified hospitals. Any test of quality such as water, drugs, or medical test undertaken by consumers must be in a NABL accredited/certified laboratory or medical diagnostic center.

QCI provides a framework to implement, assess and certify products and processes as per internationally accepted standards and only upon certifications or test results through QCI accredited bodies these products are accepted in the international market. Therefore, QCI is an important body in the quality infrastructure in India for promoting trade of quality products and services, both for domestic and export markets.

Q What is the role the industry is playing in QCI's mandate on quality?

The three premier industry bodies of India, the CII, FICCI and ASSOCHAM, are on the governing boards of QCI and its governing boards, and thus providing the industry perspective to the policies and operations of QCI. Industry needs to invest in quality for making their businesses more sustainable. Right now, they are on different boards of QCI to create avenues for growth in our journey towards quality. However, more is required to be done. Industry must resolve and accept that every Indian deserves the same quality of product and service as does a citizen of a foreign country. Therefore, there cannot be two types of product manufactured by the same industry – one for the Indian market and another for exports. This must converge sooner or later only then India will be accepted, recognized and respected as a developed country which gives quality products to everyone including their own citizen and also across the world.

Pyush Misra
Director,
Consumer Online Foundation

Indian Railways Goes For World Class Upgrade

The history of Indian Railways is 166 years old. However, its passenger amenities leave a lot to be desired. In recent years the government has woken up to the need to upgrade passenger facilities and bring railway stations across the country into world class category. A beginning has been made and it is to be hoped that ISO certifications will ensure that the momentum continues.

On time: Passenger amenities upgrades

IMAGE: PIXABAY

FOR LONG, A train journey in India remained one of the worst experiences for travelers – cockroach infested cabins, vegetarian food that could turn out to be non-vegetarian thanks to the insects cooked along with it, smelly and stained bedding, dirty platforms and waiting rooms, toilets that you preferred not to use even at the risk of a burst bladder – the list of woes was endless. One had nearly given up on any hopes that there would be any change in the state of affairs. However, these past few years have shown that even the mammoth India Railway can change for the better when there is political will and sound strategy.

Indian Railways Goes for Upgrade

The steps being taken by the Railways to modernize services and amenities for passengers and go for ISO certification was welcome news. There are several railway stations that have been successful in obtaining the ISO certification. Let us begin with the Guwahati Railway Station that got an ISO certification from the National Green Tribunal (NGT) for "providing passenger amenities in a clean and green environment." The station has successfully turned itself around into a model junction with amenities such as high-class reserve (VIP) lounge, waiting rooms, AC and non-AC retiring rooms, food courts and sanitation facilities. Guwahati Railway Station received ISO-14001 certification which is for Environment Management System as per international norms which were upgraded in 2015. Thus, the station's certificate reads ISO 14001: 2015. The station received the certificate on 26 March 2019. Notably, in the year 2018, it was also the first railway station in India to operate solar energy.

Another railway station that advanced rapidly as per global benchmarks is Thiruvananthapuram Central Railway Station of Southern Railway. It has been certified ISO 14001:2015 for Environmental Management System. Among the various types of certifications provided by the organization, ISO 14001:2015 accredits an organization which manages its environmental responsibilities in a systematic manner as per standard norms as upgraded in 2015. The services certified at the station as per the policy and guidelines of Indian Railways are Provision of Train Operation, Signal and Telecommunication, Cleaning and Maintenance, Handling of Passengers, Provision of Passenger Amenities and Ticket Booking/Parcel Handling. The certification is valid till April 8, 2022

IMAGE: PIXABAY

The Guwahati Railway Station became the first ever railway station in Indian Railways to get ISO certification from National Green Tribunal (NGT) for "providing passenger amenities in a clean and green environment."

with annual surveillance audit in April 2020.

Habibganj Railway Station in Madhya Pradesh was the first station to be ISO certified followed by Coimbatore Junction Railway station in Tamil Nadu. The Coimbatore Railway Station, one of the highest revenue earning stations in Southern Railway, won the ISO - 9001 certification for Quality Management, ISO 14001 for Occupational Health and Safety and ISO 18001 for Environmental Management System in December 2017.

The citation on display near the entrance of the station building was issued by Chennai-based Quest Certification (P) Ltd, accredited by the Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand. The certificate is valid for two years from November 20, 2017 to November 19, 2019.

One noteworthy instance of an Indian railway station advancing steadily as per global benchmarks is the Habibganj Railway Station of Bhopal, which is India's first railway station to get an ISO certification. This state-of-the-art railway station surprises every citizen with its modern features, due to which it was conferred the ISO 9001:2000 standard way back in 2008.

Habibganj Railway Station falls in the West Central Railway Division and first won the ISO certification in 2002. A mammoth redevelopment project was announced that would transform this railway station into the first world-class station in the country and into a model rail station.

Earlier, the government had announced its plans to develop 400 stations across India as world-class stations. Habibganj development project launched in July 2016 at an estimated cost of Rs 450 crore under the public-private-partnership (PPP) model, is one of the stations being developed under the project.

It is being reconstructed on the lines of Germany's Heidelberg railway station and will have a glass dome-like structure that will serve as the entrance to the station. The railway station will be a "green building" with LED lighting and provision for wastewater treatment for reuse. Cafeterias and food plaza and a plush waiting lounge will be among the passenger amenities. The station will have 'holding areas' for passengers at every platform and an exit underpass for passengers de-boarding trains with an aim to decongest the platforms. The development plan includes commercial establishments, a bus terminal, office lobbies as well as service apartments, hotels, hospitals, spas and a convention center outside the station.

Another railway junction drawing the admiration of passengers is the Mysuru railway station. It became the first railway station in South Western Railway to receive the Integrated ISO certificate. The Railway Board had identified 37 major stations across the country to be developed as 'Eco Smart' stations and Mysuru railway station was one of them.

The Integrated ISO certificate comprises three ISO certificates namely ISO:9001 Quality Management System, ISO:14001 Environment Management System and ISO:45001 Safety Management system.

What is ISO?

ISO is the acronym for International Standardization Organization, which is responsible for setting standards in activities in various fields. ISO certificate is given to organizations across the spectrum. Founded on 23 February 1947, the main objectives of ISO are to promote trade, ownership, industrial and commercial standards worldwide. It's headquarter is in Geneva, Switzerland.

Conclusion

India has the fourth largest rail network in the world with a route length of 67,368 km (41,861 mi) and total track length of 121,407 km (75,439 mi) as of March 2017. The Indian Railways operates more than 20,000 passenger trains daily, on both long-distance and suburban routes, from 7,349 stations across India and is expanding at a rapid space. In the year ending March 2018, IR carried 8.26 billion passengers and transported 1.16 billion tons of freight. The upkeep of this gargantuan structure is a massive job. It needs to be appreciated that the Indian Railways is making rapid progress to provide passengers the best in class amenities. High time, you may say!

Source: Secondary research & media reports

ACCREDITATION

A Mark Of Quality

The Quality Council of India has been entrusted with the responsibility to establish the accreditation structure in the country

Accreditation: Developing an ecosystem that protects quality.

INDIA'S QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE includes a number of accreditation bodies. The Quality Council of India (QCI) is the primary institution in the accreditation domain. It was set up as a non-profit autonomous society registered under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 with the mandate to establish an accreditation structure in the country. QCI is governed by a Council comprising 38 members and has an equal representation of government, industry and other stakeholders. The Council is the apex level body responsible for formulating the strategy, general policy, constitution and monitoring of various components of QCI including the accreditation boards with objective to ensure transparent and credible accreditation system.

QCI has been entrusted with various functions. It is mandated to develop, establish & operate National Accreditation programs for various service sectors such as education, healthcare, environment protection, governance, social sectors, infrastructure sector, vocational training etc., in accordance with the relevant international standards and guides for the conformity assessment bodies certifying products, personnel, management systems, carrying out inspection and for the laboratories undertaking testing and calibration and such other areas of organized activities that have significant bearing in improving the quality of life and well-being of the citizens of India.

QCI is also required to develop accreditation standards to support accreditation programs where such standards are not available at the national/international level.

It has four Accreditation Boards involved in accreditation programs. Each board is functionally independent and works within their core area of expertise. They are:

- National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB)
- National Accreditation Board for testing & calibration Laboratories (NABL)
- National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and healthcare providers (NABH)
- National Accreditation Board for Education & Training (NABET)

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES (NABCB)

NABCB provides accreditation to the Certification Bodies (CB) and Inspection Bodies (IB) established as legal entities anywhere in the world in accordance with relevant International Standards/Guidelines.All countries under WTO mutually accept products/services certified/inspected from accreditated agencies only. NABCB is a member of International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC) as well as signatory to its Multilateral Arrangements (MLA)s for QMS, EMS, FSMS & Product certification. NABCB is also a full member of International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) & Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) as well as signatory to its Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRA)s for inspection.

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD FOR TESTING AND CALIBRATION LABORATORIES (NABL)

NABL is an autonomous body set up under the aegis of Department of Science & Technology, Government of India and is functioning as the accreditation body for Testing and Calibration Laboratories. NABL provides laboratory accreditation services in India and abroad, regardless of their ownership, legal status & size that are performing tests/calibrations in accordance with ISO/IEC 17025:2005/ISO 15189:2007/ISO/IEC 17043 in the following areas:

- Testing laboratories
- Calibration laboratories
- Medical laboratories
- Proficiency testing provider
- Reference material producers

NABL accreditation system complies with ISO/IEC 17011:2004 and Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) MR001.

National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH)

NABH is a constituent board of Quality Council of India, set up to establish and operate accreditation program for healthcare organizations on patient safety and quality of healthcare based upon national/international standards. It is an institutional member of the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQUA). ISQUA is an international body which grants approval to Accreditation Bodies in the area of healthcare as mark of equivalence of accreditation program of member countries.NABH has developed 17 standards on subjects related to hospital and healthcare based on which it is operating its accreditation programs as well as various certification schemes.

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD FOR EDUCATION & TRAINING (NABET)

NABET is a constituent Board of the Quality Council of India. NABET provides accreditation to schools, training course providers and auditors that meet the Board's criteria and also offers a mechanism for their international recognition. The Board comprises 17 members including the chairman. The members represent different groups of stakeholders. NABET has established MRAs with the following international agencies:

- RABQSA International Inc., Australia & USA
- American National Standard Institute (ANSI), USA
- Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA), Scotland
- Pacific Accreditation Cooperation.

Source: Secondary research and media reports

For An ORGANIC WAY Of Life

The scope for organic farming is huge in India. It just needs the right certification.

IMAGE: PIXABAY

The government must work toward easing the certification issues of the organic farm structure to reduce their burden and costs

RECENTLY, MEDIA REPORTS quoted Rita Teotia, chairperson of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) as saying that she expects the Union Agriculture Ministry's Participatory Guarantee Scheme (PGS) to incentivize more farmers to grow organic food. She was talking to the media on the sidelines of a function of Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Health Organisation's (WHO's) Coordinating Committee for Asia (CCASIA) in Panaji.

The head of India's food safety regulator said, "The certified organic food production is still very low. The PGS brings together peer group of farmers and the costs are low. It is being popularized,"

Since 2001, the Government of India has been promoting organic farming through third party certification under the National Program for Organic Production (NPOP). However, it was in 2015 that PGS was officially recognized. The NPOP is under the Ministry of Commerce and since it was originally meant for exports, it requires adherence to stringent standards.

India is home to 30 per cent of the total organic producers in the world. According to an ET report, there are more organic farmers in India than any other country. However, India accounts for just 2.59 per cent (1.5 million hectares) of the total organic cultivation area of 57.8 million hectares, according to the World of Organic Agriculture 2018 report.

Despite the potential in organic farming, the sector is languishing. Most organic farmers are struggling due to poor policy measures, rising input costs and limited market, says a study by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) and global consultancy firm Ernst & Young.

Organic certification

Even as organic farmers struggle to find a better market, the certification systems for organic food compounds their difficulty, being cumbersome, time-consuming and expensive. It is urgently required that the government works to simplify the system and eliminates confusion over multiple certification systems and multiple ministries regulating organic production and sales.

Much can also be blamed on the apathy of the states towards organic farming. For example, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), Centre's free certification program for organic farmers, tells a sorry tale. A 2018 report on the implementation of PKVY highlights that all states, except Tripura, Odisha and Karnataka, have failed to utilize even 50 per cent of their funds under the scheme. The Centre increased allocation for the scheme by 44 per cent in 2018, but with states not taking responsibility, "organic India" has failed to become a movement.

Organic certification enhances the value of the product.

IMAGE: PIXABAY

Currently, the country has two types of certifications for organic produce. In order to ensure that Indian organic product qualities are in consonance with international standards, the government instituted the following bodies to take steps to identify organic products and certify them:

- Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) for implementing the National Programme on Organic Production (NPOP)-2001
- National Centre for Organic Farming (NCOF) for implementing the Participatory Guarantee System in India 2016.

Farm produce certification by APEDA: This certification is provided to the produce and not the land. This certification is open tolarge-scale farmers or small size landholder growers' groups (minimum of 25 and maximum of 500 farmers who possess land in the same geographical area) for organic certification of their produce. Tracenet is APEDA's internet-based e-service that collects, records and reports data on organic certification. It can also trace any organic produce all the way to the farm from anywhere in the supply chain.

Accredited bodies under NPOP that are accredited by NAB carry out the certification process. There are 28 agencies accredited by APEDA. Their work involves verifying farms, storages and processing units. The products that they certify as organic are allowed to carry the India organic logo.

Processed Food - NPOP –There are separate standards for handling, packaging, processing and storage. NPOP also lays down the general principles, recommendations and specific requirements for the use of organic labeling and claims. It is mandated that the labeling should convey unambiguous and accurate information on the product's organic status.

Farm produce certification under PGS – PGS-India is implemented by the National Centre of Organic Farming (NCOF) under the National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF), Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India. PGS-India is a process-based certification wherein a group certifies that its members are growing food organically. PGS-India controls the quality system through internal QMS through Farmer Grower Group Certification (GGC) instead of a certifying agency.

NPOP certification based on Export and Import: National Program on Organic Production (NPOP) defines the regulatory mechanism and is regulated under two different acts for export and domestic markets. NPOP notified under Foreign Trade Development and Regulation Act (FTDR) looks after the export requirement. The NPOP notified under this act has already been granted equivalence by European Union and Sweden. USDA has also accepted the conformity assessment system of NPOP. Due to this, the product certified by any Indian accredited certification agency under NPOP can be exported to Europe, Sweden and USA without the requirement of re-certification. To look after the requirement of import and domestic market the same NPOP has been notified under Agriculture Produce Grading, Marking and Certification Act (APGMC).Due to the equivalence commanded by the NPOP certification in several developed countries and its third-party verification system, it has remained a preferred choice. However, it is an expensive process as compared to PGS certification.

More about PGS program

The PGS program is meant to facilitate small farmers who own between two and five acres each. Since they cannot afford the more expensive certification system, they follow this cheaper system, which is becoming popular across developing countries.

In the Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS), the purpose is to ensure that the production adheres to the laid-down quality standards. The certification is in the form of a documented logo or a statement. Farmers in a group inspect each other's land and vouch for its organic credentials. They carry out the inspection at the start of every sowing season and visit each other almost weekly to provide counsel. To control errant farmers, the group decides not to sell their produce through the group till the mistake is rectified.

A boon is the fact that in this system there is much less paperwork and documentation in this system and therefore it is easy for farmers to adopt and replicate it. There are facilitation councils, mostly nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) like the IIRD, to help the farmers. Facilitation councils across the country have been working under an umbrella body called PGS Organic Council since 2011.

According to 'Participatory Guarantee System for India [PGS-India]', an 'Operational Manual for Domestic Organic Certification' published in 2015 by the National Centre of Organic Farming, Ghaziabad, under the Ministry of Agriculture's Department of Agriculture and Co-operation, PGS is a “quality assurance initiative that is locally relevant, emphasize[s] the participation of stakeholders, including producers and consumers, and (which) operate[s] outside the framework of third-party certification”.

According to a 2008 definition formulated by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), the Bonn-based global umbrella organization for the organic agriculture movement, PGSs are “locally focused quality assurance systems” that “certify producers based on active participation of stakeholders and are built on a foundation of trust, social networks and knowledge exchange”.

PGS, according to this definition, is “a process in which people in similar situations (in this case small holder producers) assess, inspect and verify the

production practices of each other and take decisions on organic certification".

Four pillars of PGS

The 2015 PGS manual of the government explains the system is founded on "participatory approach, a shared vision, transparency and trust".

PARTICIPATION: In the PGS it is not just the farmers but the entire farming ecosystem comprising producers, consumers, retailers, traders, NGOs, Gram Panchayats, and government organizations and agencies that is collectively responsible for designing, operating, and decision-making. The system fosters direct communication among the stakeholders and helps create integrity and trust-based approach that promotes transparency in decision-making, easy access to databases and visits to farms by consumers as and when possible.

PGS program facilitates small farmers.

IMAGE: PIXABAY

SHARED VISION: The farmers share a common vision. While each stakeholder organization or PGS group can have their own vision, it must conform to the overall vision and standards of the PGS-India program.

TRANSPARENCY: The active participation of producers in the organic guarantee process including information-sharing at meetings and workshops, peer reviews, and involvement in decision making ensures transparency.

TRUST: Trust is central to PGS as it is based on the belief that producers can be trusted, and that the organic guarantee system can be an expression and verification of this trust. The instrument of trust is a producer pledge that is made through a witnessed signing of a declaration, and written collective undertakings by the group to abide by the norms, principles and standards of PGS.

Advantages and limitations

The following advantages of PGS over third-party certification have been identified:

- Simple procedures, basic documents and the farmers' grasp of local language.
- Proximity to each other as they live close to each other and know each other well. A good understanding of processes as the farmers are practicing organic producers.
- Peer appraisal means that they live in the same village and have better access to surveillance. It is also cost-effective compared to third-party inspections.
- Farmers recognize each other, have common problems and support each other. Hence there is better networking for processing and marketing among the regional PGS.

* PGS also offers every farmer individual certificates and the freedom to market his own produce independent of the group.

However, there are also some limitations as identified in the operational manual:

- PGS certification is only for farmers or communities that can organize and perform as a group within a village or a cluster of continguous villages, and is applicable only to farm activities such as crop production, processing, and livestock rearing, and off-farm processing "by PGS farmers of their direct products".
- Individual farmers or group of farmers smaller than five members are not covered under PGS. They either have to opt for third party certification or join the existing PGS local group.

  PGS ensures traceability until the product is in the custody of the PGS group, which makes PGS ideal for local direct sales and direct trade between producers and consumers.

Conclusion

Rising health consciousness and changing lifestyle have brought organic food to the tables of the upwardly mobile classes. Organic food is the biggest revolution and food trend. Because organic food is aimed at healthy living it is all the more important to have certifications in place. But just instituting some is not the answer. The certification system must also be easy enough for the simple farming folk to adopt. Organic farming differs from the conventional farming in the whole agricultural process from ploughing to sowing. It is not just the fact that organic food uses no chemicals, it is also a comprehensive set of procedures that makes it important that we have a range of certifications for the organic produce. Moreover, it is expensive and discourages consumers from adopting it. According to an Assocham study, Rs 1,200–1,500 per month is the additional expenditure if a consumer switches to organic food. Higher labor cost and comparatively lower yields are the main culprits. Let's not add the weight of certification to the cost.

Source: Secondary research & media reports

BUILDING A Quality DNA

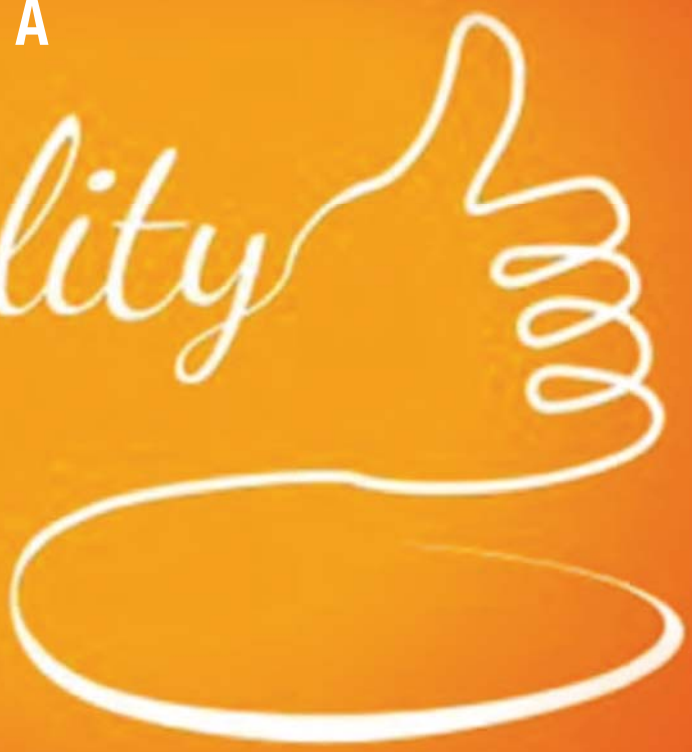


IMAGE: PIXABAY

India is building a quality ecosystem to promote its Brand India label and ensure fair competition for indigenous products and services

THE INDIAN ECONOMY is growing at a rapid pace and today is considered to be one of the biggest markets in the world. Given its growing importance and relevance in global trade, a robust 'Quality Ecosystem' with a harmonized, dynamic, and mature standards framework is urgently needed. The government feels that such a quality framework would fuel economic growth and enhance the 'Brand India' label.

Worldwide standards have been recognized as catalysts for technical development, and industrial growth. They are also important for the development of society and in this era of fast paced technological development, they have become essential for convergence of new and emerging technologies.

Government of India's effort in this direction saw the development of the Indian National Strategy for Standardization (INSS), which takes into account the current state of development across sectors, the existing quality infrastructure and the policy directions in relation to domestic economic developments and for trade in goods and services.

IMAGE: PIXABAY

The government held broad ranging consultations over a four-year period from 2014 to 2017 through national and regional standards conclaves with wide participation of experts and stakeholders from union and state governments, industry, regulatory bodies, national and overseas standards and conformity assessment bodies, academics, and international forums. The result of these was INSS, a broad consensus on what the quality infrastructure should be.

Released in June 2018, according to the PIB release, INSS is the result of the combined efforts of Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Consumer Affairs and industry stakeholders. It provides a vision for the country to achieve the highest quality standards in production and distribution of goods and services in an attempt to reclaim Brand India. The INSS report addresses four broad pillars of Quality Ecosystem: (i) Standards Development, (ii) Conformity Assessment and Accreditation, (iii) Technical Regulations and SPS Measures, and (iv) Awareness and Education.

Scope of INSS

INSS is aimed at providing direction to India's political and executive leadership on how best to use standardization, technical regulations, quality infrastructure and related activities to advance the interests and well-being of Indians in a global economy.

As the document states, INSS is intended to be a living document with an implementation plan to ensure positive outcomes in each of the identified areas.

While the government is looking at achieving some of the goals over a shorter period, it expects to undertake all elements of the strategy complete it over a five-year period (2018-2023).

Standards Development

Vision: Building a national culture of standards for growth and economic leadership

Mission: Developing a dynamic, relevant and priority driven standards ecosystem that will drive development across sectors, promote competitiveness of Indian products and services, and foster India's eminence among the global leaders in standardization.

Goal 1: Convergence of all standards development activities in India – The Bureau of Indian standards (BIS), the national standards body, has been spearheading India's standards setting process since 1947. Sector specific standardization work is also carried out by more than 25 other bodies including ministries, regulatory bodies, public sector undertakings, technical development agencies, commodity boards, industry and professional bodies, etc., albeit to a limited extent. Overseas standards development organizations are also present in India and engage experts and support industries using their standards. Under the NISS, BIS shall remain the apex national standards body and in accordance with the mandate of the BIS ACT, 2016 continue to oversee the harmonious development of standardization activities.

Goal 2: Setting up a dynamic mechanism for new standards identification, development and their revision– India has developed more than 20,000 standards in the past seven decades. Almost 50% of these are product standards and the rest are support standards such as test methods, terminology, codes of

practices, etc. The current system does not provide channels for the articulation of needs by all potential standards users. Hence, there is an urgent need to create forums and processes to articulate and prioritize needs for standards development in different sectors.

Goal 3: Inclusive participation of all stakeholders in standards development including states and MSMEs – For standards to be effective, its development must have adequate and continuous participation from all interest groups and subject matter experts. This can be achieved by generating widespread interest and awareness in the standards programs of BIS and attract participation with financial support where funding becomes a restriction, especially for MSMEs, civil society groups including consumer groups, and identified experts. The government has been organizing Standards Conclaves since 2014 and these have been good forums for the purpose. There is a need to continue holding more Standards Conclaves at the Central and State levels.

Goal 4: Integrating and harmonizing all standardization work with international and market driven standards – The need for harmonizing Indian standards with international standards for reducing technical barriers to trade and improve market access for Indian products and services, cannot be overemphasized. In order to ensure that Indian businesses remain competitive both in domestic and overseas markets, the goods and services must conform to globally accepted standards. While national considerations for specific local considerations, such as climatic and cultural conditions, should be given due accord, these should be minimal and least restrictive.

Goal 5: Identifying sectors where India could pioneer standardization work – Historically, Indian standardization efforts have revolved around following standards developed by other standards bodies. There are many sectors that remain outside the scope of standardization. Undertaking pioneering standardization work in these areas would not only unleash their commercial potential but also enhance India's contribution to global standardization efforts. These areas can include the Indian system of alternative medicines - Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy(AYUSH), Indian food cuisines, Indian traditional arts, Indian crafts, Indian traditional veterinary systems, etc.

Goal 6: Systematic and continuous participation in international and regional standardization work – Participation in international standards setting projects is a must as it allows voicing, consideration and possible inclusion of Indian priorities and concerns. It important that these standards do not contain provisions that put India at a disadvantage. Hence, continuous participation of experts in these forums is essential.

Goal 7: Development of Service Sector Standards – The topic of standardization in services is relatively new and is also weakly addressed in trade law instruments. With services accounting for a major share in the Indian and global economy, there is an urgent need to develop standards in services.

Goal 8: Creating an ecosystem to meet the challenges from Private Sustainability Standards – Over the past few years a new set of standards termed as Private Sustainability Standards (PSS), sometimes known as Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS), have become popular globally. These are built on three fundamental pillars namely social progress, economic development and environment & climate, in line with the sustainable development goals (SDGs). There is a need for a mechanism to respond to the challenges posed by such standards at the national level.

II. Conformity Assessment, Accreditation, and Metrology

Vision: Evolving a credible, competent and robust infrastructure for conformity assessment

Mission: Provide confidence to customers and markets, supplement and provide alternates to regulatory oversight and escalate Indian exports.

Goal 1: Enhance credibility of conformity assessment programs in domestic and foreign markets – The opening up of the Indian economy has led to the simultaneous development of a national quality ecosystem that now includes a full complement of conformity assessment schemes comprising third party inspections, product certification, management systems certification, personnel certification, testing and calibration, self-declaration of conformity, etc.

Source: UNIDO 2019

Goal 2: Secure and enhance global equivalence through mutual recognition agreements in accreditation and sectoral fora across a broad range of goods and services – It is necessary to map the entire spectrum of products and services that need to meet specific conformity assessment requirements and to systematically install and develop facilities and infrastructure that would help achieve equivalence status. As the body directly responsible for export certification, this initiative should be led by the Export Inspection Council and supplemented by the export promotion councils, commodity boards, accreditation boards and the CABs operating in the respective areas.

Goal 3: Promoting Indian products through a 'Brand India' label for global acceptance – Promotion of Indian products needs to be backed with a visible and credible Brand India certification label that gives assurance of quality and sustainable practices which is also globally acceptable. This would require a scheme based on international best practices with a provision for benchmarking existing national schemes.

Goal 4: Minimize costs of conformity assessment, especially for MSMEs to make them globally competitive – There is an urgent need to ease the compliance burden of MSMEs in meeting regulatory and overseas market access requirements.

III. Technical Regulations and SPS Measures

Vision: Securing the highest degree of protection for the well-being and safety of Indian citizens.

Mission: Ensuring that technical regulations are aimed to achieve legitimate objectives, minimal, risk based, least burdensome, and effective in meeting the objectives with least disruption to businesses.

Goal 1: Develop a sound understanding of good regulatory practices and regulatory impact assessment – As regulations are issued to protect and balance the needs of civil society and its various interest groups, they need to be precisely calibrated to the risks in context with the times, entail minimal cost burden, should be easy to comply, and be transparently administered. They must not impede social development and economic growth.

Goal 2: Separation of institutional roles to increase effectiveness and to avoid potential conflicts of interest. Due to historical reasons the roles of line ministries, regulatory bodies, and conformity assessment operations, have become centered within the respective ministries/departments. However, these present conflicts of interest often. An institutional and progressive separation of roles and retention of only essential functions to strengthen the effectiveness of the regulatory framework is necessary.

Goal 3: Ensure protection in areas that are widely regulated worldwide – The WTO SPS and TBT agreements provide the enabling considerations based on which technical regulations and measures are notified by countries/economic unions. The considerations include human health & safety; animal and plant life, and health; the environment, national security; and prevention of deceptive trade practices through suitable technical regulations/ SPS measures. The products and measures are notified on risk-based assessments.

Goal 4: Technical Regulations and SPS measures should be based on appropriate standards/ essential requirements, and conformity assessment procedures commensurate with attendant risks and market conditions – Technical regulations and SPS measures invariably create a burden of compliance on the producers and suppliers of products and services with attendant costs that are borne throughout the supply chain including the consumer, as well as government in running the enforcement programs. Regulators therefore need to carefully select the most essential requirements in products, processes or services that would serve the purpose of the regulations.

Goal 5: Create an overarching regulatory instrument and oversight mechanism for technical regulations, SPS measures, and conformity assessment – Presently technical regulations are notified under different Acts, and under the BIS Act where no sector-specific Act exists. It is essential to enact a new enabling legislation for notifying standards, technical regulations, and conformity assessment procedures in accordance with global good regulatory practices with suitable surveillance and enforcement provisions.

Goal 6: Create an effective market surveillance mechanism – Presently market surveillance activities and other enforcement measures are handled by state government agencies and customs officials at the ports. They are not equipped in terms of technical understanding, resources and empowerment. As the requirements for post-market surveillance and testing including cyber intelligence are expected to increase in future it is necessary to establish a professional agency for carrying out or coordinating the market surveillance program.

Goal 7: Strengthening response mechanisms to overseas technical regulations and SPS measures – New and revised technical regulations and SPS measures are being regularly notified by countries classified as TBT and SPS notifications. Many of these have a direct or indirect impact on the supply of Indian goods and services. An urgent need exists to develop a dynamic and responsive mechanism that would trigger anticipatory as well as post notification responses.

IV. Awareness, Counselling, Training and Education (ACT & E)

Vision: Creating a quality mindset nationwide

Mission: Make every citizen, organization, and institution understand, and value the benefits that standardization and related activities bring to them.

Goal 1: Enhancing awareness among stakeholders – Standards, conformity assessment, and technical regulations when applied are routinely encountered by all citizens, organizations, and institutions in their daily lives and operations. An objective of this strategy for standardization is to widely transmit the message to all stakeholders so that not only do they realize the opportunities but also become responsible role players through active participation.

Goal 2: Counselling and training regarding standards; conformity assessment; technical regulations, and SPS aspects – Producers of goods and services, and its importers and exporters may require constant counselling in this regard. Trade organizations like CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM, FIEO etc., will need to calibrate their counselling services to the 33 interested stakeholders aligned with these needs. The Trade portal (managed by FIEO) and India Standards Portal (managed by CII) also need to enhance their scope as hubs of information in this regard.

Goal 3: Creating modules for courses on quality related subjects in educational institutions at various levels – One of the most expedient tasks for building the quality mindset into the potential workforce involves building suitable curriculum and its inclusion in the various stages of formal education.

Conclusion

India is moving towards a comprehensive quality regime with the NISS. For a new India the ability to engage at par globally with the world's advanced economies is a prerequisite to its growth. NISS will enhance the competitiveness of India's economic sectors globally and give more credence to Made in India. NISS is a timely initiative that will catapult India into the reckoning of the world.

Source: Secondary research & media reports

Quality parameters are becoming more stringent in India.

IMAGE: PIXABAY

REGULATING QUALITY

The regulatory bodies in India are setting tough technical parameters to ensure global quality of goods

INDIA HAS A comprehensive regulatory infrastructure to support the quality goals of the country. It includes various government departments that work to ensure standardization in critical sectors. Regulatory Bodies notify technical regulations either through specific technical requirements developed through their own consultative processes or, by adopting relevant Indian or other standards. Wherever Indian standards have been adopted, the regulatory body is invariably involved in the work of the technical committee responsible for the development of the related standards. Regulatory bodies involve stakeholders in the development of technical regulations or adoption of standards either through structured committees or through wide stakeholder consultation. Prior notification of the draft regulations in the form of public notifications as well as the WTO TBT/SPS notifications is practiced by all technical regulators. In some areas, such as food safety, scientific risk evaluation is carried out by the relevant committees.

Regulatory bodies in India are as follows:

Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion [renamed as Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)]

Status: **Government Department**

Administrative Control: **Ministry of Commerce & Industry**

Scope: Notifying and Appropriate Authority for 15 types of Cements, 16 types of electrical products, 2 types of cast iron pipes, 4 types of tyres and tubes, 3 types of oil pressure stoves under mandatory BIS Certification.

DIPP (now DPIIT) is under the Ministry of Commerce & industry, Government of India and is responsible for

Promoting adoption of quality standards in industry.

IMAGE: PIXABAY

formulating and implementing industrial policy and strategies for industrial development in conformity with the development needs and national objectives. One of the key policy interventions of the Department is promotion of productivity, quality and technical cooperation among industrial sectors. It promotes the adoption of quality standards relating to the ISO 9000/14000 series through the accreditation services provided by National Boards for Certifying Bodies and Auditors and Trainers under the Quality Council of India, which has been certified by international accreditation bodies.

In order to ensure the quality of critical industrial products in the Indian market, DIPP has issued several quality control orders prohibiting their production and import into India. As per the orders, the products manufactured and imported into India must bear the BIS Standard Mark.

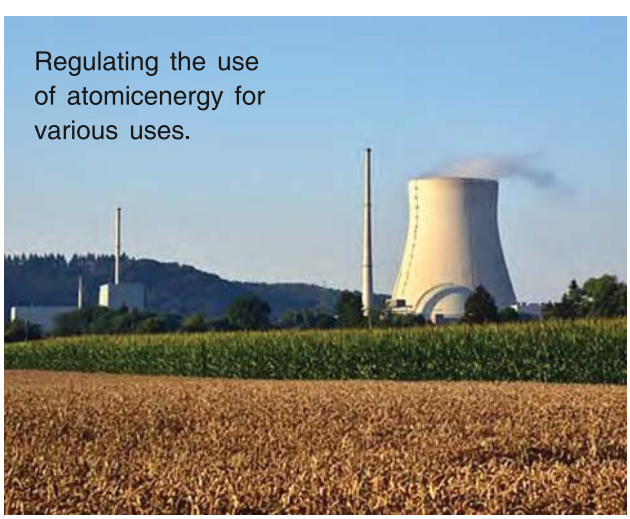
Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB)

Status: **Regulatory Body**

Administrative Control: **Department of Atomic Energy**

Scope: Notifying technical regulations and assessment, regulatory inspection and enforcement of siting, construction, commissioning, operation and decommissioning of nuclear and radiation facilities including medical and industrial radiography.

AERB is the regulatory authority of India to carry out certain regulatory and safety functions under the Atomic Energy Act. AERB has notified the various codes and standards for mandatory compliance by the manufacturers, suppliers, installers and operators of radiographic equipment for medical diagnostic and therapeutic uses and for industrial uses.



Regulating the use of atomicenergy for various uses.

IMAGE: PIXABAY

Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)

Status: **Government Organization**

Administrative Control: **Ministry of Power and Energy**

Scope: Regulatory authority for mandatory energy labeling for 8 types of appliances, notified by central government

Promoting energy efficiency.

IMAGE: PIXABAY

BEE was set up by the Government of India under the provisions of the EC Act, 2001 with the primary objective of reducing energy intensity of the Indian economy. The Standards and Labeling Scheme (S&L) is one of the major thrust areas of BEE. Launched on May2006, it gives the consumer an informed choice about the energy saving and thereby cost saving potential of the product,

Central Insecticides Board & Registration Committee (CIBRC)

Status: **Regulatory Body**

Administrative Control: **Ministry of Agriculture**

Scope: Pesticides, insecticides, fungicides

CIBRC under the Directorate of Plant Protection, Quarantine & Storage, Department of Agriculture & Cooperation was set up by the Ministry of Agriculture in the year 1970 to regulate the import, manufacture, sale, transport, distribution and use of insecticides with a view to prevent risks to human beings and animals and for other matters connected therewith. Insecticides Act, 1968 was brought into force with effect from 1 August 1971 with the publication of Insecticides Rules, 1971. The Central Insecticides Board (CIB) advises the central

IMAGE: PIXABAY

government and state governments on technical matters arising out of the administration of this Act and to carry out the other functions assigned to the Board by or under this rule.

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)

Status: **Government Department**

Administrative Control: **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**

Scope: Implementing authority for standards for ambient air quality, water quality, standards for emission and discharge from various industries, emission norms for vehicles, auto fuel quality standards, emission standard and noise limits for diesel engines and LPG/CNG generator sets

CPCB is a statutory organization. It provides technical services to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MOEFCC) on the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and advises the central government on any matter concerning prevention and control of water and air pollution and improvement of the quality of air. CPCB lays down standards for stream or well in consultation with the state governments, and also for the quality of air. It prepares manuals, codes and guidelines relating to treatment and disposal of sewage and trade effluents as well as for stack gas cleaning devices, stacks and ducts. Under the Comprehensive Industry Document Series (COINDS), it also formulates the Minimal National Standards (MINAS) specific for various categories of industries with regard to their effluent discharge (water pollutants), emissions (air pollutants), noise levels and solid waste.

IMAGE: PIXABAY

Department of Heavy Industries (DHI)

Status: **Government Department**

Administrative Control: **Ministry of Heavy Industries**

Scope: Notifying and appropriate authority for 3 types of steel tubes under mandatory BIS Certification and 1 type of electrical transformer

IMAGE: PIXABAY

For a robust industry.

DHI is working under the Ministry of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises, Government of India with the vision to provide a modern, healthy and robust auto, heavy engineering, heavy electrical & capital goods sectors and self-reliant and growth oriented Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSE). DHI through its “Mild Steel Tubes (excluding seamless tube & tubes according to API Specification) (Quality Control) order,1978” and Amendment Order, 1983 brought following 3 steel tubes under Mandatory Certification of Bureau of Indian Standards:

(I) Steel tubes for structural purpose as per IS 1161

(II) Steel tubes, Tubular and other wrought steel fittings – Part 1: Steel tubes as per IS 1239 (Part 1)

(III) Steel tubes for water-wells (Upto 200 mm Dia) as per IS 4270.

Directorate of Legal Metrology

Status: **Government Department**

AdministrativeControl: **Ministry of Consumer Affairs**

Scope: Notifying Authority for 2 types of Clinical Thermometers and 1 type of Dry Battery cells

Directorate of Legal Metrology, the Weights and Measures Unit in the Department of Consumer Affairs,

Balanced perspective.

IMAGE: PIXABAY

under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Government of India is the central authority for dealing with legal metrology. This unit is responsible to look after matters of national policy and other related functions such as, uniform laws on weights and measures, technical regulations, training, precision laboratory facilities and implementation of the International recommendation. It has also to guide, coordinate and supervise the enforcement activities of the state enforcement machinery.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)

Status: **Regulatory Body**

Administrative Control: **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**

Scope: Authority for laying down science-based standards for articles of food and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption

FSSAI under the administrative jurisdiction of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, has been established under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 which consolidates several legacy acts and orders related to food under a single legislation. The chairperson and members of the Food Authority in

IMAGE: PIXABAY

Ensuring safe and wholesome food for citizens.

FSSAI have been entrusted with setting standards, policy making and advising the central government on health goals for India. FSSAI has been designated as the nodal point for liaison with the Codex Alimentarius Commission CAC). FSSAI created a Food Category System (FCS), Indian Food Code in harmony with the Food Categorization System adopted in Codex General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA). Every Food Business Operator (FBO) requires a license or registration under provision of the Act with the FSSAI to carry on a food business in India. This also applies to importers who may also have other obligations to fulfill before commencing imports. The Food Authority has notified food testing laboratories across India to test for safety parameters and conformance to standards (identity, composition and quality) of various food items.

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)

Status: **Government Department**

Administrative Control: **Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology**

Scope: Notifying authority for compulsory registration of 30 types of electronic products under BIS registration scheme

MeitY is responsible for formulation, implementation and review of national policies in the field of information technology, electronics, internet (all matters other than licensing of Internet Service Provider), UIDAI and associated services and applications. Main aim of MeitY is to promote e-Governance for empowering citizens, promoting the inclusive and sustainable growth of the Electronics and IT & Information Technology enabled Services (ITeS) industries, enhancing India's role in global platforms of internet governance.

Registration of electronic products under BIS is mandatory for 30 types of products.

IMAIGE: PIXABAY

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)

Status: **Ministry**

Administrative Control
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Scope: Notifying authority for standards for ambient air quality, water quality, standards for emission and discharge from various industries, emission norms for vehicles, auto fuel quality standards, emission standard and noise limits for diesel engines and LPG/CNG generator sets

IMAGE: PIXABAY

MoEFCC is the nodal agency in the administrative structure of Government of India for the planning, promotion, coordination and overseeing the implementation policies and programs relating to conservation of the country's natural resources including its lakes and rivers, its biodiversity, forests and wildlife, ensuring the welfare of animals, and the prevention and abatement of pollution. Environmental standards of emission & discharge for different industrial activities, ambient air quality and noise standards as developed through the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), technical support institution of the ministry, are notified by MoEFCC in the respective rules & regulations framed under the Environmental protection Act, 1986 for mandatory compliance.

Ministry of Steel

Status: **Ministry**

Administrative Control:
Ministry of Steel

Scope: Notifying and appropriate authority for 34 types of steel under mandatory BIS Certification

IMAGE: PIXABAY

Quality control of critical steel products.

The Ministry of Steel, Government of India, formulates and implements policies for the manufacture and supply of steel and steel products in India and directly oversees steel production by the public sector units.

In order to ensure the quality of critical steel products in the Indian market, the ministry issued quality control order in 2015 and later covering several steel products, thereby prohibiting production and import of substandard steel products in India. As per the Orders, all steel manufactured and imported into India must bear the BIS Standard Mark.

Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organization (PESO)

Status: **Regulatory Body**

Administrative Control: **Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (now DPIIT)**

Scope: Framing national standards concerning public safety in collaboration with BIS, OISD & other apex bodies, notifying these standards, and approval, licensing, inspection of facilities and equipment for manufacture, transport, storage, handling, etc., of explosives, petroleum, carbide of calcium, inflammable substances and compressed Gases. The scope includes unfired pressure vessels, gas cylinders and petroleum installations.

IMAGE: PIXABAY

Quality structure for petroleum and related products.

PESO lays down the technical standards and specifications including safety standards in activities related to explosives, petroleum & petroleum products, pipelines, gases, gas cylinders, safety fittings, special electric equipment that have been specified in relevant section of various rules framed under the Explosives Act, 1984 & Petroleum Act, 1934. IT also takes leading roles in formulation and revision of Indian Standards for Bureau of Indian Standards and standards developed by Oil Industry Safety Directorate related to manufacture, refining, processing, storage, transportation, handling, testing & quality specification of explosives, petroleum, flammable and no- flammable compressed gases and other hazardous substances and referred various Indian Standards it its regulations making them mandatory.

Source: Secondary research & media reports

Of Quality & Counting !

While the first World Quality Day was celebrated in 2018, the quest for quality dates back to human history. Formally, as Chartered Quality institute celebrates it centenary this year, so does quality as an active pursuit by organizations across the globe.

QUALITY HAS A 100-year documented history, much due to the efforts of the Chartered Quality Institute (CQI), a leading organization dedicated to ensuring quality of products and services since its inception in 1919. CQI has led global efforts in the advancement of and is celebrating this heritage and the evolution of the quality management discipline in the last 100 years.

CQI was established as a Technical Inspection Institute in 1919. Along its 100 years long journey it transformed itself into a thriving professional body with a royal charter to promote quality management. It has a global membership of 20,000 in over 100 countries.

In these 100 years, the organization has made invaluable contributions to setting up parameters of quality and helped organizations in the public, private and non-profit sectors to improve the way they deliver products and services for customers.

The history of CQI is also the story of how quality management has sustained and improved organizational performance and contributed to improving the quality of life over the past 100 years.

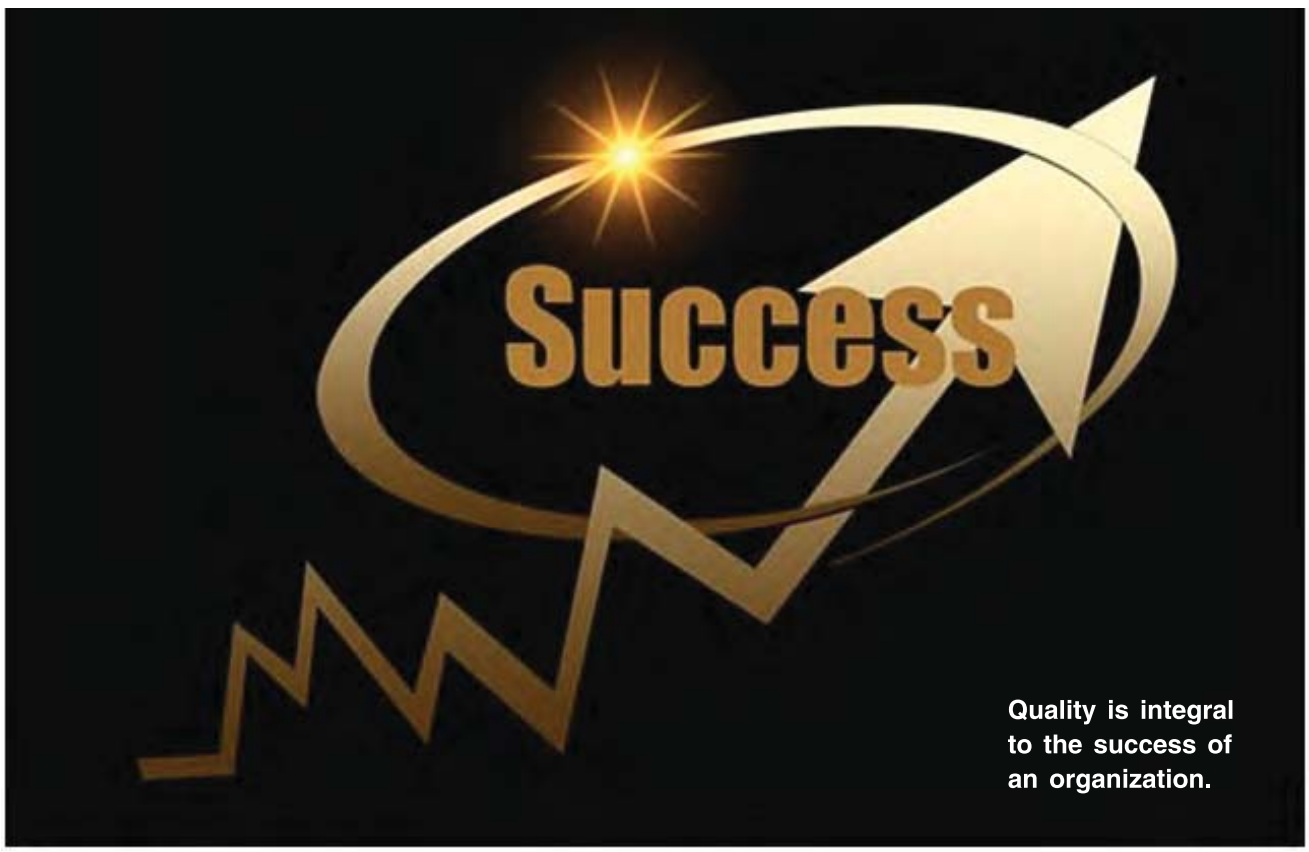
The search for quality is a never ending one. Quality professionals have made the goals of quality achievable enabling organizations to deliver good governance, quality assurance, continuous improvement and leadership. This legacy of quality will endure as long as the human race survives as the need to deliver trusted products and services becomes more and more critical in a digital age.

To quote Vincent Desmond, CEO of the CQI: “Society would not be where it is today without quality. Behind every improvement in service and product there is an individual, team or organization that has driven change through quality method.”

Apparently, quality is vital to the success of an organization. But what is quality?

According to the businessdictionary.com, “In manufacturing, a measure of excellence or a state of being free from defects, deficiencies and significant variations. It is brought about by strict and consistent commitment to certain standards that achieve uniformity of a product in order to satisfy specific customer or user requirements. ISO 8402-1986 standard defines quality as "the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bears its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs." If an automobile company finds a defect in one of their cars and makes a product recall, customer reliability and therefore production will decrease because trust will be lost in the car's quality.

According to asq.org, “Quality assurance and quality control are two aspects of quality management. While some quality assurance and quality control activities are



Quality is integral to the success of an organization.

IMAGE: PIXABAY

Quality Data Can Help You Achieve Succes

interrelated, the two are defined differently. Typically, QA activities and responsibilities cover virtually all of the quality system in one fashion or another, while QC is a subset of the QA activities. Also, elements in the quality system might not be specifically covered by QA/QC activities and responsibilities but may involve QA and QC."

Below are ISO 9000 definitions from ISO 9000:2015: Quality management systems - Fundamentals and Vocabulary.

Quality Assurance

"Quality assurance can be defined as "part of quality management focused on providing confidence that quality requirements will be fulfilled." The confidence provided by quality assurance is twofold—internally to management and externally to customers, government agencies, regulators, certifiers, and third parties. An alternate definition is "all the planned and systematic activities implemented within the quality system that can be demonstrated to provide confidence that a product or service will fulfill requirements for quality."

Quality Control

"Quality control can be defined as "part of quality management focused on fulfilling quality requirements." While quality assurance relates to how a process is performed or how a product is made, quality control is more the inspection aspect of quality management. An alternate definition is "the operational techniques and activities used to fulfill requirements for quality."

Organizations across the world have distinctive quality management function that involves ensuring quality for its stakeholders – from improving products, services, systems and processes, to making sure that the whole organization is fit and effective.

Hence managing quality is a constant pursuit for excellence. It involves making sure that whatever the organization does is fit for the purpose, and that it stays that way and keeps improving.

Quality control must be part of the bigger quality goal of every organization.

Quality certainly is more than just manufacturing excellence or getting trains to run on time. While these are certainly part of the quality management process, they are certainly not the whole picture.

For every organization the best judge of quality is the acceptance it receives from the stakeholders. Stakeholders here are not just consumers or buyers of the organization's product and services, but "anyone who has an interest in the success of what your organization does."

While customers are certainly the most important group of stakeholders for most

businesses; investors, employees, suppliers and citizens at large are stakeholders too.

For organizations, it is hence imperative to know who the stakeholders are, what they need and how to meet those needs now and in the future. Delivering an acceptable level of quality or exceeding expectations is what makes an organization achieve its quality requirements.

According to the CQI,this boils down to three things: strong governance to define the organization's aims and translate them into action, robust systems of assurance to make sure things stay on track and a culture of improvement to keep getting better.

Why is it important for organizations to care about quality?

Any organization that wishes to survive and grow must be quality conscious, especially in today's scenario where a consumer has access to global products and services. If an organization's wishes to build its brand and reputation, insure it against risks, increase organizational efficiency, be competitive and keep growing, it must invest in quality. Quality also means keeping employee morale high and customers happier.

Many organizations adopt a cavalier attitude towards quality. It becomes just a box to be ticked or to pay lip service to. But organizational history is full of failures resulting from poor governance, ineffective assurance and resistance to change. Such an attitude can have dire consequences for businesses, individuals and society as a whole.

Organizations that diligently manage the quality of output are most effective. But again. quality is not disaster prevention or reputation management – "it's about achieving great resultsand seizing opportunities to get better and better".

Quality also is not an issue that only commercial enterprises grapple with. Every organization, from governments, NGOs to private and public sector enterprises all those that have stakeholders of one kind or another, must strive to meet their needs. This is what effective quality management means.

Does quality apply to only products and services?

Quality applies to everything – product, service, process, task, action or decision in an organization – all can be judged in terms of its quality – whether it is good, poor and is it can be improved.

So, who is responsible for quality?

Quality is not the responsibility of just one person or one department in an organization. Everyone employee right from the chief executive officer to the junior executive is responsible for quality – of the work that they do – which together influence the quality of the organization's outputs. From how requirements are specified to meeting those requirements or determining the quality of the end product, involve multiple individuals. If each one brings quality to his/her job, the end product is sure to be of a quality that meets the requirements of stakeholders.

However, organizations must also invest in people who can provide specialized knowledge, tools and guidance to help everyone else do their bits in determining and achieving the required level of quality.

The quality professionals come in many guises: some are generalists, some are specialists and have job titles such as quality manager, quality engineer, quality director or assurance manager, etc.

How can quality be achieved in an organization?

Quality is a topdown approach and senior management must be committed to quality. The CQI believes that three things underpin successful quality management: effective governance that defines the organization's aims and translates them into action, robust systems of assurance to make sure things stay on track, and a culture of improvement to keep getting better.

Quality professionals use numerous methods, metrics, tools and techniques. At the heart of them all is a focus on stakeholders, robust processes, strong leadership and continual improvement. Management systems defined by international standards such as ISO 9001 (for quality management systems), ISO 14001 (for environmental management systems) and the forthcoming ISO 45001 (for occupational health and safety systems) help organizations manage quality effectively.

Conclusion

Quality is now becoming embedded in the DNA of organizations as they strive to remain competitive and profitable. Even as organizations across the world are bringing in quality management systems and standards, governments are working on raising quality consciousness and establishing stringent quality checks to enable industries to compete globally.

Source: Secondary research & mediareports

Where can consumers have their say about policies and legislation, about their needs and requirements, about products and services, about genuine and fraud companies? We provide you the platform to share with our readers your experiences.
Write to us: bejonmisra@consumerconexion.org

Shifting Signals: Consumers Choose Quality Over Price

Consumers expect differentiated, innovative products priced right and are willing to pay more for quality

Changing consumer expectations – No compromises over quality.

IMAGE: PIXABAY

The deal mindset is changing.

IMAGE: PIXABAY

WINDS OF CHANGE are blowing across the world as consumers become more quality conscious in this era of internet enabled transparency. A June 2018 report by First Insight, a technology company transforming how leading retailers make product investment and pricing decisions, says that quality is becoming more important than price to most consumers, as 53 percent rate quality as the most important factor when making purchases compared to price (38 percent). The report also notes that consumer expectations for discounts are falling as an increasing proportion of consumers surveyed said department store discounts had no influence on expectations for discounts across other categories including vehicles, smartphones, furniture, home appliances and home electronics.

While the report is based on a study of 1000 participants in the US, its findings reflect the changing expectations of consumers around the globe. The study looked at the respondents' shopping habits, purchase behavior and influences driving decisions, and tracked changes in consumer sentiment on the impact of widespread discounting by department stores and mass merchants from March 2017 to December 2017.

Coming to India, in a January 2019 article in FE Online, VP, marketing, Urban Ladder states that the common perception that the Indian consumer is moved to purchase a product only by its price is partly true. While price is an important consideration, today's Indian consumers look for value. The modern Indian consumer is very 'value conscious', evaluating benefits and quality vis-à-vis price. They may indulge in impulse purchases motivated by price considerations solely, but while making any other purchase they indulge in extended problem-solving. “The Indian consumer is a 'smart shopper' and takes massive pride in being one.”

“For years, consumers have been trained by department stores and mass merchants to focus on finding deals, and many retailers have responded with deep discounts,” Greg Petro, CEO and Founder of First Insight says. “The results of this study indicate that we may be reaching a tipping point, as retailers who have been focused on providing consumers with the quality, differentiated products they want and the price they expect are gaining greater traction and changing the consumer mindset. As the pendulum swings away from discounts, retailers have an opportunity to capture greater sales through quality products in every category, from apparel to furniture and appliances.”

Petro's insights are relevant in Indian context as well as can be seen in the deep discount traditions online and in malls that have been waning in attraction.

According to First Insight report, furniture and vehicle categories reflected the sharpest percentage change in expectations with the number of people saying discounts had no impact on purchases rising 98 percent and 74 percent respectively. Home appliances (36 percent), home electronics (27 percent) and smartphones (26 percent) also saw significant increases in people who said that discounts had no impact on their purchase decisions in these categories.

As regards India, while price was the most important determinant of a purchase till recently as consumers had low disposable income, all that has been changing with rising disposable incomes and deeper pockets. The India growth story has led to the evolution in 'value' for Indian consumers triggered by rising urbanization and globalization and the consequent exposure to modern lifestyle through media and travel. Indian consumers now have a wider perspective products and possible benefits.

Some key consumer behavior trends redefining consumer behavior are:

Quality: The expectations from quality have undergone a drastic change. While earlier, from quality consumer expectation was a promise of durability and reliability, for the modern consumer quality is more about design and aesthetics. There can be seen a distinct alignment with

global trends here as Indian consumers are increasingly not shying away from paying a premium price for products that display better and modern design with global sensibilities. From jewellery to furniture, the purchase decision is more about how aesthetically pleasing the product is. Big brands with their promises of better workmanship, durability and aesthetically appealing designs are invading the traditional jewellery space while in the space of furniture — durability of a Godrej almirah has lost appeal as newer brands come up with aesthetically designed storage units.

Brand: Consumers today are brand conscious as brands become a defining proposition of personality. They are willing to invest in premium brands even if cheaper alternative is present. Hence, brand is today an important metric in evaluating the value proposition of a purchase. Branded products are also preferred as they denote credibility and quality assurance. Premium brands are also symbols of achievement or having arrived for consumers — a sign that they are upwardly mobile.

Functionality: Despite growing purchase power, consumers are unwilling to sink their money into a product whose core product functionality is invisible. Consumers must see a perceptible need to pay a premium for the product. This is the reason why luxury segment has yet not made a dent in middle-class homes.

Deal hunting: With a plethora of options, thanks to e-commerce platforms,consumers today are deal hunters. Though even earlier, consumers are known to check out several products, shops and even markets for a bargain, this phenomenon is stronger now with e-commerce discounting, cash back and promotional sales. Shopping for the Indian consumer is more a treasure hunt as it is therapy.

Some significant findings of First Insight report include:

Influence of discounts on purchase decisions in furniture fall the most

The percentage of men and baby boomers who said discounts do not influence their purchase decisions more than doubled (111 percent and 128 percent increases, respectively) in the furniture category, with the percentage of millennials nearly doubling (94 percent increase). The percentage among women and Generation X respondents also increased around 77 percent each.

Women and millennials see sharpest fall in influence of discounts on purchase decisions for vehicle discounts

The percentage of women and millennials who said discounts do not impact their purchase decisions on vehicles nearly doubled (97 and 93 percent respectively) from March to December 2017. While the percentage of men also increased by 52 percent, it was by a much slimmer margin, as were Generation X (60 percent increase) and baby boomers (78 percent increase).

Generation X and women still influenced by discounts on smartphone purchase decisions

While a growing percentage of men (61 percent more) and baby boomers (64 percent more) show lowering influence of discounts on smartphone purchases, the impact of discounts on women's and younger generations' purchases is about the same or increasing. Women saw a nine percent decrease in the percentage of respondents who said department store discounts have “no influence” on expectations for smartphone purchases, with Generation X decreasing by five percent in December, compared to March of last year.

Deep discounts are not the only factors motivating purchase.

Millennials remain steady on influence of discounts on home appliance purchase decisions

While the percentage of respondents that said department store discounts were having "no influence" on expectations for discounts in home appliances increased overall, particularly with baby boomers (87 percent increase), the percentage of millennials increased by only three percent. Male respondents increased nearly 50 percent, with women respondents increasing 20 percent and Generation X increasing 30 percent.

Influence of discounts on purchase decisions dropped drastically for men and baby boomers

The percentage of baby boomers reporting that discounts influenced their home electronics purchases dropped nearly 60 percent, significantly higher than Generation X (14 percent) and millennials (18 percent). Men are also less likely to be influenced by discounts in home electronics than women, with a 34 percent increase in respondents in December compared to March saying department store discounts had "no influence" on expectations in this category, compared to an only 18 percent increase in women.

Quality more important than price across generation, gender and income level

Fifty-four percent of men and 51 percent of women ranked quality as the most important factor when making a purchase. Similarly, more than half of baby boomers, millennials and Generation Xers choose quality over price, with Xers the most influenced by price (41 percent) versus millennials and baby boomers, with 36 percent of both groups saying price was the most important factor. Similarly, while 62 percent of affluent respondents (who make more than $100,000 per year) ranked quality as the most important, compared to 49 percent of those that made less, it was still significantly more important than price with both groups. Twenty-eight percent of affluent respondents ranked price as most important, versus 43 percent of those who made less.

Conclusion

India's growth story is being scripted by the middle class, who are evolving very fast. This means evolving needs, tastes and attitudes. As disposable incomes rise, consumers are more than willing to pay for that extra value, thereby reducing the overall price sensitivity. Hence low pricing isn't the guarantee of purchase — consumers seek long-term value from products.

Quality is becoming more important than price to most consumers. Even as more consumers consider quality as the most important factor when making purchases, consumer expectations for discounts are falling. As the pendulum swings away from discounts, organizations must lay more emphasis on quality products in every category, from apparel to furniture and appliances.

Source: Secondary research & mediareports

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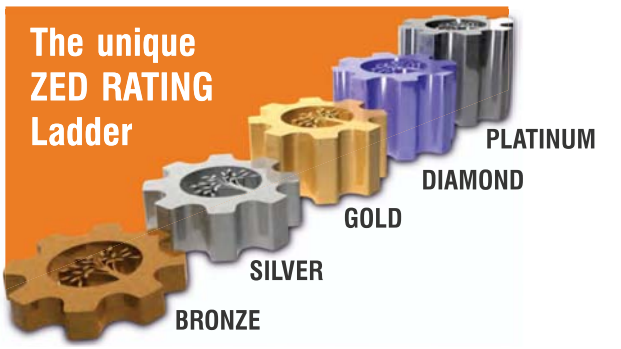

HIGHLIGHTS

- A scheme by Ministry of MSME, Govt. of India
- Certification on the systems and processes of MSMEs
- Handholding MSMEs towards world class manufacturing
- Special emphasis on MSMEs supplying to Defence Sector
- Direct subsidy to participating MSMEs
- Creating a credible database of MSMEs for OEMS/CPSUs/Foreign Investors under "Make in India initiative"
- Quality Council of India (QCI) to function as the NMIU (National Monitoring and Implementing Unit) of the scheme

"Let's think about making our product which has 'Zero Defect'; so that it does not come back (get rejected) from the world market and 'Zero Effect' so that the manufacturing does not have an adverse effect on our environment"

SHRI NARENDRA MODI
Hon'ble Prime Minister

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