

THE AWARE CONSUMER

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RESEARCH FEATURE
Tracing The Revolution
Called Quality Management

**WORLD QUALITY DAY
2022**
10TH NOVEMBER

**QUALITY
CHAMPIONS**

Theme:
**Quality Conscience:
Doing The Right Thing**

INTERVIEW



MR. ADIL ZAINULBHAI
Former Chairman,
Quality Council Of India



Ms. INOSHI SHARMA
Executive Director
(SBCC and RC), FSSAI

PLUS

ROUND UP • MY MARKET • THE PRESCRIPTION



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VIEWPOINT

MESSAGE FROM PUBLISHER & EDITOR

The Definition of Quality is Customer Delight!



QUALITY IS THE mark of excellence of a product or service – it is further defined by the ability to delight an individual's needs and preferences. It can also be considered as a promise of meeting more than the expectations of a consumer. The parameters remain subjective here as the perception of quality can be based on the features, functionality, efficiency, reliability, durability or even aesthetics of the product/service but the bottom-line is it must deliver customer delight.

Some people perceive quality as a function of its price or prestige while some may relate it to other considerations like sustainability or ethical sourcing.

Accessing best quality is the basic expectation of a consumer. And every organisation, manufacturer or supplier has to deliver the desired level of excellence by creating quality, upholding quality, supporting quality and improving quality. It follows that maintaining quality standards calls for judicious efforts on an ongoing basis by improving the features and innovating based on customer feedback. Therefore, quality cannot be a one-off act, it has to become an ingrained practice as part of the quality management system within the organisation and all the players within the supply chain up to the end users.

Conceptualising quality can seem complicated at first. However, all it requires is a customer-centric culture and everyone within the organisation made to think in terms of how good a product is or is the service good enough, with a lateral focus on how to make them better! This is

why every organisation worth its name has dedicated quality professionals that handle quality issues while striving to create a culture of quality in the workplace.

Accordingly, Chartered Quality Institute (CQI) - a chartered body for quality professionals – has instituted World Quality Day on the second Thursday of November to commemorate the commitment to providing quality products and services. This is also an attempt to bring more awareness and recognition to the quality industry while celebrating the efforts and achievements of those who work towards improving customer value through quality management.

From 2021, CQI has expanded the single day celebration into a week-long event to extend greater support to individuals and organisations for the adoption of high-quality standards.

This issue of The Aware Consumer is focusing on making quality the key factor when a consumer is accessing a product/service!

Prof. Bejon Kumar Misra
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PRAFULL D. SHETH

Editorial Board Member

INCULCATING THE HABIT OF QUALITY WITH A CONSCIENCE!



QUALITY DEFINES A supreme level of satisfaction and ensures value for money! It is quality which guarantees standards of excellence and eliminates mediocrity from seeping into our life.

The World Quality Week will be observed with a view to inculcate habit of using one's conscience to practice quality from 7th to 11th November with the focal theme of 'Quality Conscience: Doing the Right Thing'.

Indeed, the broad scope of quality is expanding beyond the consumers, employees, and other stakeholders to encompass the community and environment at large.

Therefore, the focus also must broaden from merely improving the quality of products and services to the methods of delivering them to delight consumers across the value stream.

The 2022 global campaign calls for organisations to use conscience in their decision making at every level. To practice quality with a conscience, need for behavioural changes are bound to crop up, but this will also translate into an opportunity to reflect on how to bring about attitudinal change for making

the right decisions on a principled plane.

Accordingly, the attention will shift from merely inculcating the importance of quality measurement to differentiating between right and wrong decisions as the latter can not only damage reputation but also endanger lives.

It follows that corporate values and leadership will take centre stage now in place of the erstwhile processes and systems.

Organisations will have to emphasise on a code of conduct in their value system that will restore consumer trust in behaviour and ethics. Infusing this kind of an approach into daily work at all levels is a

complex challenge, but leaders will have to rise above the occasion and set the tone for things to come!

As CQI CEO, Vince Desmond commented:

"Doing the right thing gets to the heart of quality management in any organisation, and the heart of what the quality profession is there to help with!"

You too can be a part of this wave of change in quality paradigms – celebrate it appropriately and use #WQW22 to highlight the events and activities. ■



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TRACING THE REVOLUTION CALLED QUALITY MANAGEMENT



Quality is all about excellence in products and services. And quality management is what manages the whole process to deliver an excellent product or service.



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HORIZON

JOINING THE QUALITY DOTS IN THE NEW NORMAL



The COVID-19 pandemic has hit the world very hard, leaving untold devastation in its wake. Apart from the grave toll on life and health, the impact has threatened literally every sector of the economy.



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MY MARKET

IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY



Food determines the health, nutritional status and productivity of the consumers. Quality remains the most sensitive issue in food as lack of quality can bring a host of problems in its wake.



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PRIORITISING A CULTURE OF QUALITY AND SAFETY IN HEALTHCARE



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FAKE REVIEWS ON E-COMMERCE SITES TO BECOME A THING OF THE PAST?



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VINCENT DESMOND
CHARTERED QUALITY INSTITUTE (CQI), CEO

Society would not be where it is today without quality.
Behind every improvement in service and product there is an individual,
team or organisation that has driven change through quality method.



ROUNDUP



“ Even the poorest citizen of the country deserves the best quality products and the culture of no compromise with quality has to be adopted in the country! ”

– These words of **Mr. Piyush Goyal**, our Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Textiles echo with the powerful ring of truth.

Poorest Consumers Also Deserve Best Quality Products!

DATA BRIEFING

India was positioned at an overall rank of

59th

among 110 countries in the 3rd edition of 'Digital Quality of Life Index (DQL) 2021' prepared by cybersecurity company 'Surfshark'.



“Quality is all about organizing our day-to-day working to improve quality. Everything we do can be done better, more efficient, can become cost-effective, more useful for people, and help the country become developed in the next 25 years. It can transform this country faster than our imagination.”

Sh. Piyush Goyal

Hon. Minister of Commerce & Industry,
Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution,
and Textiles, Govt. of India

Hallmarking of Jewellery – Playing by the New Rules



INDIA MADE HALLMARKING of gold jewellery mandatory from 16th June, 2021. A Hallmark Unique Identification (HUID) based hallmarking portal was launched on 1st July, 2021 to automate and digitalise the entire assaying and hallmarking workflow. The registration of jewellers was made free and valid for lifetime.

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs stated that a record 8.68 crore jewellery articles were hallmarked in the year 2021-2022 while 3.7 crore articles have been hallmarked from April to July this year. More than a lakh jewellers registered with the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) – the numbers increasing from 43,153 on

1st July, 2021 to 1,43,497 on 1st August, 2022. The number of recognised Assaying and Hallmarking Centres (AHCs) also increased from 948 to 1,220 in the same period.

Mandatory hallmarking norms have been implemented in two phases across 288 districts of the country since June 2021. Earlier this year, the government also made



Hallmarks are official marks used as a guarantee of purity or fineness of precious metal items



I have been buying gold jewellery since years and always detested the fact that most of the jewellers mislead us about the purity of gold sold by them. We obviously cannot tell the quality and purity just by looking at the ornaments. Still, I never got anything tested and had to take their word for it.

But now I check the BIS symbol and other hallmarks vis-à-vis the jeweller's claims. This gives me the peace of mind that I am not paying more than the item's actual worth and receive the purity as stated.

Even recycling my gold will be convenient now as I am confident of the purity and can ask for the correct price based on the current gold rate. Nobody can contest this or try to cheat me with a lower price!

— **Anita Jhunjunwala, Hyderabad**

WHILE ADDRESSING THE Special Plenary Session at FICCI LEADS 2022 program in September 2022, the Minister urged the industry to focus on 5 key areas in the manufacturing sector - Standards or Quality, Durability, Design, Price and Sustainability and align them to the international standards. He stressed that we must adopt new technologies like IoT, AI and Machine Learning and should also look at upskilling and retraining our workforce to be able to meet the needs of Industry 4.0.

In tune with the theme of the event, 'Excellence in Manufacturing' he observed that, "Excellence in manufacturing is not new to India. Although there is no sector in which India does not have high quality manufacturing, we as a society still live in two worlds - one which is highly quality conscious and another which is still not sensitised to the value of high quality. We need to change this mindset of two quality standards for domestic and international markets and must not compromise with quality." ▶

provisions to allow common consumers to get the purity of their un-hallmarked gold jewellery tested at any of the BIS recognised AHCs. It also brought in a scheme to allow existing AHCs to set up Off Site Centres (OSC) to increase their reach and facilitate jewellers and consumers. BIS plans to cover more districts under the mandatory hallmarking order in due course of time.

Need for Hallmarking

As we all know, gold has to be alloyed with other metals to make it workable and durable. However, this opens the door to excessive adulteration – many unscrupulous jewellers mix excessive metals in their jewellery while misleading buyers about the purity of the gold and charge inflated prices. The hapless consumer has no choice but to go by the word of the jeweller as detecting the adulteration requires complex technical tests.

The government introduced the Hallmarking Scheme for gold and silver to protect the consumers against such adulteration by obligating manufacturers to maintain legal standards of fineness. The hallmarking process accurately determines and officially records the proportion of precious metal in the ornaments and works as a guarantee of the purity of the object.

This move has finally organised India's flourishing gold market while bringing the trust and transparency that we are paying only for the actual purity of the gold!

On their part, consumers should make it a point to only visit jewellery shops that display the BIS logo. Ask for a magnifying glass and check for the BIS Mark, purity in carat and fineness for gold, Assay centre's identification mark/number and the jeweller identification mark/number. Additionally, take a bill of the purchase and verify that the hallmarking cost is not more than Rs. 35 + GST for every piece of gold. ▶



Tightening the Noose on Low Quality Pressure Cookers

THE DEPARTMENT FOR Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) issued quality control norms for domestic pressure cookers in 2020. Accordingly, all domestic pressure cookers sold online or offline in India have to conform to IS 2347:2017 standards and bear the standard mark under a license from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). It came into force from 1st February 2021 and since then such items cannot be produced, sold/traded, imported or stocked unless they have the BIS mark. This order is part of the government's efforts to contain the import and production of sub-standard products in the country.

In fact, the new Consumer Protection Act, 2019 stipulates that goods or products which do not comply with the standard which is required to be maintained by or under any law for the time being in force are liable to be held as defective. The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) even issued safety notices to alert and caution consumers against buying goods – not just pressure cookers, but also helmets, electric immersion water heaters, sewing machines, microwave ovens, cooking gas cylinders, domestic gas stoves with LPG, etc. - which do not hold a valid ISI Mark and violate compulsory BIS standards.

Following on this, the CCPA has initiated a country-wide campaign to prevent sale of spurious and counterfeit goods that violate Quality Control Orders published by the Central Government. The consumer watchdog took suo-moto cognizance against e-commerce entities found to be selling substandard or defective pressure cookers that do not conform to the compulsory safety and quality standards. It even tabulated the pressure cooker brands listed on e-commerce platforms – Amazon, Flipkart, Snapdeal, Paytm Mall, ShopClues, etc. - that violate the standards and informed the DG BIS to take necessary action.

This was followed by a major crackdown on the e-commerce players that continued to flout the norms. In March this year, the CCPA imposed a fine of Rs. 1 lakh each on Paytm Mall and Snapdeal for selling pressure cookers which did not conform to BIS standards and were non-compliant to Domestic Pressure Cooker (Quality Control) Order 2020. They were also asked to recall the sold items and reimburse the amount paid by the consumers.



NO HEED TO QUALITY CONTROL CAN COST LIVES

AUGUST 2022 WITNESSED two separate instances of deaths of people in the rural districts due to alcohol poisoning. This is just the latest in a spate of multiple occasions when people became gravely ill, lost their eyesight or even their lives due to consuming low quality, spurious or counterfeit alcohol!





Both e-tailers argued that they are intermediaries as per IT Act and the responsibility of content lies with the seller and not on them. However, the CCPA cited Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020 which state that no e-commerce entity shall adopt any unfair trade practice whether in the course of business or its platform or otherwise. While Snapdeal challenged the order, it agreed to offer a BIS-certified pressure cooker as an immediate replacement to all the 73 customers of

the identified sellers. Paytm Mall submitted its report of compliance with the Order and also paid the penalty amount.

The CCPA imposed a similar penalty of Rs 1,00,000 on Flipkart in August for allowing the sale of substandard pressure cookers and violating the rights of consumers. It was also directed to notify the consumers of all 598 pressure cookers sold on its platform, recall them and reimburse the money paid.

The consumer watchdog upholds that the Walmart-owned ecommerce platform reportedly gained Rs 1.84 lakh from the sale of these pressure cookers. As Flipkart has gained commercially from the sale of such pressure cookers, it cannot alienate itself from the role and responsibility arising out of their sale to consumers.

The same fine was slapped on Amazon with respect to non-conformity of BIS standards in the pressure cookers. It was also ordered to notify, recall and reimburse the 2265 buyers of the substandard pressure cookers.

Amazon moved the Delhi High Court in September to challenge the CCPA's order. Following this, the judiciary directed the company to deposit the Rs. 1 lakh penalty amount before the Registrar General of the Court within a period of one week apart from notifying the consumers who bought the said pressure cookers on its platform. The CCPA order regarding recall and reimbursement has been placed in abeyance till the next hearing in November. The court passed a similar order for Flipkart as well.

The strict action against low quality products peddled online will continue in the future. Earlier this year itself, the Consumer Affairs Ministry informed that as many as 305 cases were registered against e-commerce companies for flouting various norms and a penalty of Rs. 49.95 lakh was realised from 90 companies. ▀



This is actually a common occurrence across the rural and underdeveloped areas of the country where the quality of liquor is reprehensibly compromised. To add

to this, the '*desi daru*' is packed in poor quality materials to further lower the costs. Dangerous chemicals leach into the already questionable drinks thus multiplying the risks for the impoverished drinkers who have a penchant for this as it is the cheapest spirit available.

Government regulations require that country liquor should be packed in PET/glass bottles/tetra packs of country liquor and sealed properly. They should feature a QR code as well.

Meanwhile, a joint study by think tank, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) and solicitor firm PLR Chambers reveals that, "Indian

alcoholic beverages consumers are becoming more quality conscious rather than staying price-sensitive". It further demonstrates that by 2030, while 50% of the consumers would buy more of the same category of alcoholic beverages that they are consuming, 26% are expected to move to higher brands and 24% will spend on newer categories.

This 'Developing Principles for Regulation of Alcoholic Beverages Sector in India' report stated that the government should develop transparent and predictable policies, focus on technology-enabled interventions, enhance the use of data-driven models, engage in regular consultation with stakeholders, and implement phased reduction in tariffs for the Indian alcoholic beverages sector. ▀



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We hope to continue serving you for many more years to come.



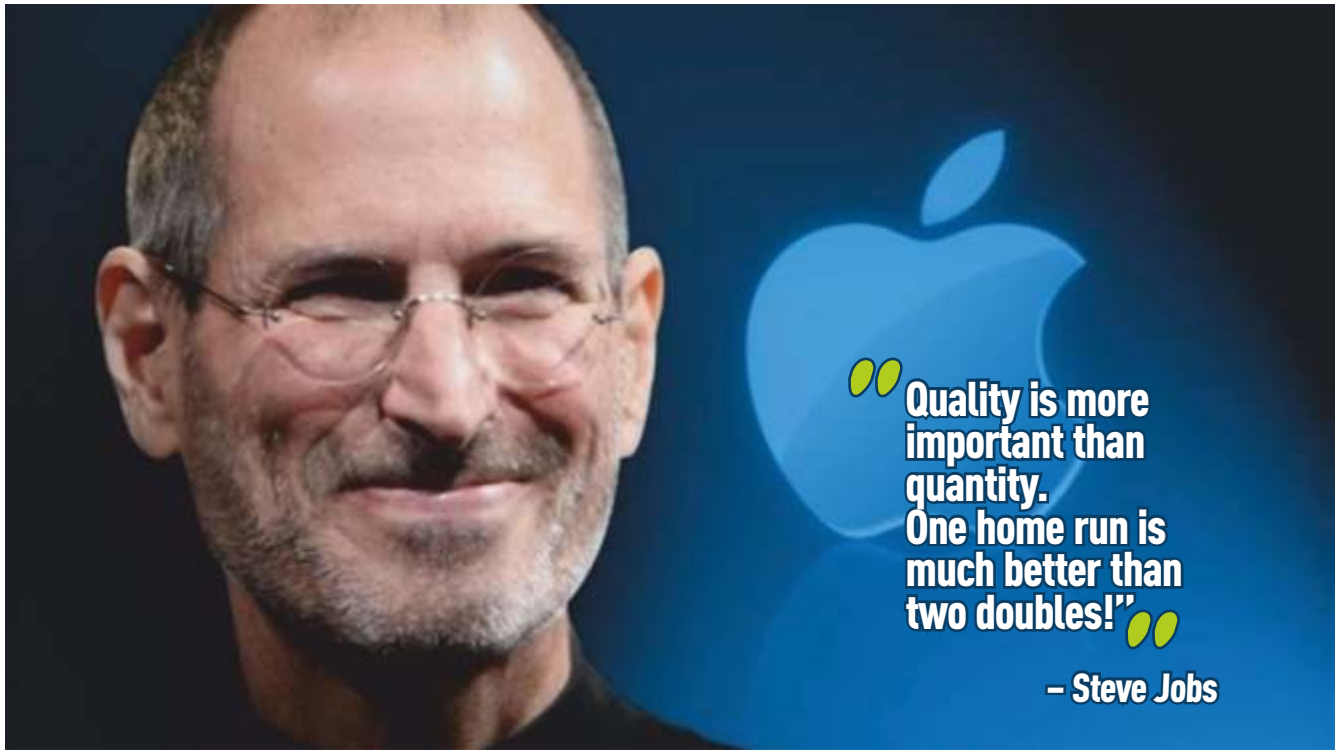
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Consumers, Beware

Quality Purchases Define the Path to Conscious Consumerism

We care about the world around us - Conscious consumption, sustainability and social responsibility are the buzzwords today!

Putting quality at the base of buying decisions is one of the driving factors of new-age consumerism. Consumers should look for value and this will empower them to get the quality they need and deserve!



AS CONSUMERS, WE vote with our purchase decisions. Today the trend is towards conscious consumerism with people making choices based on how it will affect their health, the society and the environment at large. Indeed, the decision on what to buy is no longer being blindly fuelled by habits, convenience or even price. People are pausing to consider the long-term impact of what they buy – be it food and clothing or electronics and vehicles - on themselves and the planet.

Sustainability is here to stay with the culture of buying as much as possible giving way to a conscious cutting down on wasteful consumption. Now it has become all about buying only what you need while keeping the ecological footprint of the product, its lifespan and possibility of safe disposal in mind.

In a Nielsen survey on purchase preferences, as many as 73% of global consumers said that they will definitely or at least probably change their consumption habits to reduce the impact on the environment!

Consumer Expectations are Fast-Changing

Apart from the ethical and eco-friendly considerations, consumers are also appreciating quality over quantity and even price. The overriding factor here is that something that is well-made will obviously last longer, thus conserving both natural resources and money in the long run. For this very reason, the aware folks set great store by the fact that quality doesn't come cheap. They are more than willing to pay more for things that are of better quality!

The quality requirements of consumers give weightage to:

- **Longevity** – How long the product will perform its function
- **Security** – The safety level of the product which includes whether the consumer will feel comfortable while using it
- **Efficiency** – The product's ability to streamline a process or even save money

- **Usability** – The ease of using the product
- **Sustainability** – The positive social, economic and environmental impact of the product

This quality consciousness is translating into a woke conscience where consumers become aware of whether their actions are right or wrong! Quality conscious consumers care about the quality of the product or service they receive! Personal values and knowledge come into play here. Consumers are not only putting emphasis on quality but also sparing the time and attention to gather information about the products they plan to buy. This knowledge is mined from online research, social media, talking to other people and also personal experiences. Indeed, the world is much more connected now which puts more information at the fingertips of the consumers.

As quality sentiments become more pervasive, organisations will have no choice but to pay heed to the consumer demands for

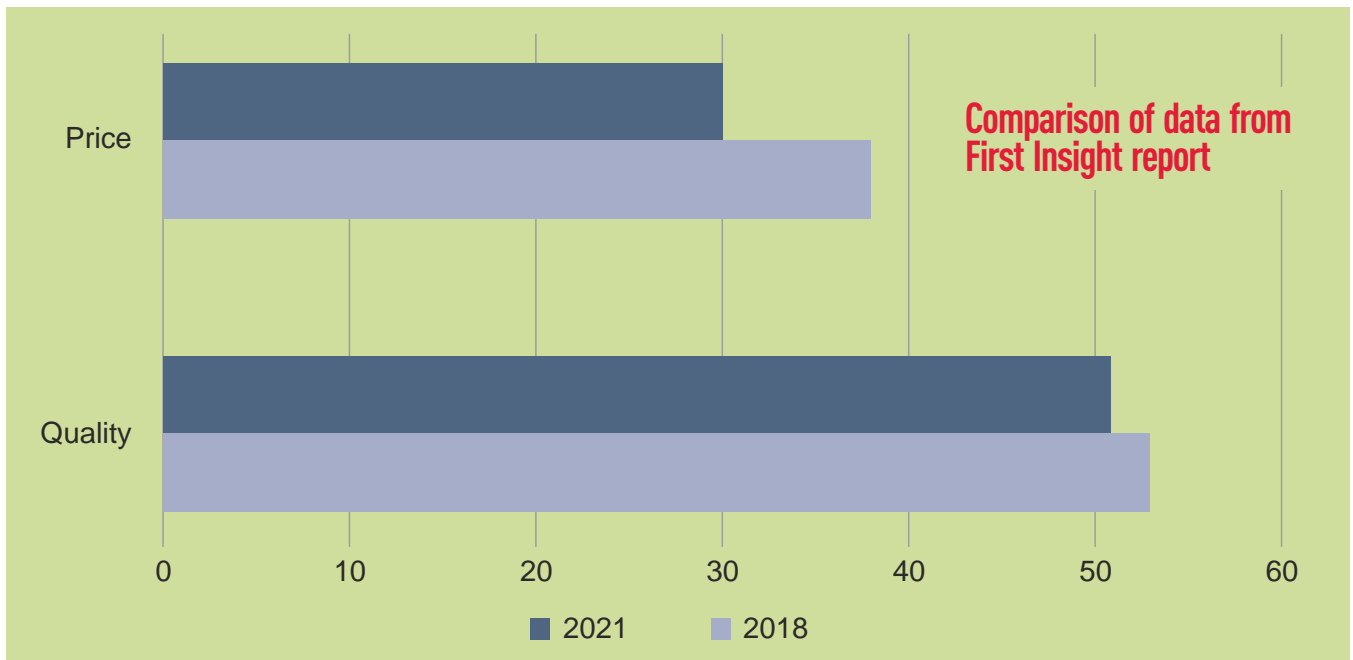
Quality conscious consumers care about the quality of the product or service they receive!

improvement or risk falling by the wayside.

You are in the Driving Seat for Seeking Quality

To keep the focus on supporting quality, we should read product labels with care to gauge the kind of ingredients and other details of the products. Look up the companies to find out more about how their products are made and the quality parameters they maintain.

Reliability and trustworthiness enters the picture here. Ultimately it is about the promise of superior performance. For this, you should



look at the certifications and ratings as they speak volumes about the quality standards of the organisation. Above all, replace mindless shopping with getting value for money in terms of high quality.

Understanding whether a company is 'doing the right thing' is what will help you to make more informed decisions about the products you buy and support.

Price Sensitivity in the Market

There is still a section of the population that is more concerned about comparing prices and getting

the best deals possible. It is true that not everyone can afford to vote with their rupee here. However, these numbers are fast dwindling with the rising clamour for quality and people migrating to quality consciousness within their own budgetary limitations.

A report by First Insight first published in 2018 stated that quality was becoming more important than price to most consumers and the trend of being swayed by deep discounts was losing its hold on the purchase behaviours. The company again conducted new consumer research in the pandemic-affected world in 2021 and found that 51% of

the consumers still rank quality/value of the product higher than its price (30%). The study concluded that customers tend to keep coming back when a product is good, even if the price is high, and customers often buy what they perceive as higher quality, even if it costs more.

So, while the mindset of affordability will obviously continue, it will no longer remain the dominant factor over and above quality.

Conclusion

Quality is paramount for the conscious consumer, but nothing can be better if it comes wrapped in affordability! ▶

TRACING THE REVOLUTION CALLED QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Quality is all about excellence in products and services. And quality management is what manages the whole process to deliver an excellent product or service. But where did this come from? We track the development of the concept of quality management with a focus on the ISO standards for quality.



QUALITY IS ONE of the most important management principles. It has to be maintained at every level and across all aspects. It dictates everything from customer satisfaction to business reputation and profitability. Developing a culture of quality is considered crucial for everything – be it customer loyalty, employee dedication or business growth. Quality management sets the stage for distinguishing oneself from the competition and achieving success.

Going by this, the quality management concept can be mistaken for a modern-day phenomenon. However, the roots of quality control can actually be traced as far back as the Middle Ages. This was the time when craftsmen organised themselves into guilds that developed strict guidelines for product and service quality. Apprentices trained and perfected their skills in the guilds till they achieved the highest standards of quality. Inspection committees inspected and evaluated the work before marking the flawless pieces with a special symbol. This became a form of quality control prior to the sale. It also ensured that the product quality was consistent, maintained and improved upon. Some craftsmen placed a second symbol on their goods which became a mark of their reputation.

This system continued to flourish for centuries, embedded into different systems throughout the Industrial Revolution. It was the factory system that turned the craftsmen into factory workers and quality evolved to revolve around factory audits/inspections for removal of defective goods.

The early twentieth century saw a breakdown in quality control with the focus shifting to quantity and productivity. However, when working harder and longer failed to improve efficiency, it again drove home the need for a robust, structured and logical approach to quality. There was the realisation that employing checks, controls and other measures early in the production process will prevent defects and yield more profits.

The Journey

Quality management systems first surfaced in the 1920s with statistical theories being applied to quality control. However, they were again put aside as production was expanding and the end-product approach started failing in the face of growth and development.

It was in the 1940s that experts like Joseph M. Juran and William Edwards Deming developed the techniques of total quality management, that industries rely on till today!

At this time, Japan had a reputation for shoddy products and low quality imitations that were shunned by the

international markets. It was looking to rebuild its economy post the devastation of the second world war and wanted to explore new ways of achieving quality. The island nation invited Deming and Juran for consultations which not only helped Japan recover but also ushered in a quality revolution!

This move kickstarted a systemic change in the quality control approach – moving beyond mere inspection to strategies that incorporated the processes and people. With quality processes becoming integrated into management practices and everyday working in an end-to-end quality management system, Japan started producing high quality products at lower prices that gained favour around the world.

As the Japanese goods continued to outperform the American and European made ones, these economies started losing market share and suffered badly. After a point, they had no choice but to play catch up. When they could no longer ignore or dismiss this phenomenon, U.S. corporate leaders stepped up to the plate and embraced the new approach which set the stage for Total Quality Management. Today, these quality and operational excellence strategies are flourishing across the globe.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT

- Focuses on the customer and meeting the customer's needs
- Holds everyone responsible for the quality of the product

Quality Gurus

It follows that quality management is not a single policy coming from a particular individual. It is a collection of ideas contributed by a core group of management thinkers. While William Edwards Deming is hailed as the first Quality Guru, Joseph Juran is largely considered the Father of Quality! The pioneering duo developed a range of quality concepts and theories; their teachings are benefitting organisations and individuals till date. Dr. Juran gifted the world the trilogy of management processes - quality control, quality improvement and quality planning.

They were followed by other great thinkers like Philip Crosby, Shigeo Shingo, Dr. Genichi Taguchi, Dr. Kaoru Ishikawa, Armand V. Feigenbaum, and Dr. H. James Harrington. Their books and principles have



played a significant role in the evolution of quality over the decades.

Driving Quality Beyond Total Quality Management

The quality movement has slowly matured much beyond the foundation laid down by the early practitioners of quality. Several new initiatives have evolved and been adopted by the world.

Before the turn of the millennium, Motorola developed the Six Sigma methodology to minimise defects while striving for perfection in all processes and products. Over the years, this has evolved into a key process improvement tool that achieved significant breakthroughs and bottom-line results. Lean Manufacturing is another new approach that minimises waste and trims down the manufacturing process, while staying within certain margins of productivity and quality.

Now we are in the age of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) and Quality 4.0 is taking centre

stage. CQI is an ongoing process where management and workers strive to create constantly improving processes and quality while Quality 4.0 references the application of proven quality disciplines to new, digital and disruptive technologies.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

The ISO is an independent, non-governmental federation of national standards bodies from 167 countries and the world's largest developer of voluntary International Standards. It was founded in 1946 in Geneva, Switzerland. It develops and publishes standards in all technical and non-technical fields that are internationally agreed by experts.

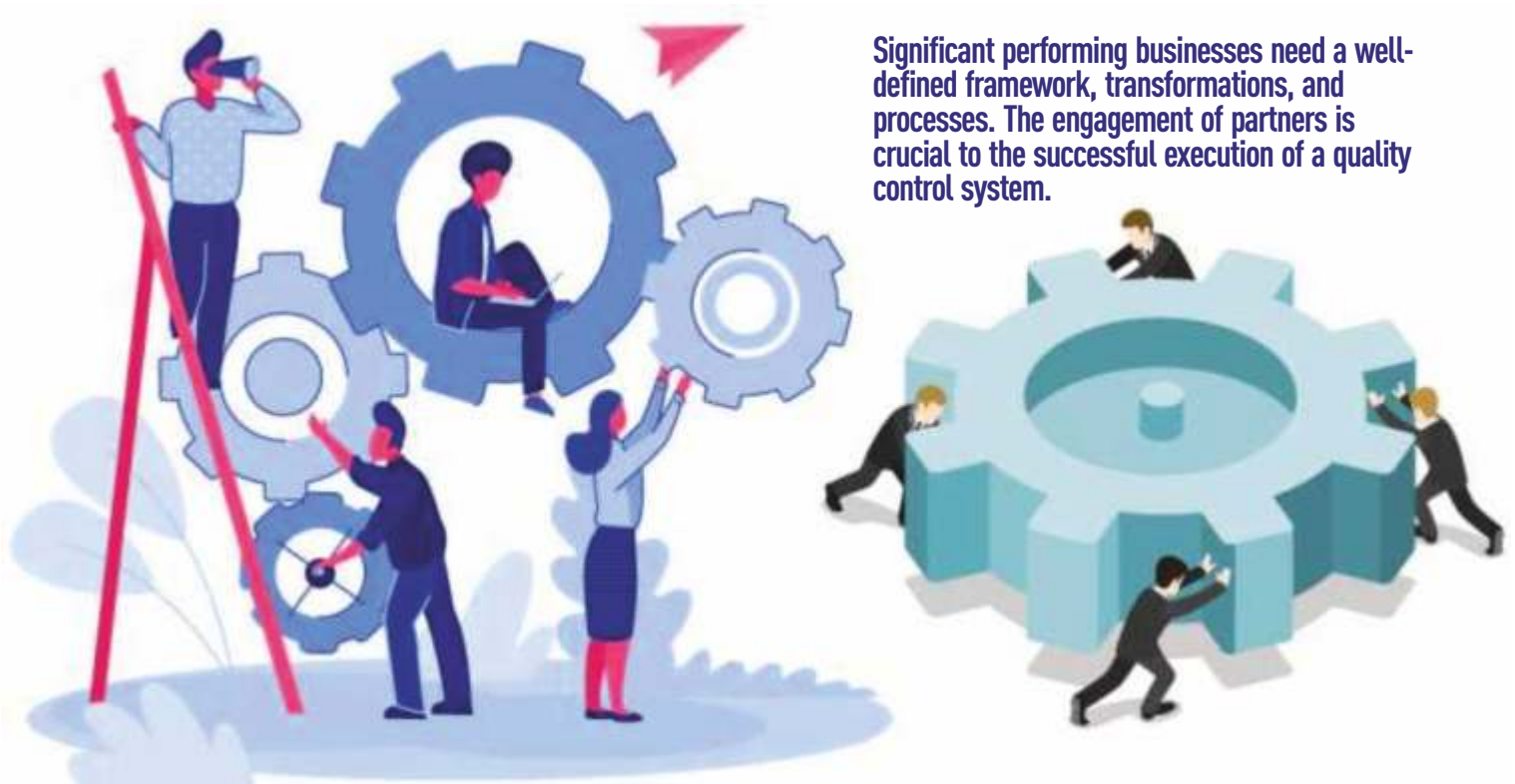
The ISO 9000 series of quality management standards was first published in 1987. This is a family of standards that define how organisations can establish and maintain effective quality assurance systems for manufacturing and service industries. They are designed to ensure that companies meet the minimum requirements to become an integral part of the industry – be it food, automotive or healthcare. The standard is now considered to be the last word in quality!

ISO 9000 basically deals with the fundamentals of quality management systems that are defined by the

A Quality Management System is a uniform, well-organised, process-driven approach to governing quality and control objectives to ensure continual improvement.

The Seven Quality Management Principles

QMP 1	Customer Focus	Organisations depend on their customers and therefore should understand current and future customer needs, should meet customer requirements and strive to exceed customer expectations
QMP 2	Leadership	Leaders establish unity of purpose and direction of the organisation. They should create and maintain the internal environment in which people can become fully involved in achieving the organisation's objectives
QMP 3	Engagement Of People	People at all levels are the essence of an organisation and their full involvement enables their abilities to be used for the organisation's benefit
QMP 4	Process Approach	A desired result is achieved more efficiently when activities and related resources are managed as a process
QMP 5	Improvement	Improvement of the organisation's overall performance should be a permanent objective of the organisation
QMP 6	Evidence-Based Decision Making	Effective decisions are based on the analysis of data and information
QMP 7	Relationship Management	An organisation and its external providers (suppliers, contractors, service providers) are interdependent and a mutually beneficial relationship enhances the ability of both to create value



Significant performing businesses need a well-defined framework, transformations, and processes. The engagement of partners is crucial to the successful execution of a quality control system.



ISO was founded with the idea of answering a fundamental question: "what's the best way of doing this?"

Regulators and governments count on ISO standards to help develop better regulation, knowing they have a sound basis thanks to the involvement of globally-established experts.

seven quality management principles that underlie the family of standards.

ISO 9001 is the most well-known international standard for quality management systems. It is also the only standard in the family that can be certified to. It is based on a number of quality management principles and can be used by any organisation, large or small, regardless of its field of activity. Over one million companies and organisations in over 170 countries have certified to ISO 9001.

It is helping these organisations work more efficiently

ISO is continually developing the standards. The ISO 9000 series of quality management standards was revised in 2000 to increase emphasis on customer satisfaction. The fifth version of the ISO 9000 series was issued in 2015 to increase emphasis on risk management. The ISO 9001:2015 was up for revision in 2020, but it was decided to continue it as is without any changes!

by organising the processes while reducing product failures and preventing other quality issues. As this will ensure that customers get consistent, good-quality products and services, it will translate into many business benefits as well.

ISO doesn't provide certification or conformity assessment. It is third-party certification bodies that certify products, services, systems and organisations that conform with the specific requirements of the standard. There are standards related to the certification process as well. Organisations undergo the certification process to meet the regulatory requirements or the commercial standards of the industry. At times, government agencies or other entities may prefer or require the certification. Some do it just to gain consistency and establish consumer trust and satisfaction.

Conclusion

Today, quality control is not only an integral part of manufacturing, but relates to services and other sectors of the society as well. ►

REPORT

Upping the Quality Stakes with Assurance

The latest annual assessment of quality engineering in the World Quality Report highlights the fact that expectations of quality assurance have been steadily increasing across industry sectors.

WORLD QUALITY REPORT

2021-22 | THIRTEENTH EDITION

The COVID-19 crisis has reinforced the importance of quality assurance

THE WORLD QUALITY Report is the industry's largest research study providing a comprehensive assessment of the current state of quality engineering practices from around the world and across different industries. Published by Capgemini and Sogeti in association with strategic technology partner Micro Focus, this is a one-of-a-kind annual global study that has been tracking and examining the most important trends and developments in quality assurance and testing for the past 14 years while offering recommendations for tomorrow's challenges.

The software sector is being analysed here, but it covers a broad section of industries where software is used for testing and improving quality. Moreover, it acquires greater significance with the Commerce and Consumer Affairs Minister, Mr. Piyush Goyal stressing on the need to adopt new technologies like IoT, AI and Machine Learning to deliver better to the consumers.

The 2021-22 report evaluates responses from over 1,750 executives and professionals across 10 industry sectors in 32 countries. The respondents were surveyed through quantitative interviews followed by qualitative deep-dive discussions.

The report identifies a welcome increase of positivity in the world of quality assurance. Acceleration in quality transformation is visible across the board, directly

attributed to the resilience shown by the IT and Quality teams in the face of the COVID crisis.

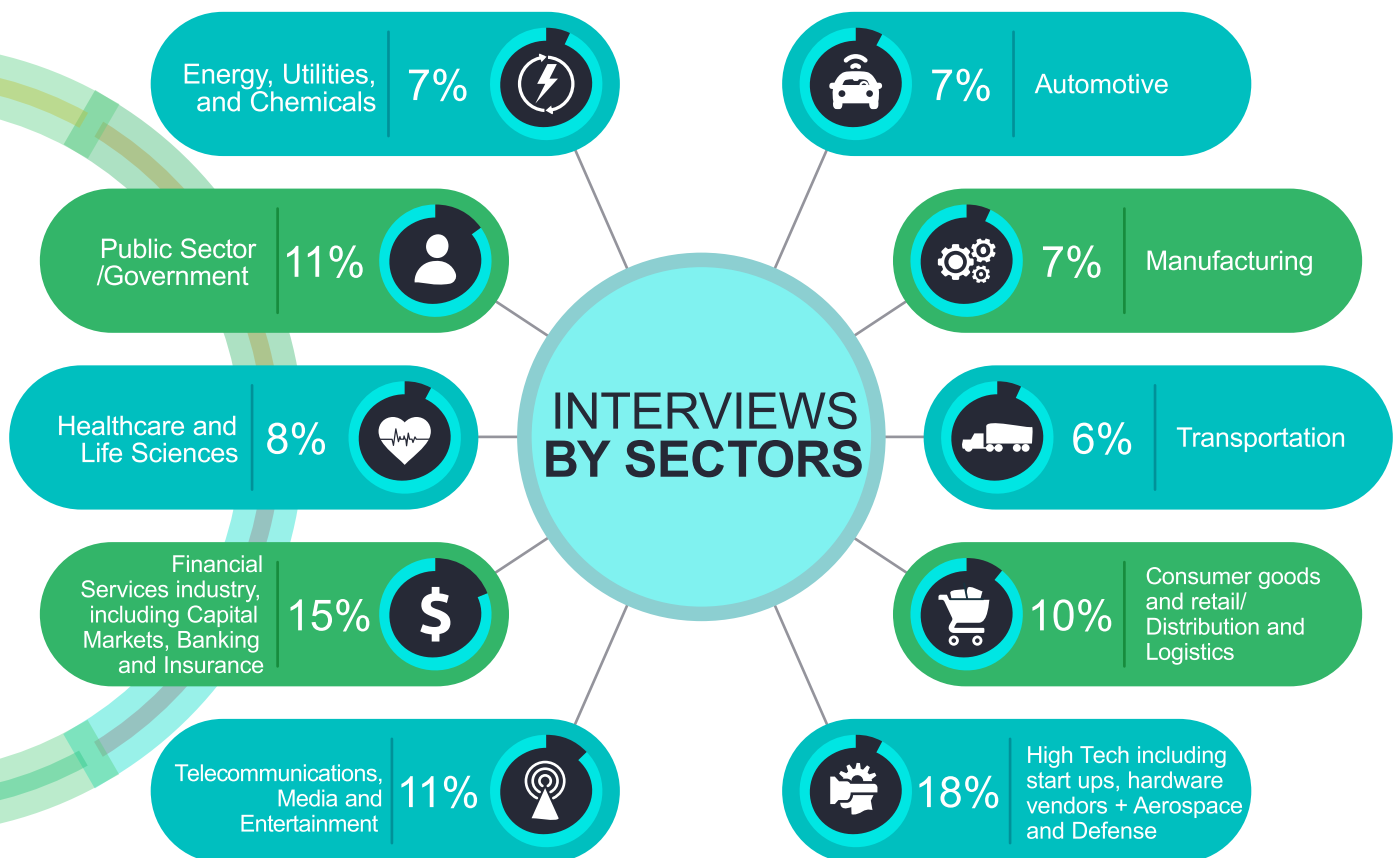
The key expectations remain more realistic –

- Enhancing customer experience (rated highly by 63% of respondents)
- Enhancing security (62%)
- Responsiveness to business demands (61%)
- And high quality of software solutions (61%)

It was concluded that it makes sense that these criteria have been evenly weighted. Similarly, there is a small point spread in the importance of quality assurance and testing objectives, showing that they are evenly balanced. Figure 1 shows that they are largely regarded in a similar light to one another. (The figures range from 58% to 62%, and they haven't moved much during the last four years.)

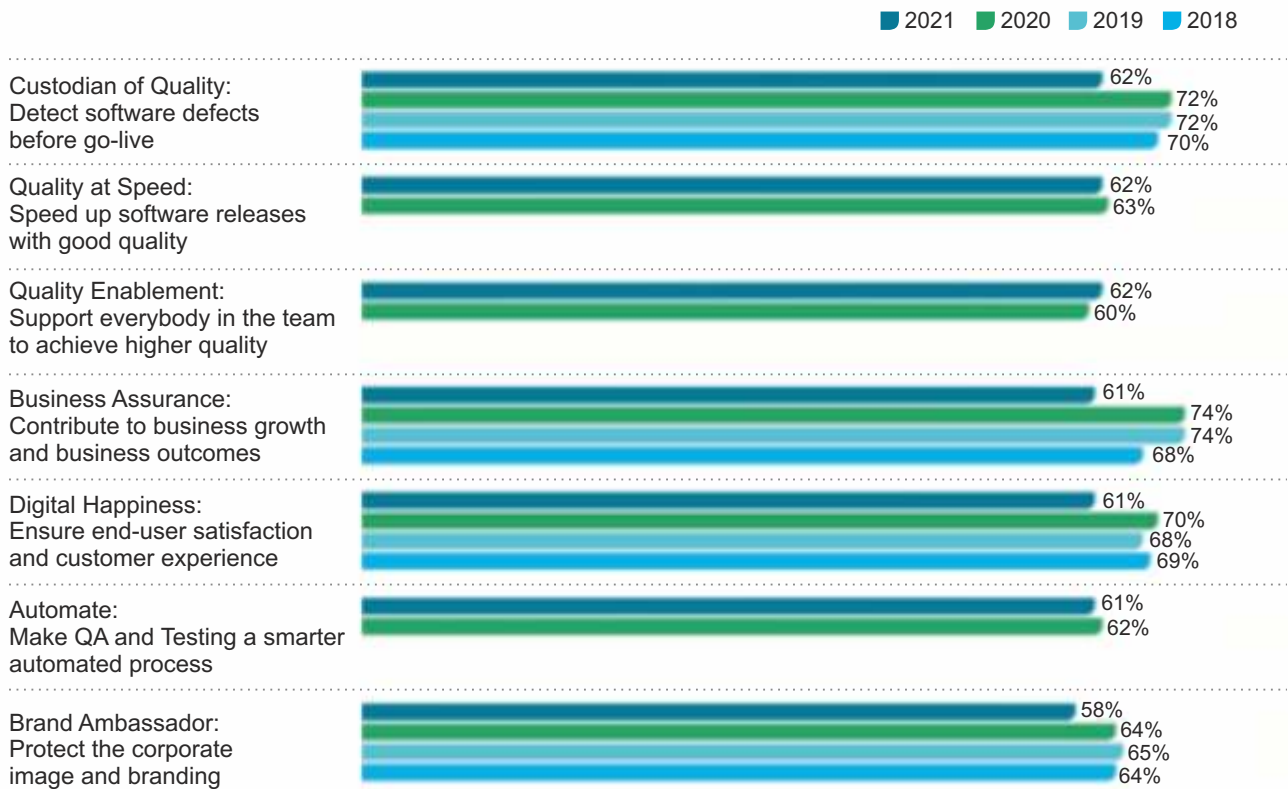
To add to this, the management is finally seeing quality assurance as about more than finding defects! According to Andrew Fullen, head of Innovation and Technology for Sogeti in the United Kingdom, this means quality will play a larger role and be seen differently.

The pandemic-induced pressures of time, resources and availability has made companies more open to out-



Focussing on software development and testing, this report presents a snapshot of the changes across industries in terms of delivering quality

Fig. 1: Objectives of Quality Assurance and Testing in the organization

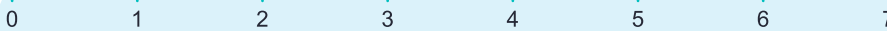


MOST IMPORTANT QA PRIORITY BY IT AND BUSINESS

Quality Enablement

Support everybody in the team to achieve higher quality

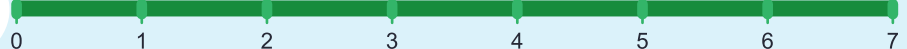
5.74



Digital Happiness

Ensure end-user satisfaction and customer experience

5.73



Quality Assurance is Non-Negotiable Now

of-the-box approaches. Most of them have integrated changes – like working remotely - into the day-to-day work.

The Culture of Quality has Changed

There has been a significant shift towards a more orchestrated approach to Quality Assurance as organisations are growing increasingly aware of its importance. It is evolving from serving as an independent function to become an integral and inclusive part of the team and delivery lifecycle as digital transformation efforts expand.

There is a clear sense that testing is no longer seen as an obstacle to progress, but as a factor in its achievement. Embedded quality model adoption is gaining traction across sectors and the workforce must now take pains to instil quality in their work.

Organisations are keen to put artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) techniques to good use in their quality assurance programs. (see Figure 2) It is heartening to see that confidence in AI in Quality Assurance is high, plans are robust, and skills and toolkits are being developed to put AI and ML techniques to good use in the quality assurance programs. 42% business owners trust the intelligence provided by AI and ML platforms with 46% actually willing to act on intelligence provided by them. Despite this, AI in Quality Assurance hasn't reached a point of maturity yet.

There is immense value and benefits to be derived from automation. (see Figure 3) "These findings highlight the importance of using AI-powered continuous quality and test automation tools to advance modernisation initiatives," said Rohit De Souza, Senior Vice President and General Manager of Micro Focus' ITOM and ADM product groups, as well as Leader of the CTO Office and Product Security.

The Future is Intelligent Quality

Quality Assurance teams will soon become a source of rapid growth in intelligent industry with organisations being keen to achieve digital transformation. The key drivers for intelligent industry are illustrated in Figure 4. To achieve this, the first steps for organisations involve management buy-in and demonstrating feasibility. This requires organisations to focus on investing in products and services that will deliver the most value in the shortest amount of time, as well as in people.

The report also assesses quality assurance and testing in individual industries such as automotive, energy, financial services, healthcare, government, high tech and telecom.

Top Takeaways to Accelerate the Quality Assurance Journey

The World Quality Report is a call-to-action in the following segments that are applicable across industries -

- **Focus on what matters:** The emphasis should be on the customer experience and on business objectives, and on meeting needs in these areas with efficiency and speed. The focus is shifting from IT quality to production quality.
- **Standardise the use of test automation in QA, and use it from end to end:** An automation-first approach in software quality delivery should now be the norm across all QA activities.
- **Stop talking about AI and ML, and start doing:** Smart technologies are expected to transform quality engineering, so it's imperative to begin the journey now.
- **Emphasise the availability of test environments and test data:** Investment in real-time environment and

Fig. 2: AI/ML Testing Readiness in the Organisation

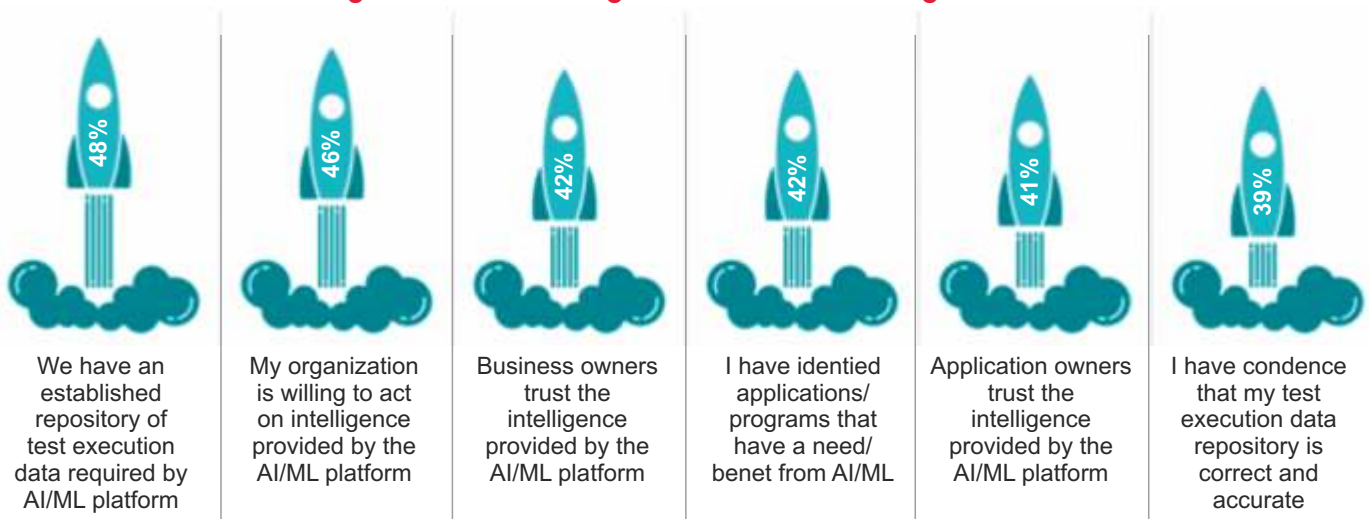
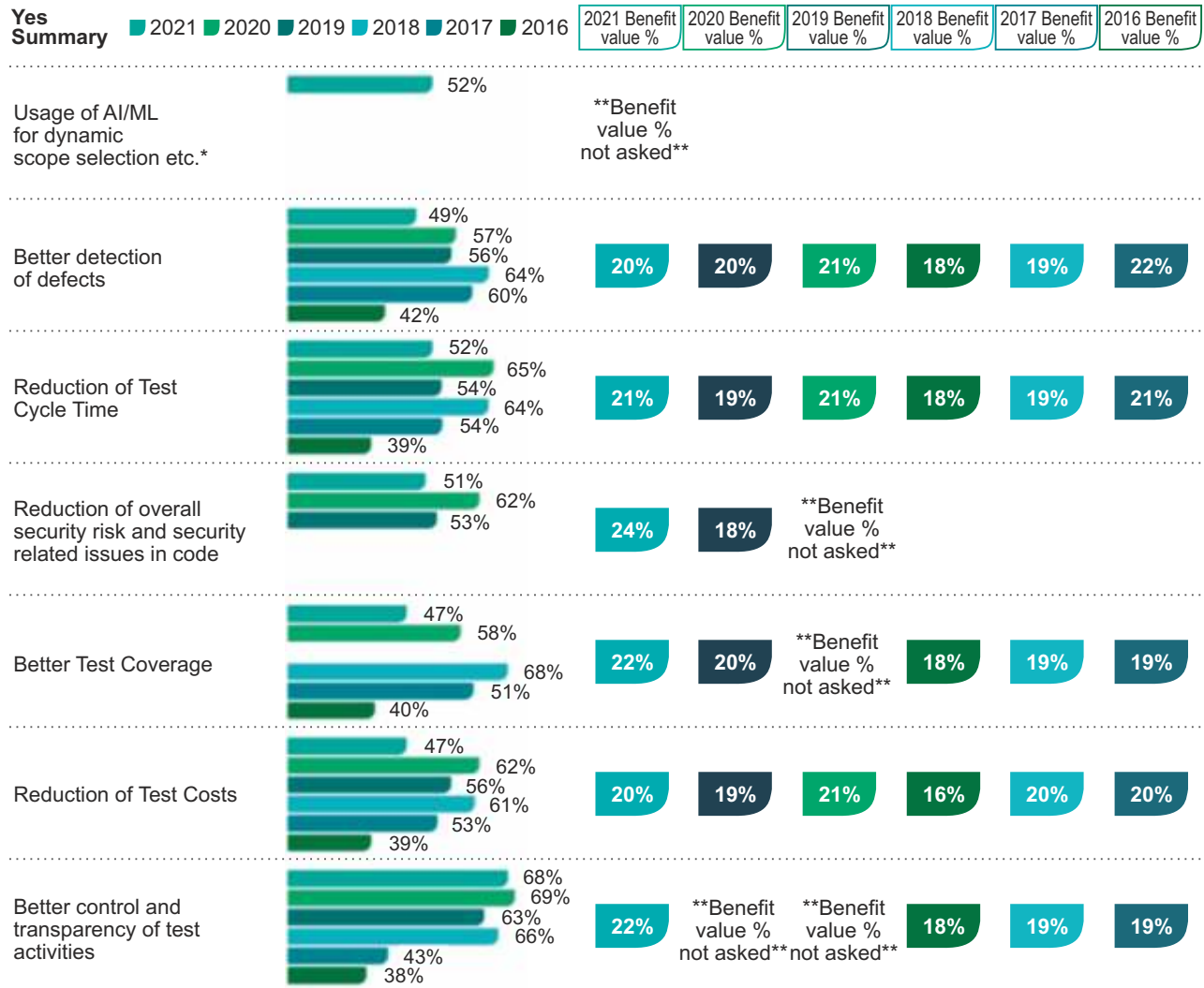


Fig. 3: Benefits Realised from Automation
(*New option introduced in 2021 study)

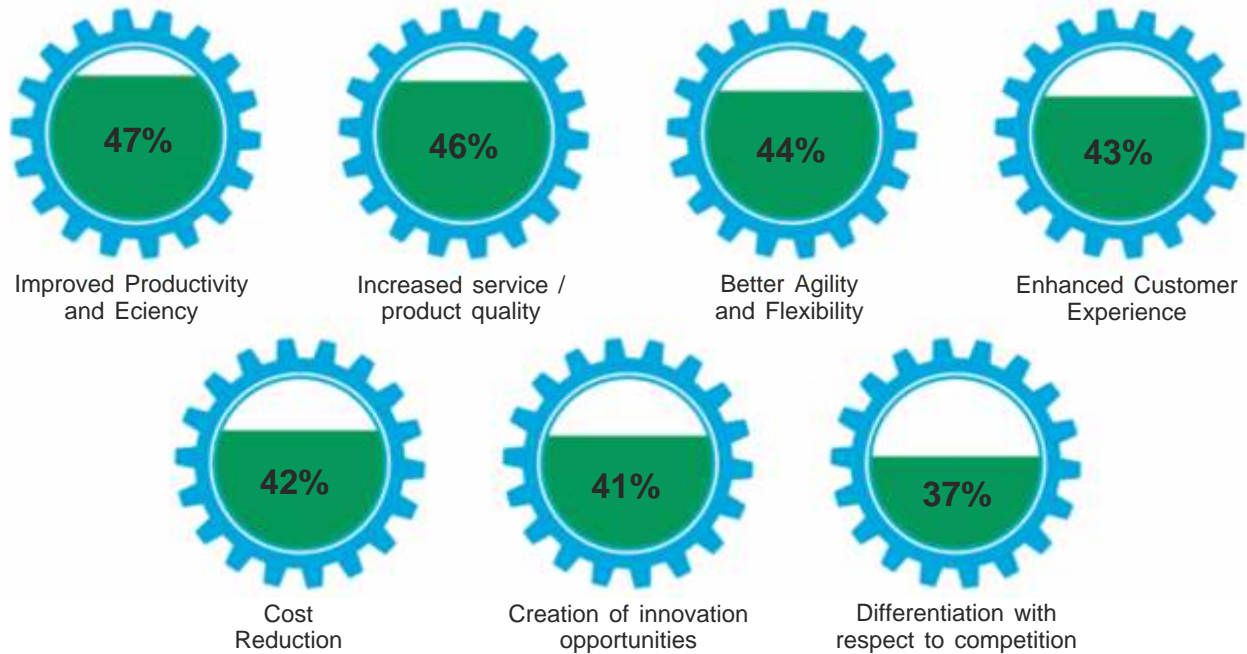


What's coming across loud and clear in this year's World Quality Report is the shift in perception and increased attention towards Quality Assurance as a whole.

– Mark Buenen, Global Leader, Digital Assurance and Quality Engineering, Capgemini Group



Fig. 4: Importance of the Key Drivers for Next Stage of Digital Transformation in Organisations



“Quality engineering isn't just about the tools. It's about the overall approach. It's about creating conditions in which people both inside and outside the team understand the need for quality, and promote it. It needs to be in people's DNA, and this will only happen if senior managers are actively behind it.

My wish is that quality becomes recognised not as a support function, but as something that is as important in its own right as development, and price, and time to market, and other key factors in the software development lifecycle.”

– Isabelle Farina, Head of Department Quality Management, Endress+Hauser

data availability solutions should continue to be a focus within the organisational strategy.

- **Get management buy-in for intelligent industry initiatives:** It's a given that leadership backing facilitates change – so demonstrate feasibility and quantify potential outcomes.

In the Wings

The World Quality Report 2022-23 was published last month (after this edition went to print). It dwells on accelerated adaption to the new normal on a global scale across all industries. It also sounds a note of caution that

without the right level of focus on quality, brand reputations and business outcomes will be at stake.

The broad conclusion is that quality operations and quality engineers play a more pivotal role than ever in enabling organisations to achieve higher levels of flexibility and agility, while assuring positive business outcomes and greater customer satisfaction.

Conclusion

It's a new world out there post the pandemic, and quality assurance is more crucial than ever for meeting consumer expectations! ▶

Joining the Quality Dots in the



The COVID-19 pandemic has hit the world very hard, leaving untold devastation in its wake. Apart from the grave toll on life and health, the impact has threatened literally every sector of the economy. However, quality has emerged triumphant from the mess with a drive towards unparalleled improvements. Now it is up to the organisations and even the consumers to build a better world in the new normal!

Quality is coping
with the fallout of
the pandemic with
positive results!

Quality

A close-up photograph of a hand in a dark suit jacket and white shirt, holding a blue pen. The hand is drawing a white, glowing, upward-curving arrow on a dark surface. The word 'Quality' is written in white, glowing, cursive script to the left of the arrow's tail.

THE CORONAVIRUS HAS unleashed an unprecedented and unpredictable impact on the world's economy. As we struggled to navigate the extraordinary situation, a sweeping societal change engulfed our existence. The world as we knew it metamorphosed and we had no choice but to adapt to the far-reaching changes of the 'new normal'. While the transition was on shaky legs, it is heartening to see that quality has emerged as a winner in the current circumstances!

A Holistic Change

A lot has changed in the last two plus years. We were consumed by a crushing fear that left us worried about our lives, jobs, health and wealth. And even as we find ways to deal with the pandemic, we are collectively driven towards wanting to live safer and

“CQI's Future of Work report (which studied the post-pandemic world) clearly shows that change was definitely on the horizon, but it was looking like evolution, not revolution. Once COVID-19 came along, its effects accelerated change at a rate that no one could have predicted!”

– *Quality World magazine*

more productive lives. Think about it – is not your foremost concern now about safety and security – both for yourself and your family?

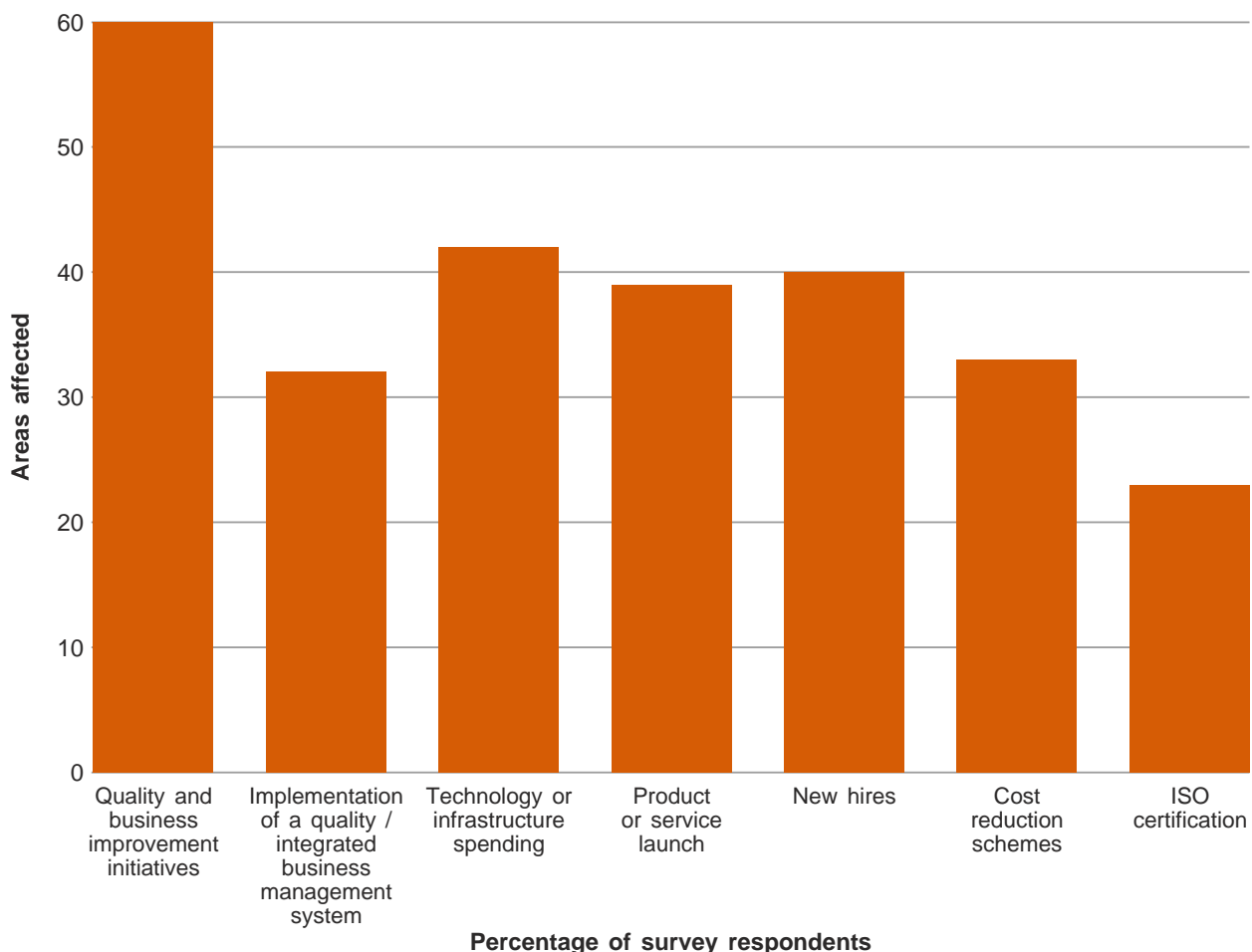
The primary shift has been in the rapid digitalisation as the pandemic has fuelled technological

enhancements that are touching on almost every sphere of our life. As consumers, we are also rethinking our consumption habits and breaking the old mindset barriers. We have exponentially adopted digital approaches, right from our work profiles to telemedicine in healthcare to shopping through video calls. We are no longer averse to the erstwhile taboo subject of working from home. Buying even luxurious products like jewellery and high-end cars online - without touching or seeing them for real - is also becoming a matter of course.

The Arc of Quality Going Forward

These seismic shifts, that are marked by an unbelievably seamless adoption, are no longer at the stake of quality!

Overview: Significant impact to business and quality improvement initiatives



Quality outcomes improve when more non-quality employees are involved in quality work

Nonquality full-time employees involved in quality work, % of total head count
(disposable medical-products example) (n = 24)



Source: McKinsey POBOS Quality benchmark in medical device companies

Indeed, the severe economic disruption of the pandemic is actually creating an inflection point where organisations across industry segments are forced to recognise the role of 'quality' in consumer purchase and consumption activities. Accordingly, they have to reevaluate what they want to be and redefine where they want to go. The progressive ones are seizing the moment and striving to provide consumers with the highest quality all the time. They also let people know that they value quality by initiating quality compliance initiatives.

This has led to structural changes in business practices that have digitalised quality – organisations are debunking the old systems and behaviours to give us access to quality even in the online realms. They have realised that consumers want a safe environment for the sales experience, customer service and after-sales. This is making them strive to embrace change and leverage innovation so as to deliver utmost quality at all times.

A standing example of the changed commitment is the fact that quality control inspections were being guided and conducted thoroughly (with remote testing, recorded live videos, digitally transmitted documentation and more) despite the physical limitations of the pandemic-induced lockdown and other restrictions.

Smart quality is a key part of the equation! A recent McKinsey report stated that manufacturers that switch to smart quality will see up to a 50% reduction in the cost of quality, a game-changing ROI.

Business strategies are also breaking out of the conventional norms and making way for quick-thinking and fast-adapting work processes. There is a sense of urgency and desire to do better with an undivided focus on ensuring the right quality and timely delivery at the right cost. Information technology is also playing an essential role in monitoring quality management and transparency in the organisation.

A CQI and Qalsys joint report on 'COVID-19: The Impact of Coronavirus on Quality Professionals' is based on an online survey of the experiences of 250 quality professionals to get real benchmark data from the quality profession. Approximately half of all survey respondents said that their electronic quality management system had been key since the outbreak.

Continuing with the New Normal

Even as uncertainty continues to hang like the proverbial Damocles

sword over our heads, the new habits have been formed and we cannot hope to return to the pre-COVID-19 routines. Our ability to adapt to the umpteen challenges that were thrown our way shows that we are open to embracing change with less fear even as we become sure of getting the quality we expect.

It is time organisations move to embedding the 'smart quality' culture and capabilities pan enterprise. This requires that the performance management of quality metrics must be digitally enabled (coupled with artificial intelligence and cloud computing) so that virtually every employee has quality elements specific to their role incorporated into their responsibilities and daily work.

The McKinsey research team figures that, "Typically, only the quality organisation is accountable for quality in design, development, operations, and even post-market activities. But in a smart-quality organisation, everyone owns quality!"

Conclusion

We sincerely hope that the buoyancy in quality continues to prevail and we will stay agile even after the pandemic is over! Above all, the spirit of 'Quality with Conscience' should prevail, especially for satisfying the quality demands of e-commerce consumers! ▶

Creating Quality Compliance Culture by Way of Standards

The BIS is the national standards body that promotes and regulates standards for products and services in India. It provides traceability and tangibility benefits to the consumers as well as the economy by way of standardisation, certification and testing.



The BIS Standard Mark (ISI Mark) is a mark of quality. Consumers prefer to purchase ISI/BIS marked products.

HOW IS A consumer to know whether a product or service is of consistent quality, on par with other comparable products or services in the industry? What will define the characteristics of the products/services or establish a quality benchmark for them?

There is a need for certain protocols to guide the creation of a product or service. And this is where standardisation comes into the picture. This involves laying down well-defined procedures and practices based on the consensus of all the relevant parties in the industry.

Standards are reference documents that define structured methods and concrete benchmarks built on collective knowledge.

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is the National Standards Body of India under the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Government of India. It was established for the harmonious development of the activities of standardisation, marking and quality certification of goods and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. The overarching aim is to curb the availability of generic products that pose a health risk to the end users.

The organisation was formerly known as the Indian Standards Institution (ISI) that was set up in 1947. The Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 1986 established the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) as an independent body to replace the ISI and take over its functions. This was again replaced by the BIS Act 2016 which reinforces the activities of BIS as the National Standards Body of India.

The new law further enables the government to:

- Include goods, services and systems, besides articles and processes, under the standardisation regime.
- Include products under mandatory certification on grounds of health, safety, environment, national security and prevention of deceptive practices.
- Enable hallmarking of precious metal articles under mandatory certification.
- Provide consumer protection measures like recall of non-conforming standard marked products, compensation to the consumer and more stringent penal provision.
- Strengthen penal provisions for better effective compliance and enable compounding of offences for violations.

The functions of BIS can be broadly grouped into:

- Standards formulation
- Product certification
- Hallmarking
- Laboratory services
- Training services (National Institute of Training for Standardisation)
- Consumer affairs and publicity
- International activities

The core activities – like standardisation and conformity assessment - benefit the consumers by providing safe, reliable and quality goods while also minimising the health hazards. Additionally, the standards and certification schemes also support various public policies especially in areas of product safety, food safety, consumer protection, environment protection, building and construction, etc.

Formulation of Standards

The primary function of the Bureau is to formulate and promote the Indian Standards. It has identified 14 sectors that are important to the industry, in line with the national priorities - Chemicals, Food and Agriculture, Civil, Electro-technical, Electronics & Information Technology, Mechanical Engineering, Management & Systems, Metallurgical Engineering, Petroleum Coal & Related Products, Medical Equipment and Hospital Planning, Textile, Transport Engineering, Production & General Engineering and Water Resources.

Every sector has a separate Division Council to oversee and supervise the work. A number of specialist technical committees (known as Sectional Committees) operate under every council for formulating the standards. The committee structure assimilates relevant stakeholders like manufacturers, users, technologists, regulators and others who have substantial interest in the field to ensure balance of interests while taking all significant viewpoints into account through a process of wide consultation.

This standards formulation activity has been harmonised (as far as possible) with the relevant guidelines laid down by the ISO. BIS has formulated over 20,000 standards so far, through around 1000 technical committees involving about 15,000 experts. They cover important segments of the economy and help the industry in upgrading the quality of their goods and services.

These standards are subject to periodic review with reaffirmation, amendment, revision or withdrawal, as required. This keeps them in line with the technological



BIS is a founder member of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and is actively involved in the development of International Standards by acting as a Participating/Observer member on various Technical Committees, Sub-Committees, Working Groups, etc. It also represents India in the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the World Standards Service Network (WSSN).

developments as well as maintains harmony with the International Standards.

- BIS is developing a Sustainability Framework for standards formulation
- It is also developing standards for emerging sectors like Electric Vehicles

Certification of Products

BIS operates a Product Certification scheme for ensuring compliance to Indian Standards and awards the BIS Standard Mark (popularly known as ISI Mark) to products that conform with the relevant standard. Presence of this mark is a sign of quality and a promise of safety. There is a separate ECO Mark scheme for environment-friendly products.

	
BIS-CRS Logo for BIS-Registration	BIS-ISI Logo (BIS Standard Mark) for BIS-Certification

The Foreign Manufacturers Certification Scheme (FMCS) is available for foreign manufacturers who wish to certify their products for export to India. They can seek certification from BIS for marking their product(s) with BIS Standard Mark after ensuring conformity of the products to the relevant Indian Standard(s).

BIS product certification is voluntary for all manufacturers in India and abroad. However, compliance to Indian Standards has been made mandatory by the government for around 380 products like milk powder, drinking water, specific food products, LPG cylinders, cement, steel materials, household electrical products, automobile accessories, etc.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has notified compulsory BIS registration for around 77 electronics and information technology goods under the Compulsory Registration Scheme (CRS).

To make infant food items safe and check the menace of adulteration, the government has issued a new rule that no person shall manufacture, sell or display food items of children without BIS certification. It will come into effect from April 1, 2023.

To check the import of low-quality viscose staple fiber (VSF) that is used for manufacturing various textiles products, the Ministry of Textiles (MoT) is planning to make BIS certification mandatory for the items by issuing a Quality Control Order (QCO) and imposing it on imports as well – September 2022



All existing Bureau of Indian Standards labs in India need modernisation and proper mapping so that the testing facilities can be better utilised.

– PIYUSH GOYAL
Union Minister for Commerce and Industry
during his presidential address at the
fourth meeting of the Governing Council of
Bureau of Indian Standards in August 2022

Mandatory BIS standards have been prescribed for the following food products:

1. Whole milk powder
2. Condensed milk, partly skimmed and skimmed condensed milk
3. Milk based complementary foods
4. Hexane, food grade
5. Skimmed milk part 1 – standard grade
6. Skimmed milk part 2 – extra grade
7. Packaged natural mineral water
8. Infant milk substitutes
9. Partly skimmed milk powder
10. Packaged drinking water (other than packaged drinking natural mineral water)
11. Infant food – follow up formula – complementary foods

The mandatory standards are available at:
https://www.services.bis.gov.in/php/BIS_2.0/bisconnect/standards_mandatory.

Laboratory Testing

To cater to the needs of testing for certification activity, BIS has set up eight central laboratories to test the product samples. These are equipped with established testing facilities for products of chemical, food, electrical and mechanical disciplines. Approximately 25,000 samples are tested in the BIS laboratories every year.

In addition, BIS also operates a Laboratory Recognition Scheme to recognise any laboratory in India or abroad for carrying out testing of samples in relation to conformity assessment. It has recognised a host of NABL-accredited and government laboratories to support the activities of product certification.



The BIS/ISI mark is a third party guarantee of quality, safety and reliability of the product. It denotes that the product has been subject to multiple tests before being certified as safe for use.

Consumers trust BIS because its first priority is to keep consumers healthy and protect them from hazardous products.



How Does BIS Registration Play Out?

Any manufacturer can apply for BIS certification for its products as it indicates high quality and standards of the products to the consumers.

The Bureau will grant the certificate of registration after testing samples of the products in BIS set-up laboratories according to the defined Indian Standard and furnishing of required documents. There will be quality inspection and surveillance to ascertain the availability of required infrastructure and capability of the manufacturer to produce the product conforming to the relevant Indian Standard on a continuous basis.

The BIS certification is valid for two years and has to be renewed on a regular basis. It also operates a simplified procedure for certain specific products.

Consumer Protection

BIS operates a full-fledged Consumer Affairs Department – known as Complaints Management & Enforcement Department (CMED) – at its headquarters in New Delhi with Public Grievance Officers at all its Regional and Branch Offices to provide consumers with prompt attention and speedy redressal of their grievances/complaints.

Consumers can lodge a grievance/complaint regarding BIS certified products through:

- Consumer Engagement Portal on eBIS website at www.manakonline.in
- BIS' own mobile application called BIS CARE
- Email at complaints@bis.gov.in
- Contacting/writing to Public Grievance officer of the nearest Regional/ Branch office of BIS
- Contacting/writing directly to the Head of CMED

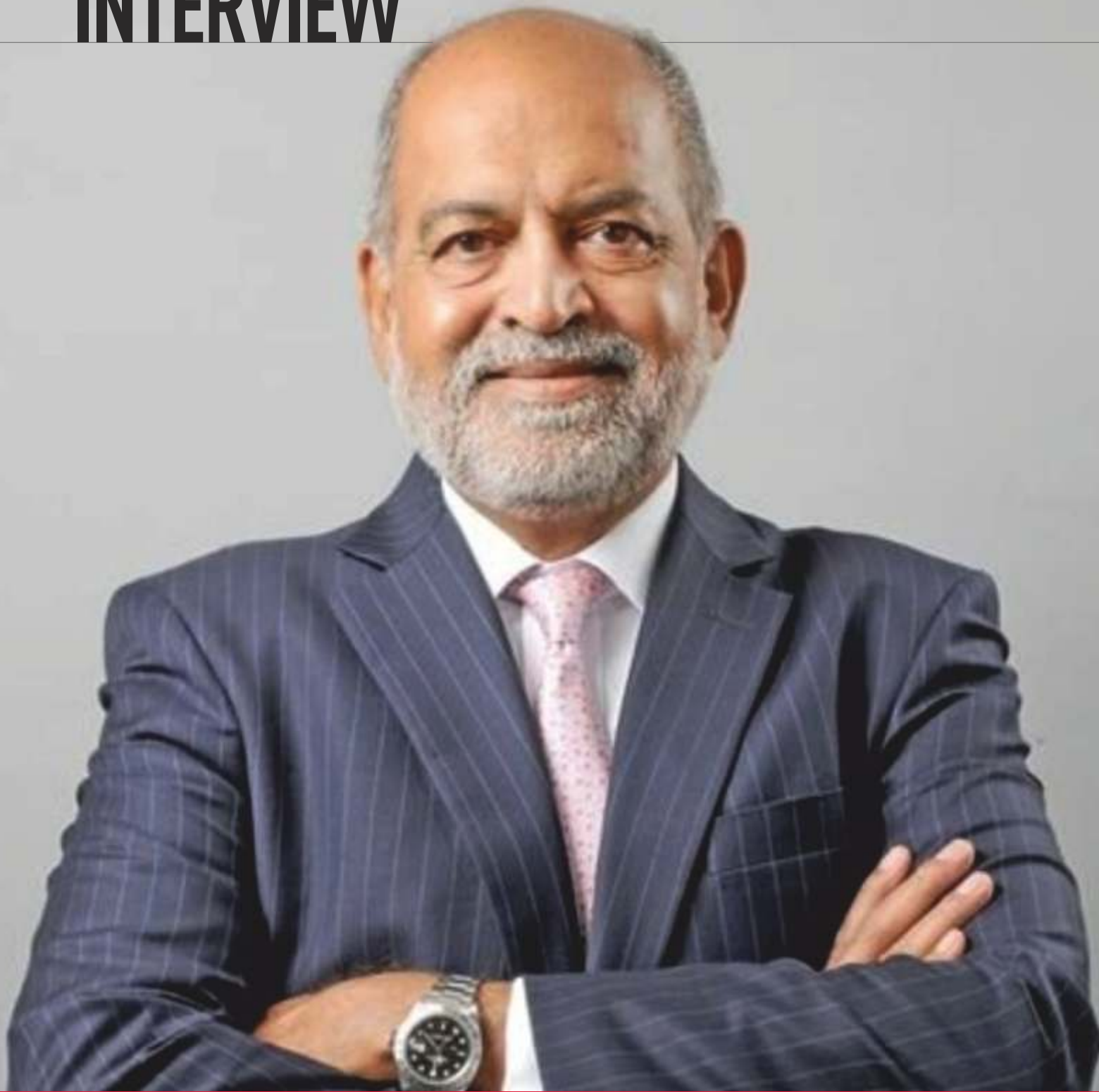
The complaint can be regarding:

- Quality of BIS certified products including products under Compulsory Registration Scheme and Hallmarking Scheme
- Misuse of BIS Standard Mark
- Violation of Quality Control Order
- Misleading claims of conformity through advertisements/leaflets/price lists etc.
- Services related (for services provided by different departments of BIS)
- Others/Miscellaneous including operational issues

Conclusion

BIS is curbing the availability of generic products by formulating standards and providing certification to products so as to protect the consumer interests at large. ▶

INTERVIEW¹



Mr. ADIL ZAINULBHAI

Former Chairman, Quality Council of India, speaks to The Editor of THE AWARE CONSUMER about how the culture of quality has evolved in India over the 25 year journey of QCI. He served as the Chairman of QCI through three terms for a period of eight years from 2014 to 2022.

Mr. Zainulbhai is the Chairman of the Capacity Building Commission, which plays a central role in the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB), also known as 'Mission Karmayogi'. He is also the Chairman of Network 18 and TV18 and sits on the boards of Reliance Industries Ltd., Larsen & Toubro Ltd. and Cipla.



Young creative minds who have less to no experience, are the strength of QCI, and they can achieve the impossible because they don't know what is not possible.

– Mr. Adil Zainulbhai, Former Chairman QCI
at QCI's Silver Jubilee Celebrations

Q How has the quality ecosystem evolved in India? What are the bright spots today and what should we improve upon? Looking forward, what are the key things that the industry should look into, to enable Make in India and Make for the world with Quality as a key pivot?

While the roots of standardised conformity assessment in India can be traced back to the 1950s when ISI was established, the real push came in 1990s when our economy started to gradually open up. It is during this time that we saw the establishment of BIS and a renewed focus by the government on the overall Quality Ecosystem of the country. QCI was eventually set up in 1997 to act as a National body of Quality Control in India.

Post 1991 reforms, rising consumer awareness and an influx of global players made domestic producers ramp up production to meet the increasing demands. Quality as a parameter was not given adequate attention. However, we are now seeing a bend towards quality consciousness across all sectors. It is in this context that an overarching quality ecosystem becomes imperative, even more so with our vision to become a world leader by 2047.

When we began, the Quality ecosystem was driven by our export requirements. But today, as our economy has progressed, Indian consumers are demanding higher quality especially so with an increase in disposable income over the past few years. I would like to point out here that in some sectors we are performing really well like the auto and 2-wheeler industry (Over the last three years, 0.52 million EVs were registered in India and we are expected to become the third largest automobile industry by 2030), healthcare industry (pharmaceuticals and vaccines; we supplied COVID-19 related medical and other assistance, to over 150 countries), Software Industry (Developing solutions to meet domestic as well as global demands; 12% of all the recognized start-ups worldwide are Indian), etc. One of our biggest competitive advantages in the IT sector is that we have reaped the benefits of our demographic dividend through a sync of Quality, Speed, and Scale. We need to keep these 3 principles as guiding lights for other industries as well.

At present, India holds a 2% share in Global trade, we should aim to make this figure reach 15% over the next 25 years. Quality of Life is also an integral part of the Quality ecosystem and will play a key role in truly awakening India's workforce to create global solutions.

The focus must be to develop industries across all tiers to produce world-class products to meet domestic requirements and leverage that as a springboard for Brand India globally. Made in India must be perceived as a hallmark of Quality.



Q How has technology changed the face of quality and India's overall competitiveness?

Innovation and Technology have changed the way we interact and work with others. We have seen the pivotal role that Technology had in our fight against the Covid pandemic. Every sector from healthcare and education to business has adapted itself in some way or form through IT Solutions. One of the key reasons that can be attributed to this change is the rapid digitalisation that we have seen in the past 10 years and a *strategic focus towards Digital Public Goods such as Aadhar, DBT through Jan Dhan, UPI, CoWin, etc.*

If we look at just 15 years back, who would have imagined that we could order products ranging from groceries to a Television within seconds from a mobile phone? Today, it is possible. *Roughly, 260 Mn people in India today use UPI which is four times the total population of the UK! Even when it comes to DBT payments, it is mind-boggling to comprehend that there were more than 10 crore transactions at the click of a button on a single day!* These solutions clearly indicate that consistent quality in technology leads to the development of trust which in turn further expands the user base.

Even at QCI, we have incorporated technology solutions in our assessment processes, be it mobile-based apps for data collection or Drone mapping. This has allowed us to streamline the overall process and make it more transparent. While doing Swachh Survekshan our assessors are equipped with cameras and sensors that allow us to monitor actual on-ground data.

India's continual development of world-class technology solutions such as CoWin and ONDC highlight India's increasing global competitiveness. Industry 4.0 will only be truly realised through Quality 4.0 and technology will play a key role in the process.

Q Ensuring a change in mind-set – how do we create a culture of quality that permeates the minds of Indian citizens and businesses?

An effective quality culture is driven bottom-up incorporating quality consciousness at all levels of the value chain. This is further supplemented by the Government bringing in policy changes where quality is kept at the forefront. One thing is quite clear, modern Indian consumers are demanding quality across all domains and are willing to pay a premium for that.

India currently stands at an inflection point of opportunities from where it has the potential to be a USD \$32 Trillion economy by 2047 with USD \$20,000 per capita GDP. This target requires active citizen participation across all domains, one of which is Quality.

Quality is a 'sine-qua-non' for business success and it is the responsibility of all stakeholders, that is, Government, Businesses, and Citizens to create a Quality Ecosystem. Businesses need to use it as a differentiator as quality has the potential to increase profits. Senior management needs to ensure that there is zero tolerance when it comes to Quality. It is a journey to excellence where Quality has been built into the design and has been promised to customers. The Government needs to ensure that there is enough market surveillance and a compliance system that is at par with global standards. When it comes to consumers, I am talking about them at the end because they are the bedrock of this ecosystem, they have to demand quality and inculcate it as a value for future India.

At QCI, our motto is to go beyond the mandate. For us, Quality is a Responsibility that has to be present in all spheres, be it Goods, Services, or Life.

Q Quality plays a key role in sustainability and the circular economy. This is key to India's vision of an enhanced 'Quality of Life' for its citizens. What would you suggest the country should do to attain this?

It has been known for quite some time now that the Linear model of production and consumption or better yet the "take-make-dispose" model is no longer viable. With growing demands, shrinking resources, and ever-increasing waste, it's everyone's responsibility to protect the future by taking sustainable action now.

As a country that is striving towards becoming a developed nation by 2047, we have to follow a sustainable model. The Circular economy or the "cradle-to-cradle" model talks about

an approach where *nothing is created, nothing is destroyed but everything is transformed*. Quality is imperative in this. We need to reshape our supply chains and ensure efficiency across all levels. We will soon become the most populous country on the planet; how will we be able to meet the demands and expectations of 1.5 Bn Indians? Even more so, how will we be able to provide everyone with a dignified Life?

It is in this background that we need to build from the Bottom-up. The Smart Cities and Aspirational Districts initiatives are examples of how such an approach can create visibility and enable local action. We also need to ensure that *future prosperity growth is shared across all parts and regions of the country and is matched by social progress*. The government is also aggressively working with a 'goal-based' approach towards meeting the SDG. *Sustainability and Inclusivity need to be kept at the centre of any policy decision that we take.*

Q As India embarks to progress into 'Amrit Kaal', what are key factors that we should take note of to gainfully attain the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of a Viksit Bharat by 2047?

During his Independence Day speech, the Hon'ble PM stressed on the "PaanchPran" that every citizen needs to imbibe to ensure that India becomes a developed nation in the next 25 years. He talked about how an aspirational society is important for any nation.

We have come a long way in our 75-year journey, from being a third-world nation to being the country with the third-highest number of Unicorns and second-highest number of internet users. We have run the most successful and effective Covid vaccination campaign in the world. More than 2 Billion total doses! We are moving in the right direction but for this to be truly India's Century, it is necessary that this momentum continues and grows.

The motto should continue to remain, "Minimum government and maximum governance" with emphasis on bringing Quality in Goods and Services as well as improving "the quality of life" of our citizens. We need to ensure essential service delivery in education and healthcare to all the citizens of the country and develop sustainable infrastructure to meet the demands of the present while ensuring that the needs of future generations are met. Achieving these goals would require an active partnership between the citizens and policy-makers. *Quality India is at the core of Brand India which would be India's key pivot in the coming decades.*



The Hon'ble Prime Minister has laid out the roadmap to make India a developed nation by 2047. In continuation of our legacy of service and commitment, I envision QCI's sincere and robust contribution in enriching the Quality of life of billions of Indians in the coming decades as well, on our journey to realising the vision of Panch Pran and Viksit Bharat.

Further, we are extremely delighted to have Shri Jaxay Shah join us as Chairperson, QCI. We have had many luminaries as Chairpersons, Mr. Shah being the latest. In this august company, we welcome him and believe that his youthful exuberance will add to the speed and agility of this organisation!

– Dr. Ravi P. Singh, Secretary-General, QCI

QUALITY COUNCIL OF INDIA (QCI) is the apex quality body in the country! It was established in 1996 as an autonomous organisation under the Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, which is celebrating its Silver Jubilee this year.

Over the 25 years of its operations, QCI has been leading the quality movement in India with an emphasis on adherence to quality standards in products, systems and services, for promoting and protecting national interest and the health and safety of its citizens.

The Silver Jubilee Celebrations was marked by a grand event on 6th October 2022 - and set in motion the future pathway for the next 25 years! The theme of the event was 'Gunnvatta Se Atmanirbharta' (Achieving Self-Reliance Through Quality).

Mr. Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce & Industry,



With all the festivals coming up, there is no better festival than celebrating India's quality, and it should become the DNA of every citizen..... Quality is one thing that will define Brand India. The moment you introduce quality parameters in the picture of products, services, and lives- it automatically becomes more reliable.

– Hon'ble Minister **Piyush Goyal**

Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, and Textiles graced the event and applauded QCI for its indelible contribution to upscaling the quality ecosystem in strategic sectors with imperative interventions and urged the organisation to propel the quality rotors of the economy for envisioning India as a developed nation by 2047.



We'll become the third largest economy soon; we are ensuring that we have houses, electricity, cylinders, and focus on providing high-quality products and services gives rise to massive competitive advantage to us... Quality has to become a part of our bloodline. It is the only basis India can achieve growth by 2047.

– **Mr. Amitabh Kant**,
India's Sherpa to G20



Quality is a national mission; it is one thing that will define brand India
– Hon. Minister Sh. Piyush Goyal at QCI's silver jubilee celebration

OUR BOARDS



National Accreditation Board
for Testing and Calibration Laboratories



National Accreditation Board
for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers



National Accreditation Board
for Certification Bodies



National Accreditation Board
for Education and Training



National Board
for Quality Promotion

CREDIBLE AND RELIABLE ECOSYSTEM OF QUALITY



QCI EMERGED OUT OF A SERIES OF GLOBAL & NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ECOSYSTEM OF TRADE AND QUALITY



Global Developments

Inspections for product quality, quality of physicians

Conformity Assessment

BIPM estd. (1875)

Metrology LCTA (1878)

BIPM estd. (1875)

Metrology LCTA (1878)

Conformity Assessment

IEC estd. Standards

ISO estd. (1947) GATT (1948) Standards

Aus. Def. Proc. Accreditation

OIML est. (1955) Metrology

ILAC estd. (1977) Accreditation

IAF estd. Accreditation

WTO estd. (GATT 1994 & WTO TBT Agreement)

Regulation / Overall QI (excl. MS)

EU Regulations (on Harmonised Standardization, Conf. Assessment & Mkt. Surveillance)

UN / OECD / GIZ Initiatives

Overall QI

Focus moving towards QI & SDGs

Overall QI

500 A.D. onwards

1875-78

1906

1947-55

1977-88

1993

1995-97

2005-17

2018 - Now



India's Response

Conformity Assessment

First traces of Inspections for product quality

Standards

ISI estd.

Metrology

NPL estd.

Standards

BIS estd. (1986)

Accreditation

NABL estd. (1988)

Overall QI

Inter-Ministerial Taskforce constituted on "Indian National Scheme for Quality & Conformity Assessment"

Overall QI
Cabinet Note approved for establishing Quality Council of India
QCI estd. as a Society (with NABCI, NABET, NABCI)

Accreditation

NABH formed (2005)
NABL<->QCI (2016-17)

Metrology LM Act 2009

Standards BIS Act 2016

Mkt. Surveillance

Framework being made under DPIIT

Regulation Being framed under co-ord. of DoC

BIPM: International Bureau for Weights and Measures (LCTA: London Convention Trade Association) IEC: International Electrotechnical Commission ISO: International Organization for Standardization GATT: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade WTO: World Trade Organization ILAC: International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation IAF: International Accreditation Forum OIML: International Organization of Legal Metrology ISI: Indian Standards Institute NPL: National Physical Laboratory BIS: Bureau of Indian Standards QCI: Quality Council of India

Three panel discussions were organised to culminate the ideas of luminaries from government agencies, international organisations and the private sector.

1. Quality Ecosystem: An Enabler for Make in India - Moderated by Mr. Adil Zainulbhai, Chairman Quality Council of India and Capacity Building Commission, the session hosted Mr. Emmanuel Riva, Chair, International Accreditation Framework (IAF), Mr. Rene Van Berkel, UNIDO Representative & Head, Regional Office in India, Mr. Vipin Sondhi, Former MD & CEO, Ashok Leyland and JCB India and Mr. Matt Gantley, CEO, UKAS.

2. India@100 years: Achieving through Speed, Scale, Digitalisation & Quality - Moderated by Dr. Ravi P Singh, Secretary General, QCI, the session hosted

distinguished speakers like Mr. Sanjeev Sanyal, Member of Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, Mr. Anil Agrawal, AS, DPIIT, Ms. Siti Rubiah Lambert, UNCTAD and Mr. Anal Singh, Plant Head, TATA Motors.

3. Heal in India-Heal by India: Standardization & Global Benchmarking - Moderated by Mr. Mahesh Verma, Chairman, NABH, the panellists included Mr. Ram Sevak Sharma, CEO, NHA, Mr. Randeep Guleria, Ex-Director, AIIMS, Mr. Girdhar Gyani, DG, AHPI and Mr. Narottam Puri, Advisor, QCI.

The strategic inputs will be formulated into comprehensive action points for enabling quality and will serve as a blueprint for QCI (and its constituent boards) to accelerate the promotion and adoption of quality in the society. ▶



“We should change the perception that Circular Economy is a necessity, and embrace it as a business opportunity for the future, it's not just about romanticising recycling but it is about innovation driven by efficiency.”
– Mr. Rene Van Berkel,
UNIDO Representative & Head,
Regional Office in India



“The institutions of future will be built on model with minimum govt intervention, where govt acts as catalyst and facilitator while the private sector leads the initiative.”
– Mr. Anil Agrawal,
AS, DPIIT

OUR DIVISIONS



Project Analysis and Documentation Division



Zero Defect Zero Effect



Project Planning and Implementation Division



QUEST
Quality Education and Training



Research Analysis and Capacity Building



MR. JAXAY SHAH

**nominated as the
New Chairman
of the Quality
Council of India**

THE HON. PRIME Minister Mr. Narendra Modi has appointed Mr. Jaxay Shah, founder Chairman of Savvy Group and former Chairman of CREDAI, as the Chairman of the Quality Council of India (QCI) for a period of three years effective from 21st October 2022. Mr. Shah has been appointed based on his vast industry experience which shall contribute to further propelling the wheels of Quality, a legacy established by the former Chairpersons of QCI. He founded one of India's largest infrastructure conglomerates, the Savvy Group, in 1996 and held the position of national chairman of CREDAI, the apex body of private real estate developers in India. In addition, he also holds the position of the Chairman of the ASSOCHAM Western Region Development Council and serves as the Advisor at the PharmEasy Accelerator Program, which offers 1 lakh+ medicine and health products. ▶

QCI is a vibrant organisation of 1000+ people who are improving the quality of life for 140 crore Indian citizens. I am a huge believer of the India story and confident that QCI will be pivotal in fulfilling PM's vision of India as a developed country by 2047. This will be achieved on the pillars of quality and credibility of everything that is 'Made in India' for the world."

– Mr. Jaxay Shah



“The tagline
'Sahi Bhojan, Behtar Jeevan',
thus, forms the foundation of
'Eat Right India' movement.”



Ms. INOSHI SHARMA

Executive Director, (Social Behavioural Change & Communication) and Executive Director (Regulatory Compliance), FSSAI.

She is an officer of the Indian Revenue Service and has held various assignments pertaining to publicity of tax provisions, international taxation, vigilance and the appellate tribunal. Prior to her assignment with FSSAI, she has worked as Director, National Health Mission in Haryana looking after the procurement of drugs & equipment and adolescent health.

Q The theme of World Quality Day this year is “Quality conscience: Doing the right thing” On this occasion, what is your opening message to our readers?

It is said that 'Quality is everyone's responsibility', and the same is applicable across all the sectors including food sector. That is why, the theme for World Quality Day is 'Quality Conscience'. The emphasis on conscience signifies a collective approach to achieve appropriate levels of quality. All the stakeholders, whether producers, manufacturers, processors, distributors, wholesalers, retailers, customers, have shared responsibility to ensure that the entire production and distribution chain maintains quality standards with almost zero defects and zero wastage. This would logically entail not only doing the right thing but also doing the things right in the first place.

Q What do you feel should be the role of Consumers in India to strengthen activities of FSSAI in further improving the accessibility to wholesome food and also be part of the standard setting exercise conducted by FSSAI from time to time?

The consumer is the cardinal point of all the regulatory and standard setting exercise carried out by FSSAI for ensuring availability and accessibility to safe and nutritious food across the country. In fact, the FSS Act, 2006 itself lays emphasis on the role and involvement of consumers in standard setting and its implementation. The FSS Act mandates representation from consumer organisations in the Food Authority, which is the highest decision making body at FSSAI as well as the Central Advisory Committee, which is a Committee for close cooperation between Food Authority, enforcement agencies and organisations working in the field.

The consumer and consumer organisations act as eyes and ears of the Food Authority to give us feedback on the regulatory provisions, existing market practices and emerging challenges/need.

Q FSSAI is responsible for setting standards to ensure that food is of highest quality. Can you share some success stories of FSSAI in recent years in setting India-centric Standards and building awareness on Food Safety in the interest of all the stakeholders?

The standards set by FSSAI are science-based, which lay down specifications for various food products in terms of food quality as well as product safety. The concept of quality is inherent in the standards-setting exercise to ensure that the food products are manufactured with highest quality standards, as per the intended use. This emphasis on standardisation of food products also ensures the safety as well as quality of food products, which is one of the key mandates of FSSAI.

In order to meet the growing demands of consumers for health-based foods, FSSAI has recently set standards for Ayurveda Aahaar, for those products which are prepared in accordance with the recipes or ingredients or processes as per the authoritative books of Ayurveda. Also,

regulations for endorsement of a food as 'Vegan Food' have also been notified.

Q What are some of the most challenging issues existing in India in the food and beverage sector on food quality? How do you feel they can be resolved?

India is a diverse and vast food market where, with the changing lifestyle and socio-economic developments, the food habits are also changing. Further, rapid urbanisation is also leading to increased demand for various food products, especially perishables like milk and milk products, fruits, etc. These developments pose challenges for the food regulator to check malpractices like adulteration, sale of sub-standard food products and unhygienic food processing or manufacturing practices. This requires a multi-pronged approach from building consumer awareness to strict enforcement against the defaulters.

In order to accomplish this, FSSAI has embarked on a large-scale effort to transform the country's food system in order to ensure safe, healthy and sustainable food for all Indians through the 'Eat Right India' movement. It adopts a judicious mix of regulatory, capacity building, collaborative and empowerment approaches to ensure that our food is good both for the people and the planet. Regular surveillance and enforcement drives are also conducted during festivals for specific products such as dairy.

Q Please share the criteria adopted by you for the market authorisation of a new product in the interest of consumers.

Every food business operator licensed for manufacturing of standardised food products can operate their business without any prior approval from FSSAI, subject to meeting the laid down product and process standards. However, in case of novel food products (Non-standardised food products), the FBO is required to seek prior approval of FSSAI before applying for license.

Q Adoption of modern testing facilities and a robust surveillance system are the two key requirements to assure quality as per standards to the end-users in the food supply chain. What steps has FSSAI taken and intends to take further in the coming years?

Regular surveillance and enforcement activities are undertaken by FSSAI from time to time for specific food products. The Regional as well as State Food Authorities of FSSAI also undertake surveillance and enforcement drives in certain specific areas under their jurisdiction, as and when such need is felt. In addition, FSSAI has engaged with the States for strengthening of laboratory infrastructure, apart from providing support for manpower as well as equipment.

Around 60 Food Safety on Wheels (FSWs) and 95 Modified Food Safety on Wheels (FSW) (which is a mobile food testing laboratory) have been distributed across various State Food Authorities in the country to cater to basic analytical needs of the consumers.



We have gone beyond regulations to popularize safe & nutritious foods: **Eat Right campaign**; consumer books for food at home, work & school and created a network with doctors & dieticians

Q Food manufacturers make a lot of false promises on the quality of the food in their marketing campaigns. Has FSSAI taken any legal action against such misleading advertisements? How do you feel FSSAI should further work to tackle the menace of false claims and deceptive advertisements?

The claims made by FBOs are periodically scrutinised by FSSAI by the Advertisement Monitoring Cell, suo-moto or on the basis of complaints/representations received from consumers or through Department of Consumer Affairs. Any FBO found violating the regulatory provisions or making non-scientific claims is issued notices to rectify the claim or withdraw the same and in case, he still fails to comply with the requirements of the regulations, appropriate legal proceedings are also initiated against them. FSSAI has put in place a mechanism for approval of claims on food products, in order to ensure that the said claims are scientifically examined and, if found appropriate, only then, the same are allowed to be made by the FBOs. Further, FSSAI also works closely with the Department of Consumer Affairs to address grievances related to quality of the food or claims being made on them through INGRAM portal, apart from having a dedicated FSSAI Food Safety Connect App.

Q Can you please suggest a process the consumers in India should mandatorily follow to be assured of quality and safe food sold under the FSSAI logo?

The consumers should check for FSSAI logo as well as

fourteen-digit license/registration number on the packaged food label. Besides this, details such as expiry date/use by date, manufacturing date, nutritional information and list of ingredients may also be read carefully before buying a food product. For hotels and restaurants, the consumers can always check for Food Safety Display Boards, which depict the license number of the FBO. The license number also needs to be mentioned on the cash memo/invoices/bills by the FBO, which can be checked by the consumer.

FSSAI has released educational videos for awareness of consumers, DART book to check adulteration in daily-used food items, which are available on the Eat Right India website.

Q Finally, please share the existing mechanism adopted by FSSAI to encourage feedback or complaints from consumers on quality of food and what is the response process on such feedback or complaints? Any plans to further improve the consumer feedback system?

As a consumer, one has certain rights with regards to the food and food products he purchases. All he has to do is to be aware and exercise his rights. The Food Safety Connect App is a dedicated portal for engaging with the consumers to address their grievances related to quality and safety of food products. Further, FSSAI has dedicated email and toll-free helpline numbers to connect to the consumers for resolution of their queries/grievances. ▶

Pyush Misra

Trustee,
Consumer Online Foundation



Driving Quality with a Mature Conscience Rather Than Simple Consciousness

“Companies have to provide high-quality products and services that meet consumer expectations. While quality management principles bring awareness of the need to deliver excellence, such quality consciousness will not suffice alone. It is quality conscience that drives the urge to do the right thing by the consumers because that is the right (and only) way of doing things! ♥♥

– notes Pyush Misra



*Conscience is a strong sense of right and wrong
Quality conscience makes us want to do the right thing!*

THE LAST FEW decades have witnessed a gradual change in consumer perception of the importance of quality in products and services. As more and more people realise that they can expect – and should demand – quality, it has started occupying centre place in their purchase decisions.

Organisations have no choice but to tune in to this subtle shift in the market and deliver better value to the consumers by ensuring top customer service that is marked by reliability and support. To give credit where it is due, they are constantly striving to improve the processes and procedures by fostering a culture of quality consciousness in the workplace.

By way of quality management, manufacturers and suppliers are even putting their money where their mouth is by investing time and resources to develop strong quality systems. There is constant training, development and a supportive work environment that makes employees aware of the need for quality and why it is important to do the right thing. The focus is on delivering excellence through high performance.

This quality consciousness drives actions to provide the best possible products and services. Employees strive to ensure that the product or service is delivered on time, within the budget and meets consumer expectations. They will also expend efforts in identifying and addressing problems early on, with a relentless focus on meeting the quality standards at all times.

The organisation, on its part, emphasises on continuous improvement with a view to making the product/service better, faster, cheaper and so on. However, it is clear that this quality consciousness stems from a sense of duty and accountability!

The Difference That Quality Conscience Can Make

Conscience is the inner voice that tells us what is right and what is wrong. It comes from a moral and ethical plane that is deeply rooted in personal integrity. It is the conscience which makes us do the right thing, not just because we should do it, but because we want to do it!

Going by this, the sense of conscience follows the famous words of Henry Ford, *"Quality means doing it right even when no one is looking!"*

Therefore, quality conscience stems from a place of strong moral values which drives a person to do the right thing, even if it is not the easy option or even the most

Quality consciousness is about knowing that you have to adhere to a certain set of standards or best practices. Quality conscience is about wanting to do so!

profitable choice. This is the choice that will wipe out mediocrity and uphold the highest standards of excellence at all times. The inherent sense of responsibility becomes a gold standard in itself!

In fact, it can be juxtaposed that a quality conscience is vital for successfully implementing and delivering quality.

The theme of World Quality Week 2022 converges on 'Quality Conscience: Doing the Right Thing'.

The aim is to drive a conscience-based quality delivery that will lead to the emergence of a true quality culture that comes naturally without any extra effort. This will beget actions and behaviours that are driven by a value based system, thus making it sustainable as well. Following the path of the moral compass will be difficult, but it will be intensely rewarding and satisfying too!

Taking the High Road

As more and more consumers start expecting quality as a matter of course, it will push and challenge the market to operate in excellence. On our part, we also have to function from a place of quality conscience. This should not be restricted to the workplace alone, but also encompass maintaining quality standards in our personal life.

We should be quality individuals

who can always be relied upon to put our best into everything we do!

The exact standards and details can differ from person to person, but the ethical stance of doing the right thing - because there simply is no other choice - should remain the most important consideration at all times.

Take this World Quality Week as an opportunity to awaken your urge to do right and celebrate your own quality achievements!

Conclusion

Let us reflect on doing the right thing – both as a profession and in our personal life. Let us support others in doing the right thing and celebrate the quality conscience that makes this possible! ▀



Some still hold the outdated view that managing quality is purely about the 'toolbox' of policy, process and systems, however, it is leadership, culture and values that truly underpin any defined system of work. Although these areas can be the hardest to navigate, they are the key to doing the right thing.

– Vince Desmond
CEO, CQI

We can compromise on anything, but we just cannot compromise on quality!

Importance of Quality Management in the Food Industry

Food determines the health, nutritional status and productivity of the consumers. Quality remains the most sensitive issue in food as lack of quality can bring a host of problems in its wake. The food sector is becoming highly dynamic on the one hand, but there is growing concern about the safety and wholesomeness of the food on the other.

Food is a holistic experience that incorporates sensorial properties, nutritional traits and safety

IF THERE IS one thing that we cannot compromise on, it is food! Quality is of supreme importance in this sector as it will directly impinge on our health and well-being. And safety is considered a precursor of quality. Unfortunately food remains the most susceptible to the incidence of poor quality!

Indeed, incidents of food hazards due to contaminated or adulterated foods are recurring in the media. We keep hearing of cases of severe food poisoning to even little children succumbing due to intake of bad quality food.

Food is supposed to keep us healthy! Can we allow it to make us sick or even unproductive?

Quality remains a primary attribute in the food industry. But how do you define food quality? It is basically food that is acceptable for human consumption according to its intended use. This encompasses the taste, aroma, colour and texture of the food product along with its purity and nutritional value. In addition to this, the food should be fresh and wholesome as well.

However, food is a broad umbrella covering a variety of segments. There are fruits and vegetables that are cooked and mostly eaten fresh at home. Similar is the case of milk, eggs and meats, not to mention spices, condiments and more. Then there are processed and packaged foods that we purchase to consume at a later date. Commercial food outlets prepare and serve/sell food on a large scale.

The Impending Risks

Growing pollution and the use of pesticides in agriculture along with addition of preservatives, colourants, flavouring agents and other substances is intensifying the jeopardies related to food. Adulteration remains another unsettling concern – this is adding or substituting an inferior material to the food that can degrade the quality and even make it unfit for consumption. As food is handled by many different people in different ways during the period of growth, storage, processing, transport and distribution, it further increases the risk of contamination, spoilage, etc.

Therefore, quality has to be monitored at every link of the supply chain right from farm to fork. A few of the primary considerations include:

- **Raw material specifications** – Everything begins from sourcing the right ingredients. The source perspective of the crop or other ingredients covers reliability and traceability about where each batch is coming from, in what condition and so on.
- **Product formulation** – Documenting the recipe for the food/beverage item in terms of process and specifications like list of ingredients, ingredient code, percentage formula and effective dates. This not only sets the quality standard but can also be used as a reference point should any issue arise.
- **Manufacturing process control** – This covers the procedures employed by the facility right from

transporting and storing the ingredients and ambient conditions maintained in-house to the tools used in the process, operators that will handle the product and so on.

- **Sanitation best practices** – This is all about ensuring that the food environment is as clean and hygienic as possible – like cleanliness of the premises, equipment, food preparation and storage and serving areas, personnel wearing protective gloves, caps, etc. - so as to produce the safest possible food.
- **Final product standards** – This is concerned with the product weight, size and expiration date apart from the specific chemical and microbiological characteristics that have been set for the food/beverage.
- **Packaging** – Many food and beverages need to be packed to protect them and allow for safe handling and transit. This should serve its purpose without impinging on the quality.
- **Labelling** – Here it is all about specifying the correct ingredients and quantities along with the nutritional information.

It is clear that a number of people, processes and systems are responsible for creating a food product. All the service providers involved in the pre-preparation, processing, packaging and service sectors have to assimilate their efforts to ensure a high quality result.

Whatever their size or product, all food producers have a responsibility to manage the safety of their products and the well-being of their consumers - ISO



How do you know whether the food item that you are eating is safe and of good quality?

Why Food Quality Matters?

Food quality is a broad subject – it is not just about protecting consumers from contaminated, hazardous or toxic food that can affect their health and lead to food-borne diseases. It also includes ensuring they get the appropriate weight and quality they pay for and expect.

“Indian wheat and other agricultural products must be of high quality to be the world's standard source for food.”

– PRIME MINISTER
NARENDRA MODI
at a meeting in May 2022



Packaging is becoming a worrying concern as it can leach chemicals and other toxic substances into otherwise good quality food. This kind of contamination is very risky and can lead to food poisoning.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also spotlighted the importance of monitoring and addressing food safety issues, which used to be common in the value chain. Moreover, consumers are defined by a heightened awareness and expect high standards of quality across the products. Even a minor mishap can make them question the quality and trust aspects of the food item and will negate the satisfaction quotient.

Ensuring Food Quality with Standards and Regulations

International bodies as well as the governments lay down a bevy of food standards to uphold utmost quality in food products and protect the health of consumers.

International Standards

- **Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)** – This inter-governmental body has become the single most important international reference point for food standards. It publishes the Codex Alimentarius (Food Code) which is a collection of internationally adopted Food Standards. The document includes Standards, Codes of Practice, Guidelines and other recommendations to protect consumers and ensure fair practices in food trade. Different countries use Codex Standards to develop national standards.
- **International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO)** – This is a worldwide, non-governmental federation of national standards bodies that aims to promote

standardisation. ISO 22000 lays down the requirements for a producer's food safety management system, including the processes and procedures to be followed to control hazards and promote safe products. It can be used by any organisation regardless of its size or position in the food chain. While adoption of the standard is voluntary, getting certified by a third party will provide a layer of reassurance within the global food supply chain, helping products cross borders and bringing people food that they can trust.

ISO's food standards benefit producers and manufacturers, regulators and retailers and, most important of all, you and me, the consumers!

- **World Trade Organisation (WTO)** – This international organisation facilitates free, fair, smooth and predictable flow of trade between the member countries. Signatories are required to protect the safety and quality of foods and also ensure that imported foods are of good quality and safe to eat by way of effective food standards and control systems.
- **The World Health Organisation (WHO) and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)** have developed several technical papers related to food safety and quality assurance. They are constantly involved in activities in food safety and quality.

National Standards: Many countries have instituted their own national food regulatory bodies like the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in USA and Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in India.

- **FSSAI** - The FSSAI has established mandatory science-based standards to regulate the manufacture, storage,

The FSSAI and other national agencies have set up a network of well-equipped food testing and analysis laboratories to support timely analysis of samples and ensure compliance of international and domestic standards on food. The Ministry of Food Processing Industries also extends financial assistance for setting up of food testing laboratories.

distribution, sale and import of food items. They prescribe minimum compositional standards, maximum levels for several chemical contaminants, hygiene and sanitary practices and various other provisions to make food safe. All food products manufactured, imported or sold in India have to meet the requirements prescribed under the Food Safety and Standards Act.

- **Voluntary Product Certification:** The ISI mark (for processed foods) and Agmark (for raw and processed agricultural products) are voluntary grading and marking schemes for safeguarding the health of consumers.

Additionally, there are established food safety management systems like:

- **Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)** – This requires food manufacturers to take proactive steps to ensure that their products are safe. It focuses on eliminating contamination and false labelling, thereby protecting the consumer from being misled and helping in purchasing of products that are not harmful.
- **Good Handling Practices** – This is a comprehensive approach from the farm to the store/consumer that identifies potential sources of risk and indicates steps and procedures to be taken to minimise the risk of contamination.
- **Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)** – This approach comprises of a careful evaluation of each and every process in the food chain - raw material procurement, manufacturing, distribution, usage – to clarify the potential of development of pathogenic microorganisms or other food hazards. It involves identification of hazards, assessment of chances of occurrence of hazards and defining measures for hazard control.

Many food companies prepare their own standards as well. However, these are usually a copy of the national standards.

Quality Council of India has launched two certification schemes – IndiaGHP and IndiaHACCP - based on globally accepted Codex Standards for adoption by food manufacturers and supply chain operators. These schemes will enable them to demonstrate compliance to global standards without having to go for costly and time consuming foreign certifications.

Taking the Right Steps for Food Quality

Food manufacturers, operators and other service providers that grow, process, pack, transport or cook food have no choice but to:

- Comply with governmental, industry and corporate regulations and quality standards for the food industry
- Incorporate effective quality criteria into business processes and align them with quality policies
- Have the right documentation to demonstrate adherence to certain quality parameters and certificates of analysis with the solution

Therefore, an efficient quality management system has become crucial for food products from the sourcing of raw materials to the distribution of finished goods so as to fulfil the determinants of quality.

Quality control is a process that identifies and rectifies any defects in finished products. It involves quality inspections wherein a specific team is tasked with testing products for defects. It can be achieved by identifying and eliminating sources of quality problems during production.



Quality testing ensures food products are safe for consumers

Quality assurance has a broader perspective as it targets the process by which a food product is made to prevent defects from occurring. It aims to eliminate flaws during development by improving testing processes.

However, most of the food processing industries are in the unorganised sector which gives rise to a number of unique problems.

Conclusion

Quality is an indubitable stipulation in the food industry. Food and beverages have to meet stringent parameters in the interest of consumer safety and public health. ▶



Prioritising a Culture of Quality and Safety in Healthcare

Healthcare should be defined by quality services and safe outcomes for the patients. India has made ground-breaking success on the access to healthcare frontier. We have some remarkable healthcare improvements under our belt as well. However, severe shortcomings in quality of care still prevail!

THE INDIAN HEALTHCARE system is considered the largest in the world. It continues to be one of the most rapidly expanding sectors in the country and is marked by expanding access to healthcare for the general populace. Indeed, our healthcare system is quite elaborate and with the recent strides in improvement, it has become accessible for everyone.

But is it able to deliver quality healthcare is another question altogether? Alas, the improved access has not translated into better outcomes for the consumers!

Defining Quality in the Healthcare Context

The US National Academy of Medicine demarcates six pillars of high quality care which are being acknowledged on the global level:

Pillar #1 Safety - High quality care avoids preventable harm to patients

Pillar #2 Effectiveness - High quality care is based on scientific knowledge and given to all who could

benefit/not given to who is not likely to benefit (i.e. avoiding underuse and misuse, respectively)

Pillar #3 Patient-centeredness - High quality care is respectful of and responsive to individual patient preferences, needs and values and ensures that patient values guide all clinical decisions

Pillar #4 Timeliness - High quality care minimises wait times and harmful delays for both those who receive and those who provide care

Pillar #5 Efficiency - High quality care maximises the benefits of available resources and avoids waste of any kind (e.g. equipment, supplies, ideas, energy)

Pillar #6 Equity - High quality care does not discriminate care recipients based on their personal characteristics (e.g. gender, ethnicity, geographic location, socioeconomic status)

Quality healthcare is “doing the right thing for the right patient, at the right time, in the right way, to achieve the best possible results.” – Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

Right now, the world is focussed on universal health coverage (UHC). However, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) stress that quality is a key element of universal health coverage. The SDG target 3.8 calls on countries to achieve UHC, including financial risk protection, alongside access to quality essential health care services.

The World Health Organisation upholds that quality of care is the degree to which health services for individuals and populations increase the likelihood of desired health outcomes. It is based on evidence-based professional knowledge and is critical for achieving universal health coverage. The global health watchdog further exhorts, “As countries commit to achieving Health for All, it is imperative to carefully consider the quality of care and health services”.

Yet, the WHO acknowledges that even with increased access to services, health improvements can remain elusive unless those services are of sufficient quality to be effective.

Where Does India Stand?

According to the Global Healthcare Security Index 2021 that measured the capacities of 195 countries to prepare for epidemics and pandemics, India ranked 66 with an overall index score of 42.8, with a change of -0.8 from 2019. (see image below)

However, according to Health and Health Systems ranking of countries worldwide in 2021, by health index score, India ranked 111 out of 167 countries showing up the prevailing abysmal quality of healthcare in the country.

Public healthcare remains free for every resident of the country. Additionally, every government since

Going by global statistics, between 5.7 and 8.4 million deaths are attributed to poor quality care each year in low- and middle-income countries, which represents up to 15% of overall deaths in these countries. A whopping 60% of the deaths in these countries from conditions requiring healthcare can be attributed to poor quality care while the remaining are due to non-utilisation of the health system.

Even the high-income countries are not immune to poor quality healthcare - 1 in 10 patients is harmed while receiving hospital care and 7 in every 100 hospitalised patients can expect to acquire a healthcare-associated infection.

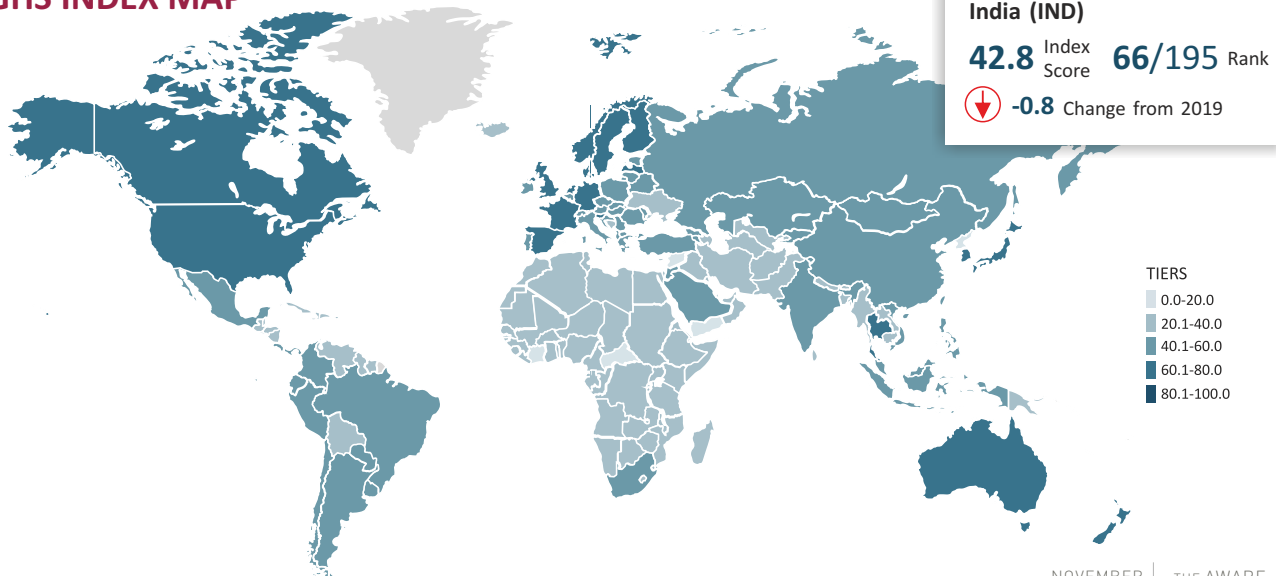
independence has been initiating a range of health programmes to ensure good healthcare to every citizen. The previous government's National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) strengthened healthcare infrastructure and boosted failing public health indicators in rural areas.

The latest version of the National Health Policy (NHP) was launched in 2017 with an ambitious agenda of improving health status through concentrated policy action in all sectors and expanding preventive, promotive,



Healthcare focus should shift from quantity to quality!

GHS INDEX MAP



The quality of drugs also remains dubitable despite governmental regulations. In an alarming incident, last month 66 children died in Gambia after consuming four fever, cold and cough syrups made by a company in Haryana. WHO raised an alert urging people to not use them, "Laboratory analysis of samples of each of the four products confirms that they contain unacceptable amounts of diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol as contaminants. To date, these four products have been identified in Gambia, but may have been distributed, through informal markets, to other countries or regions." More stringent quality checks continue to be imperative.

curative, palliative and rehabilitative services provided through the public health sector with focus on Quality. This was followed by the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) health protection scheme to cover 10 crore poor and vulnerable families (about 50 crore people) with cashless secondary and tertiary care.

The overarching aim is to provide the highest quality healthcare options to the public. And the constant improvements in health infrastructure and services has significantly increased access, availability and affordability for the consumers. The number of primary care centres has especially increased manifold with improved access even in remote areas. The maternal mortality rate has declined considerably – this parameter is used widely by analysts and developmental economists to rate a country's health sector progress.

However, the total number of deaths remains high on account of poor quality and inadequate services. The Lancet Global Health Commission report on 'High Quality Health Systems', published in September 2018 reveals that almost 122 Indians per 100,000 die due to poor quality of care each year. Our death rate due to poor care quality is worse than that of Brazil (74), Russia (91), China (46) and South Africa (93) and even neighbours Pakistan (119), Nepal (93), Bangladesh (57) and Sri Lanka (51). Another study by The Lancet revealed that poor care quality leads to almost twice more deaths than insufficient access to healthcare, with 16 lakh Indians dying due to poor quality of care!



"The idea behind Heal in India and Ayushman Bharat Digital is not only to serve the citizens of India, but with improved quality in health care and facilities, take the healing to the world and share it with everyone."

- **Shri Ram Sevak Sharma**,
CEO, NHA at QCI's
Silver Jubilee Celebrations
(Heal in India Panel)

A study by Public Health Foundation of India in Uttar Pradesh shows that the safety of the poor is being compromised due to lack of quality care - like poor hand hygiene, usage of unsterilised instruments - and inadequate clinical care like the lack of monitoring of labour progression in public health facilities.

Deconstructing the Indian Healthcare System

India's healthcare delivery is marked by wide incongruities – we have world acclaimed private hospitals on the one hand that are marked by innovative technological advances in medical science to public facilities on the other that deliver unacceptably low quality of care.

Efforts to assimilate the healthcare standards across facilities are hindered by structural constraints. Qualified and experienced healthcare professionals as well as the appropriate infrastructure are still lacking in both the rural and public healthcare spectrum. Medicines and equipment also remain sub-par in these segments.

As per an audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), there was a 24% to 38% shortfall in the availability of medical personnel at primary health centres, sub centres and community health centres in 28 states/union territories. Instances of non-availability of essential drugs were observed in as many as 24 states.

Lack of accountability among providers and poorly functioning governance systems in the health system are primarily to blame for the poor quality of care. Various reports highlight the incidence of malpractices like kickbacks for referrals, irrational drug prescribing and unnecessary interventions.

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the inefficiencies of our healthcare systems with the spotlight on both the inadequacy and poor quality of healthcare in the country. We recognise the selfless contributions of healthcare professionals during this challenging time, but they were limited by the infrastructure and other shortcomings.

Experts in the quality sector opine that quality improvement in healthcare requires a systematic approach where the healthcare organisation diligently

"The importance of healthcare quality and safety has been highlighted in the recent ongoing health issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic as healthcare professionals were challenged to provide excellent, quality care as they protected themselves, patients, families, and the community. The healthcare quality and safety professional remains challenged to learn from these experiences to better prepare for future problem-solving opportunities." – A quality improvement professional in the healthcare sector in USA

monitors, assesses and improves the standards of healthcare.

However, the appalling scenario in India is exacerbated by lack of availability of data from many hospitals for analysing the quality of care. The National Accreditation Board of Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH) has developed quality metrics along with recommendations for administrative data requirements.

Efforts for Improvement

The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is committed to improving the quality of care provided in public healthcare facilities. Its main objectives are to:

- Ensure access to quality health services for all
- Provide support to achieve universal health coverage and Sustainable Development Goals
- Ensure implementation of global best practices, evidence and policy recommendations
- Reduce the harm to patients and support strengthening the overall quality of health systems, etc.



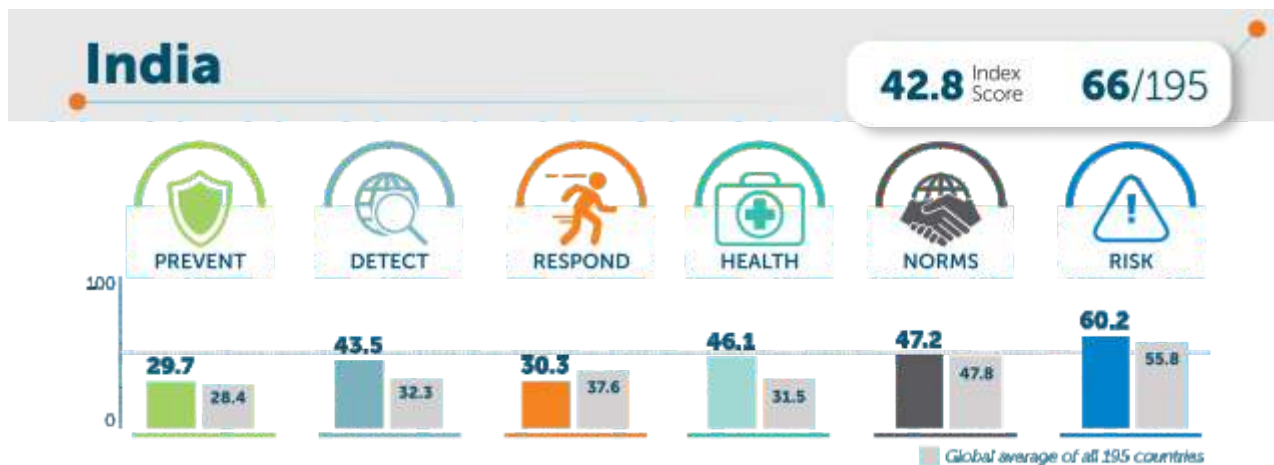
"The culture of quality in any organisation is one of continuous improvement and that is a journey to excellence, we'll never get there but, it will remain a journey."

– Mr. Vipin Sondhi,
Former MD & CEO, Ashok Leyland and
JCB India – at QCI's Silver Jubilee
Celebrations (Quality Ecosystem Panel)

development in the provision and mobilisation of technical assistance to the states. It has developed the National Quality Assurance Standards keeping in view the specific requirements for public health facilities as well as global best practices. They are broadly grouped into 8 'Areas of Concern'– Service Provision, Patient Rights, Inputs, Support Services, Clinical Care, Infection Control, Quality Management and Outcome. They are meant for providers to assess their own quality for improvement through pre-defined standards and to bring up their facilities for certification.

Improving the quality of healthcare and health outcomes requires more of such evidence-based policy approaches with a focus on governance issues

including improving public sector management, building institutional capacity and promoting a culture of data-driven policies. And the effectiveness of these new approaches to improve the quality of care needs to be demonstrated empirically to facilitate adoption. Moreover, as informal providers are delivering most of the health services in the rural areas, the unique scenario calls for providing them



The Health Ministry, in collaboration with state health departments, has developed and implementing a comprehensive Quality Assurance Framework for public health facilities and programs. This comprises of four inter-related approaches and activities to achieve a patient-centric quality system -

- Instituting organisational framework for quality
- Defining standards of service delivery and patient care
- Continuous assessment of services against set standards
- Improving quality through closing gaps and implementing opportunities for improvement

It also set up the National Health Systems Resource Centre with a mandate to assist in policy and strategy

with tools and incentives to deliver better care along with intensive efforts to change their practices.

Conclusion

There is no choice but to invest in improving access to quality healthcare in such a way that everything from hospital infection rates to hospital stays are reduced. However, achieving true quality calls for a collaborative effort involving the healthcare professional along with the patient, his/her family and the community as a whole. This will pave the way for reliable, cost-effective and sustained health system that delivers quality care with enhanced patient outcomes. Otherwise, the 'Better Health for All' vision will continue to remain a far-fetched dream for India! ▶



Payal Agarwal
Editorial Consultant

Fake Reviews on E-Commerce Sites to Become a Thing of the Past?

“As online consumers, we are now living and breathing quality. We do not hesitate to announce our level of satisfaction with an online purchase by publishing a rating and review for the products. Similarly, we rely on others' reviews before buying things online. But what if the reviews we are banking on turn out to be fake or paid?”

— *implores Payal Agarwal*



EVEN AS E-COMMERCE is booming in India and across the world, the online shopping motivations of consumers are undergoing a sea change. While price differentiation was a driving factor in the early days, mature online shoppers are prioritising other factors like convenient website, prompt delivery, having new/desired products in stock, products delivered in good condition and so on.

Recent research is showing that consumers are giving precedence to quality over price when it comes to online spending. Quality in the virtual space is defined by the online experience, service standards and even data protection as much as by the actual superiority of the products. For instance, when we get a damaged product, we expect the e-tailer to provide free return shipping and send us a replacement/refund at once. This sends the trust factor soaring and brands the online platform/seller as a quality one.

Another aspect of digital commerce that is dictating quality and value is product reviews! Indeed, it has become rare for consumers to make an online purchase decision without reading at least a couple of reviews that have been posted by other users.

This approach makes sense as how is an e-shopper to decide which digital product is of good quality when he/she cannot see or touch it for real? Apart from the product descriptions, pictures and quality seals on the e-commerce portals, customer reviews are a clincher in the grand scheme of things. They provide a second-hand insight into the material, size, shape, performance and usability of the product.

With 9 in 10 shoppers relying on consumer reviews when buying goods online, it is estimated that online reviews influenced \$3.8 trillion of global e-commerce spend in 2021!

Alas, even as more and more consumers are depending heavily on user reviews to understand the opinions and experiences of others who have purchased and used the products/services, many of the

reviews on the digital platforms are turning out to be fake, paid or manipulated, at best!

How can a consumer differentiate between actual and paid reviews of products and services?

What are Fake Reviews?

The European Parliament defined fake reviews as, "Any review that is not an actual consumer's honest and impartial opinion, or that does not reflect a consumer's genuine experience of a product, service or business." It further mentions that in multiple surveys, around 70% to 80% of people said that online reviews play a key role in their purchase decision.

Reviews are crucially important for both the e-commerce platforms and the e-sellers. It helps in everything from establishing credibility and winning business to maintaining a



Amazon can't end fake reviews, but its new system might drown them out

good reputation. The algorithm on e-commerce platforms pushes products with more positive reviews to the top, thus giving them a clear edge over other products in terms of sales.

With consumers basing their purchase decisions on what other people write about their experiences, these entities often resort to unfair means to make their products stand out.

Fake reviews take various forms. A company may offer incentives like discounts, vouchers, free products or even monetary commissions to consumers for posting positive reviews. Or it may hire a service provider to manage the online reputation through various means which include paid stellar ratings and

reviews. Then there are those that pay people to post negative comments and ratings about the competitors.

The European Commission reported in January 2022 that an EU-wide screening of online consumer reviews across 223 major websites revealed that around 55% of them failed to follow the EU's Unfair Commercial Practices Directive which requires that truthful information is presented to consumers to allow them to make an informed choice. There were doubts about another 18% of the screened websites. According to another study, fake online reviews influence \$791 billion of e-commerce spending annually in the US, \$6.4 billion in Japan, \$5 billion in the UK, \$2.3 billion in Canada and \$900 million in Australia.

The Harvard Business Review revealed in 2020 that a large and thriving market for fake reviews existed in private Facebook groups in the USA.

Review Policing By Countries And E-Platforms

Regulators, consumer enforcement bodies and other stakeholders in various countries are adopting guidelines to deal with fake reviews. Australia issued a guide for businesses and review platforms on online reviews way back in 2013. Spain requires businesses to indicate whether people who leave a review of their product or service have actually bought/used it. France published an opt-in standard for the management of online consumer reviews, the misuse of which is a fraudulent commercial practice punishable with monetary fines. UK is also planning to outlaw fake reviews.

Facebook and eBay are cracking down on the trade in fake reviews with the social media giant removing pages, groups and disabling accounts that are involved in fake reviews.

E-commerce platforms are also deploying varied measures to tackle this hazard. Amazon uses AI machine learning tools and human investigators to detect and weed out fake reviews along with kicking off companies from its marketplace when

they break the rules. It claims to have blocked 200 million suspected fake reviews before they were posted in 2020 while boosting the weight of verified and newer customer purchase reviews. Similarly, TripAdvisor is using fraud detection technology employed by banks to detect and remove fake reviews.

The Indian Scenario

Following a spate of consumer complaints on the menace of fake reviews on e-commerce sites, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs along with the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) convened a meeting with e-commerce companies, consumer rights groups and other stakeholders to discuss how paid, unverifiable reviews make it challenging for consumers to recognise genuine reviews. The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) also held several rounds of consultation with trade bodies on this issue.

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA) issued a statement that, “.... due to fake and misleading reviews, the right to be informed, which is a consumer right under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 is violated.” The Act provides that the consumers have a right to be “informed about the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods, products or services”. It is



In India, ensuring the authenticity of the reviewer and the associated liability of the platform are the two key issues in the fight against fake reviews. E-commerce players must disclose how they choose the 'most relevant reviews' for display on their websites.

– Rohit Kumar Singh
Secretary, DoCA

focusing on ascertaining traceability (it is a major challenge to ascertain who wrote a fake review or gave a rating), legitimacy and also handling of negative reviews posted by business rivals.

In May this year, the DoCA formed a committee to study the present mechanism being followed by the e-commerce entities in India and the best practices available globally. Based on the report it will develop a legal framework to keep a check on fake/deceptive reviews and unverified star ratings posted on e-commerce websites and travel and hotel

bookings platforms to protect consumer interests.

The committee is working on changes in the norms related to fake reviews, which were formulated by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) in 2021 and are voluntary in nature as of now. Once the norms are finalised, they will become mandatory and entail heavy penalties on e-commerce firms for posting fake reviews and also for getting fake reviews done of rival entities. Apart from this, the Department of Consumer Affairs may also take suo moto cognizance of errant e-commerce entities.

According to the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, penalty on e-commerce entities for posting fake reviews of products and giving inflated ratings would be imposed, and the penalty amount could range from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 50 lakh.

The CCPA already issued 24 notices against e-commerce companies for fake reviews.

Conclusion

Fake reviews are hard to detect and it is difficult to prove that a reviewer has been paid to provide a false review. The government is going all out to nip such malicious behaviour in the bud – let us wait and watch how the norms roll out in the coming days. ▀



The Delhi government has told the High Court that it is taking active steps for drafting, finalisation and enactment of the Delhi Health Bill, 2022 to regulate clinical establishments, including laboratories. While the Bill awaits finalisation, the government has issued directions to all pathological labs to bring uniformity and standardisation in their functioning.

This is in response to a PIL filed by our editor and international consumer policy expert, Prof Bejon Kumar Misra in 2018 (through his counsel Shashank Deo Sudhi) against unauthorised pathological labs being run by unqualified technicians in the national capital. It also called for strict implementation of the Clinical Establishment (Registration and Regulation) Act of 2010.

– Advocate Shashank Sudhi

DELIVERING QUALITY IN A SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEM



Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors are figuring prominently in the quality definition for the responsible consumers of today! They expect companies to do more than just deliver excellent products and services; they are also expected to contribute to the environment and society while practicing constant quality improvement.

Sustainability is part of the new quality equation!

CONSUMERS ARE INCREASINGLY

driven towards quality products and services. However, their quality parameters are not defined by superior raw materials, excellence in manufacturing or delivery of services alone. The paradigm of quality has stretched further to encompass environmental, social and other factors as well.

Indeed, consumers want to see that the companies they patronise actually care about the planet and its people! They are looking at positive conduct that is defined by constructive contributions to the environment and social causes. In short, sustainability is becoming embedded into quality!

The ESG Stance

Environmental Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) is a major talking point today. It comprises of three key

pillars that characterise the sustainability and ethical impact of an organisation. This covers:

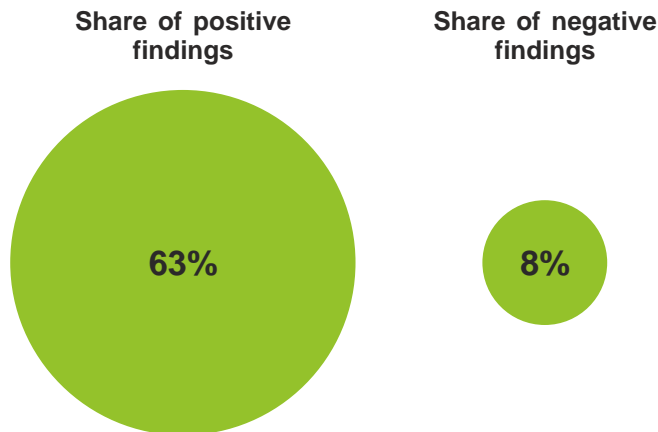
- **Environment** – This aspect is about preserving the natural environment and is focused on the resources used by an organisation along with the consequences thereof. It includes greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, pollution, biodiversity loss, depletion of resources like energy, water, etc. and waste generation that together contribute to climate change.
- **Social** – This criterion is concerned with an organisation's relationships with its stakeholders and how it treats its people. This encompasses everything from employee working conditions, fair wages, engagement, equity, diversity and inclusion to the impact and assistance for the local community where it operates.

- **Governance** – This lens converges on how an organisation is governed and managed in terms of board composition, management structure, executive compensation and more. It covers how the internal system of practices, controls and procedures enable the leadership to make effective decisions, promote transparency and accountability, comply with the law, prevent bribery and corruption, etc.

There are a number of third-party ESG rating agencies that evaluate public and private companies on their environmental, social and governance performance. Companies that are committed to ESG goals get high ratings in general. However, each agency uses its own set of metrics to measure the level of ESG compliance and there are no industry-wide set of common standards as of now.

Paying attention to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) concerns does not compromise returns – rather, the opposite.

Results of >2,000 studies on the impact of ESG propositions on equity returns



Source: Gunnar Friede et al., "ESG and financial performance: Aggregated evidence from more than 2000 empirical studies," *Journal of Sustainable Finance & Investment*, October 2015, Volume 5, Number 4, pp. 210-33; Deutsche Asset & Wealth Management Investment; McKinsey analysis

There is a strong body of evidence that a strong ESG proposition creates value for the companies and their shareholders

The ESG framework plays a predominant role in investment decisions as it provides insight into the sustainability of the business operations. Investors also use it to determine the future financial performance with companies that adopt ESG standards considered more likely to be successful.

Failing on the ESG front can destroy both company value and standing, sometimes just in the blink of an eye. A case study of ESG controversies by a global research team in 2020 estimated that more than \$600 billion of market cap for S&P 500 companies was lost to 'ESG controversies' in the last seven years alone.

Quality for the Conscious Consumer

ESG is now driving consumer preferences too as they bake responsibility into their buying behaviour. People are paying more and more attention to the carbon emissions, child labour practices, corruption levels and other such aspects of a business.

Consumer expectations are evolving. A company that manages its carbon footprint denotes good quality!

While the ESG concept was gathering steam in the public perception since a couple of years, the COVID-19 pandemic and other threats of climate change and social injustice have brought it front and centre in the discourse!

Indeed, consumers are taking an active stance by demanding that the companies that they buy from should use sustainable natural materials, adopt eco-packaging, focus on water conservation and target net-zero emissions. Similarly, they are expected to advance diversity in the workforce and leadership, protect human rights and work to alleviate poverty. There should be ethical corporate governance measures in place like anti-corruption and capped executive compensation.

The 2021 Consumer Intelligence Series survey on ESG by PricewaterhouseCoopers reveals that a whopping 83% of consumers think companies should be actively shaping ESG best practices! (see Figure 1)

The accompanying report clearly states that, "While consumers have long said that they value sustainability, the COVID-19 crisis perceptibly shifted consumer behaviour and enlarged the pool of conscientious consumers willing to pay more for healthier, safer, more environmentally and socially conscious products and brands."

"I will discontinue my relationship with companies that treat the environment, employees, or the community in which they operate poorly" - 76% consumers in the PwC Consumer Intelligence Series

Even before the pandemic, a RepTrak 2020 report that analysed two years of data showed that ESG is the ninth most important factor when determining consumer willingness to buy a company's products or services. It becomes the fifth most important factor when it comes to recommending a company. ESG also ranks as the third most important thing people consider when deciding whether they will give a company the benefit of the doubt. (see Figure 2)

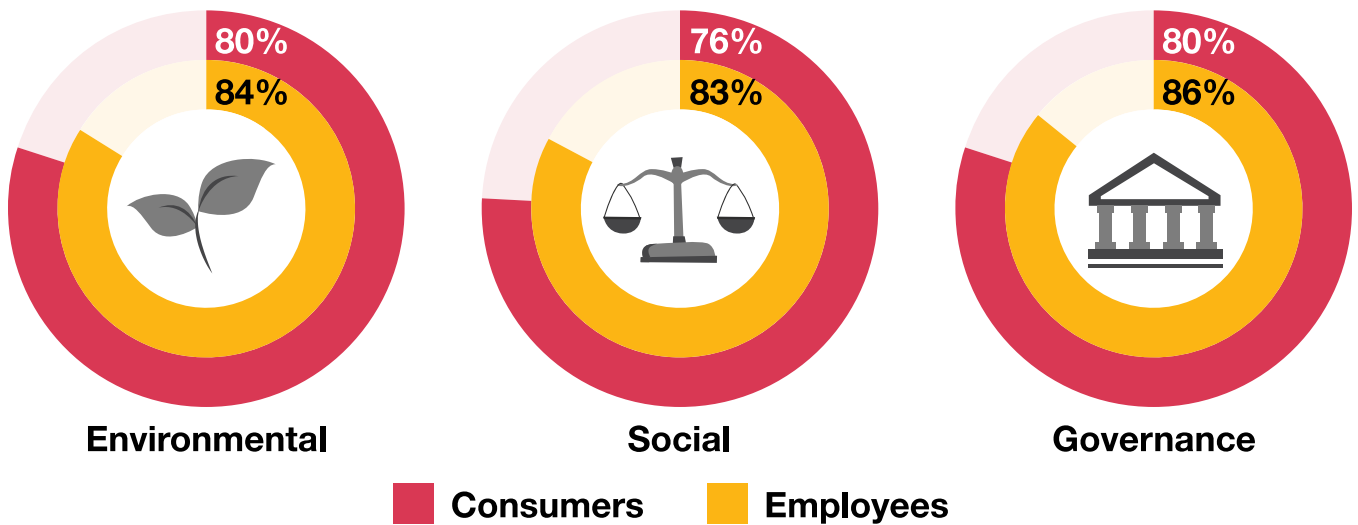
Consumers have direct access to a lot of information now. They are not only looking at the ESG ratings but also the reputation and perception of the brand. They pay attention to social media noise about companies that are using less water or using renewable energy. They want to hear from the community about organisations that hire diverse employees, give their workforce a say and treat shareholders with respect. Initiatives like inclusion practices and net-zero emissions pledges stay high on their radar. In short, it is all about the consumer's feelings about the company selling the product or service and whether it can be trusted to do the right thing. Customers today are more attentive to product reviews and reputation.

Consumers want to buy from responsible companies that reduce their harmful environmental and social impact. They will vote with their wallet for brands that really care!

FIGURE 1:

ESG commitments are driving consumer purchases and employee engagement

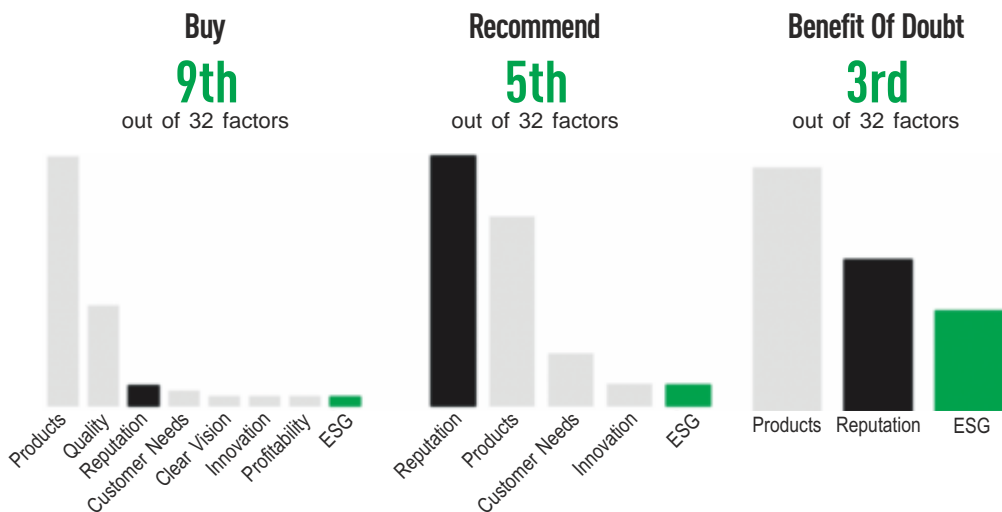
I am more likely to buy from / work for a company that stands up for...



Q: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.
Consumers (n=5,005) | Employees (n=2,510)

FIGURE 2:

ESG's Growing Impact On Business Outcomes



and services are increasingly positive.

A study published this year states that firms with quality management systems (QMSs) and environmental management systems (EMSs) accomplish statistically significant higher ESG scores than companies without them. In fact, the accompanying research proves that companies operating with QMSs and EMSs achieve higher performance scores in all the three pillars of ESG.

Conclusion

Consumers are demanding quality that is defined by

Sustainability as a Part of Quality

Sustainability is an integral part of the quality equation and vice versa. There is an intuitive relationship

between the two concepts that makes them two halves of a whole. Therefore, it's all about improving ESG in a holistic manner to deliver maximum value as consumer attitudes towards sustainable products

sustainable improvements to the environment and society. Therefore, organisations have to weave ESG into their DNA to emerge as responsible entities that offer quality products and services! ▶

In a (QUALITY) Conversation...



By way of a freewheeling discussion, Mr. Rajesh Maheshwari, CEO, National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) explains the Board's exceptional role in maintaining quality standards in the country across sectors.

FEW CONVERSATIONS DURING travel can often turn out interesting. One such (quality) conversation between a group of people explores the quality infrastructure in our country.

Students, especially graduating students, are usually curious about the various types of jobs and career opportunities. Their perspective encompasses a kaleidoscope of opportunities and are confused about which to pursue. One such bright and curious student I had come across in my travel casually asked me what do I do?

I told him that I am an accreditation officer at National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB). The bewilderment on his face was clearly visible and I had a small smile.

Not knowing what is accreditation, he began asking more about it. Instead of lashing out the standard definition of accreditation (defined as “third-party *attestation* related to a *conformity assessment body*, conveying formal demonstration of its competence, *impartiality* and consistent operation in performing specific conformity assessment activities”), I thought of giving him a small glimpse of the quality infrastructure to truly enable an understanding which may lead to appreciation of the accreditation vertical.

I started by explaining to him that accreditation is an important pillar in the quality infrastructure of the nation along with metrology, standardisation, conformity assessment and market surveillance. Grasping his interest to listen more, I explained about Metrology: the science of measurement.

National Physical Laboratory India (NPLI) is the custodian and has the responsibility of realising the units of

physical measurements based on International system (SI units).

I questioned him, what are SI units, which put a smile on his face as he recollected the SI units.

Standardisation: provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context.

He said he knows of one standard ISO 9001 used by many organisations. Appreciating him, I said we can discuss more on this.

Conformity Assessment: Conformity assessment is a demonstration that specified requirements relating to a product, process, system, person or body are fulfilled.

Certification bodies conduct audit of manufacturing companies against the requirement of ISO 9001 and certify them ISO 9001 complaint which effectively means their quality management system is in accordance with ISO 9001. Here the activity of certifying an organisation is a conformity assessment activity.

So NABCB certifies all organisations as per ISO 9001 was his immediate question.

I explained to him that accreditation is the process by which an authoritative body - such as NABCB - gives formal recognition that a body or person is competent to carry out specific tasks. Here the specific task is certification services by a certification body as per ISO 9001. So effectively NABCB is a step higher than the organisation certifying clients.

This cleared his mind and he got a basic understanding of how the system works. Not knowing what further to ask, he questioned: What other things does NABCB do?

Before I could explain, the uncle beside us interjected himself into the conversation and questioned, do you have your mobile and explained that behind it there is a standard IS 13252/IEC 60950 and BIS mark claiming the safety of the device. But before he could confuse the student on self-declared mark of conformity, I informed him this can be discussed shortly.

I elaborated to him that NABCB was established by Quality Council of India (QCI) as per decision of the Cabinet in February 1996 and Memorandum of Association of January 1997 to carry out accreditation of Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs). NABCB also operates in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011 which is the standard for accreditation bodies. Also, NABCB is recognised through its Multi-Lateral Arrangement (MLA) and Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) with Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (APAC), International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC).

NABCB grants accreditation to CABs for management system certification bodies, product (including process and service) certification bodies, personnel certification bodies, inspection bodies and validation verification bodies.

With such a sudden downpour of so much information in a short span of time, something not specifically taught to him in his technical education, he sat silently processing and understanding the various details. We all relaxed for a while and received food during the journey.

Upon seeing the packaging and the food, he asked whether NABCB does anything with the food we received and how the safety of the food was ensured.

With a hearty laugh, I asked what he wants to know about food, food safety, ingredients, the packaging or any other aspect. He smiled back. The earlier gentleman started saying that food is tested by FSSAI and they put their number there to ensure its safety. With this gentleman starting to state many myths and creating confusion, I was perplexed.

One madam near us, on overhearing the conversation, told us that she had been a food analyst and would like to explain further. She told him that any aspect which relates to the safety of a consumer gets regulated by the government. FSSAI is a regulator which mandates various food regulations and enforces them. However, to ensure enforcement, FSSAI depends on accreditation bodies such as NABL, NABCB and its accredited CABs which do a wide variety of conformity assessment activities such as testing, inspecting the food and packaging to ensure it meets the

requirements. The organisations manufacturing food have Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) in place to demonstrate their compliance. The food prepared also gets inspected by third party accredited inspection body to ensure additional level of safety.

Building on her example, I started to explain that while the earlier mobile mark is a Statement for Declaration of Conformity (SDoC) declared by the manufacturer himself, the food declaration is after assessment from a third party.

I elaborated, suppose you manufacture a product which needs to get exported to international market, the product manufactured gets tested at an organisation usually called a Conformity Assessment Body which is not a manufacturer or trader of the same product. The CAB are involved only in conformity assessment activity and they obtain accreditation from NABCB. The manufactured products are exported based on a third-party declaration of conformity accompanying it, usually such products are easily accepted in the market of the importing country based on the accredited declaration of conformity from the exporting country.

One old person curious of this discussion questioned, I have a pacemaker installed long back and was told it was an imported device. Did this pacemaker also go through such a strict quality measure?

I explained that earlier the CDSCO regulated the medical devices into different classes and mandated Medical Device Quality Management Systems (MDQMS) for regulatory compliance. We may have imported such devices based on the accredited CAB declaration of conformity of the device. I explained to him, currently NABCB accredited CAB's certify organisations for MDQMS and the availability has increased a lot.

He blessed NABCB and CDSCO on doing such great work but quipped again, so NABCB takes care of everything from food to medical devices, with a small smirk.

The student also joined in the same question and requested me to explain.

I asked him to go through NABCB website to understand the various schemes operated by NABCB wherein in accreditation is being granted to various organisations in wide spectrum of conformity assessment activities. Product certification, inspection and other schemes are explained in which NABCB is recognised by many regulators, government bodies and heavily relied upon. I showed a small video on NABCB for their better understanding at <https://youtu.be/w3D49NJKyfg>.

The student was pumped up and told he wanted to work with NABCB wherein he can learn about many different sectors and contribute to nation building and quality infrastructure! ▶



"Our medical institutions are good; they are good in both public and private sector. The public and private healthcare organisations are like two oars of a boat, unless both are functional, we cannot move ahead."

- Shri Narottam Puri, Advisor, QCI
at QCI's Silver Jubilee Celebrations (Heal in India Panel)



High-Quality Products are a Must to Increase Export from India!

THE MARKET SOLELY works on the principle of demand and supply where the manufacturers supply the goods demanded by customers. The contemporary trend is that customer demands high-quality goods at a low price while capitalists intend to sell low-quality goods at a high price or high-quality goods at a very high price.

In this scenario, India might have managed to supply goods at a low price but it certainly lacks the providence of high-quality products. We have seen multiple cases of Indian products not being accepted in western countries due to a lack of quality content. It not only affects the Indian trade deficit, which is going above its predicted value, but also deteriorates the global image of India for not being a provider of quality goods. It is an issue of concern in the contemporary world that must be looked at as soon as possible.

Several economic experts believe that Indian products lack global standards. One of the reasons for it is that Indian companies are unwilling to become a part of the global value chain. It requires an increase in capital and technology development to enhance the quality of products in order to match global standards. Thus, Indian manufacturers prefer to root with low-quality goods because they see a humongous opportunity in the domestic market itself. They see an ample number of opportunities with a lower standard of products. They believe in selling the maximum number of articles

rather than selling the best product. The bigger issue is that stakeholders primarily discuss tariffs, pricing and logistics, which eventually reveals their capitalist tendencies.

The previously mentioned factors have led to a decline in the trade balance with a number of countries, especially the U.S.A. The country tests and checks most of the imported products that needs to have a predetermined standard. India used to get in conflict with the U.S.A due to its demand of high expectations which has been difficult for Indian manufacturers to accomplish.

India routinely neglects to inform the WTO of new standards and frequently does not give its trading partners enough opportunity to consider them before adoption. The "One Nation, One Standard" program was introduced by the Indian government in 2021 with the intention of coordinating the standards adopted by the country's many Standard Development Organizations. But, there is a lack of implementation of the same. Thus, India needs to enhance its quality standards not only for gaining international recognition for Indian products but also to maintain healthy standards for the country. Hence, concrete action for quality standards is the demand of the hour that needs to be taken understanding the gravity of the situation.

– **Rupal**, Kamala Nehru College, Editorial team of *Awaken - Consumer Club (Delhi)*

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UPDATE ...



Moving a Step Ahead

Update on the September edition on

Demystifying Renewable Energy for Consumers

Heat Pumps Use the Laws of Physics to Cut Electricity Costs!

HEAT PUMPS ARE emerging as a reliable use of renewable energy. Instead of using electricity to generate heat, the 'heat pump' absorbs heat from its surroundings – effectively 'pumping' it from one place to another. This heat can be extracted from the air or even from the ground before being pumped to where it is needed. However, air-source heat pumps are the most common as of now.

The US Department of Energy notes that for climates with moderate heating and cooling needs, heat pumps offer an energy-efficient alternative to furnaces and air-conditioners.

In India, heat pumps are primarily used to heat water – the exterior heat is transferred to the storage tank of the water heater, where it increases the temperature of the water, while releasing cool air outside. They can be used for residential and commercial purposes. Larger models are available for use in spas, jacuzzies, swimming pools and even industrial applications.

Heat pumps are both energy-efficient with 60% to 85% saving in energy and cost-effective as well. Space heating and cooling solutions can be in the offing soon.

India is making great strides in the utilization of renewable energy.

An air-source heat pump can deliver 2.5 to 5 times more heat energy to a home compared to the electrical energy it consumes!

According to Mercom India Research's India Solar Open Access Market Report Q2 2022 released in September:

- Open access solar installations in the first half of 2022 totalled 1.3 GW, an increase of 97% compared to the same period in 2021
- India added 6.89 MW of open access solar capacity in Q2 2022, an 18% QoQ increase and 223% YoY increase
- As of June 2022, the total solar capacity installed in the open access segment was over 6.5 GW
- About 2.8 GW of projects are under development and in the pre-construction phase

To tie in with this edition of The Aware Consumer, in 2017, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy's (MNRE) had mandated that solar photovoltaic modules, inverters and battery storage systems in the Indian market should conform to the specified Indian standards and get the BIS certification.

Now, the solar module manufacturers are themselves urging the government to update the BIS certification standards for photovoltaic systems and other related equipment to align with international norms revised last year. They are arguing that delays in updating the standards will hamper domestic manufacturers from upgrading their products and competing with Chinese counterparts.

Some more pioneering efforts in renewable energy utilisation are highlighted below:

RAILWAYS EQUIPS 65,000 TRAIN COACHES WITH POWER SAVING LED LIGHTS

6.5 crore Kwh units of energy will be saved per year with this move.

Railways will also save Rs. 40 crore and cut down 4920 Tonnes of CO2 emissions per annum



NITIN GADKARI UNVEILS INDIA'S FIRST EVER 'ELECTRIC DOUBLE-DECKER BUS' IN MUMBAI. 500 BUSES WILL BE ON ROADS BY 2023 !



INDIA LAUNCHES ITS FIRST SOLAR-POWERED RO-PAX FERRY SERVICE IN GUJARAT

The fully air-conditioned ferry has 22 VIP lounges, 11 cabins, 3 cafeterias, game zones, and a top deck for sea view.

The ship has a capacity of 375 passengers, 70 cars, 50 motorcycles, 25 tempos, and 55 trucks.



On the sidelines of the Clean Energy Ministerial in Pittsburgh, USA in September, India entered into a collaboration with California for research and innovation in the field of zero-emission vehicles to spur the development of its nascent electric vehicle (EV) industry and address climate risks.

The California-India Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Policy programme is aimed at supporting ZEV uptake in India, spurring the development of an EV industry in India and contributing to India's industrial growth. In addition to addressing policy, technology and investment strategies for a ZEV transition, it would identify opportunities for India to emerge as a strategic leader in the global ZEV transition.

California has the world's most advanced ZEV policies. It has an ambitious 100% ZEV mandate by 2035.

This platform presents a unique opportunity as India prepares to host both the Clean Energy Ministerial and the G20 in 2023.

YOUR OPINION MATTERS

Letters to the



editor

((September issue:
Demystifying Renewable
Energy for Consumers))

We are truly humbled by the praise and acknowledgment that is flowing in from varied sources. Please feel free to send in your comments, views or feedback on The Aware Consumer magazine at bejonmisra@theawareconsumer.in – we will publish your opinions and implement your feedback while ensuring that your voice is heard on the right platforms.



I have gone through the magazine, particularly the articles focused on renewable energy. My specific observations and comments are as follows -

i) Multiple fronts have been opened for promoting renewable energy, but the question remains unaddressed as

to whether regulatory agencies are capable to manage and ramp up the pace accordingly

ii) Due to insufficient staff for the visits to factories/OEMs and testing facilities, huge back log is piling up for the approval of PV modules and certification of solar panels. Similar issues are emerging for electric vehicles. This trend, if not checked, may lead to not producing best quality products and decoupling of India from China. Quality and safety of such products, most importantly in the case of Green Hydrogen, need to be interwoven in the related policies and regulatory mechanisms.

iii) Largest Floating Solar project and similar other projects have great potential but land requirement issues need to be addressed and there should be a single unified platform for all states to enable end consumers for appropriate calculation of costs/charges.

iv) Pilots are needed on Grid Forming Inverters as current technology is not capable to run a 100% renewable energy grid and lessons need to be learnt from the invasion on Ukraine for implementing 100% renewable energy plants.

v) All aspects are truly and lucidly explained to bust the myths & scepticism of shifting to renewable energy. Similar approach is required to convince public, particularly staying in large residential multistorey complexes in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities to switch over to using electrical vehicles, provided adequate charging and parking facilities are provided. This can be a game changer towards shifting to electric mobility with huge leaps.

vi) Operations domain of renewable energy i.e. Green Jobs need to be steered with freshers qualified and trained in renewable energy rather than power sector experts.

– **Dr Dinesh Katoch**
New Delhi • dckatoch@rediffmail.com



We are hearing words like green and clean renewable energy nowadays which is very significant and most needed as of now. We need to bring a new revolution in this sector.

India is turning and shifting to renewable energy drastically since last two decades. This is of course very much essential to protect our environment and soil. This publication of 'The Aware Consumer' is full of information and contains very good deliberation on renewable energy. This will give full guidance, understanding and explanation of all questions to the people who are stepping into the world of clean, green and pollution free world. Indeed, the entire team is worthy to be congratulated. My best wishes again

and I will request to throw more light on subjects like this in coming times.

– **Dr C D Shelat**, Deputy Commissioner, Food and Drugs Control Administration, Gujarat • cdshelat.fdca@gmail.com

I have been reading The Aware Consumer magazine for quite some time. The spectrum of topics covered is very broad and impressive. Moreover, all of the articles are very well researched. I really enjoyed reading the latest issue on Renewable Energies. It was very exhaustive and informative, and a big step in educating us, the lay people.

Your commitment to provide quality reading is highly commendable. Congratulations to all the people involved in bringing out the magazine regularly covering all the issues from a consumer's perspective. Keep up the good work.

– **Neeta Pradhan**
Delhi • pradhan.neeta@gmail.com



The Aware Consumer is a very informative magazine for consumers. It awakens the consumers for their rights and lays a guideline on the subject. It's useful from many points of view, I consider it an asset for

all. Regarding this issue, it is definitely going to help a lot in many ways. I recommend people to go through this for sure.

– **Dr Awadhesh Agarwal**
Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh
• gorakhnathbloodbank@gmail.com



I am very happy to read this edition of The Aware Consumer that focuses on Renewable Energy

from a consumer perspective. It is very useful to all. We are proud of Shri Bejon Mishra and his team for the success of this magazine. I shall suggest to all consumer groups and others to read it.

– **Naveen Kumar Dixit**,
Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh
• nk5039@gmail.com



It's a very good initiative to create awareness of the use of solar panels (can be used in agriculture sector, like farmers installing solar panels right beside their well and not depending on government for power). As there is subsidy from Central government, thereby they are benefitted of having continuous power which is of huge help to carry out commercial farming. When it comes to houses it's the same, continuous power will be there and small size solar panels too are available in the market.

In Maharashtra from as many as 15 years all the major hotels use huge solar panels. Huge turbines are being erected at different points at different altitudes in Sangola (near Solapur), thereby all nearby villages and towns draw power.

– **S Pavan Kumar**, Hyderabad
• spvspectronics@gmail.com

WATCH OUT

for the next issue in December dedicated to “National Consumer Day”



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