

Standardization versus non standardization of sustenance products: Is consumers sensitivity matters?

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ABSTRACT

The survival and growth of any business depend upon the satisfaction of consumers. The importance of standardization was realized as it provides an important communication link between the consumer and the product. Standards also provide useful information to the consumer about the product through informative labeling. In India Bureau of Indian Standards looks after the standardization of product. BIS have a record, standards for most of the processed foods. In view of this, the study is focused to analyze consumer awareness and preferences towards standardized food products. Standardization is an effective tool to create assurance for quality and safety and to makes the purchase easy. Hence the authorities should take the necessary steps to educate the customer about the several certification marks through extensive advertisements.

KEYWORDS: Standardization, Bureau of Indian Standards, Consumer awareness, Assurance, educate, certification marks,Advertisements.

INTRODUCTION:

Every consumer has a right to get his money's worth. Consumers constitute the largest unorganized body in the country and the protection of their interest and right is vital importance in a welfare state like India.

Mahatma Gandhi has put consumer on a distinct pedestal when he said.

“A consumer is the most important visitor on our premises.

He is not dependent on us we are dependent on him.

He is not an interruption on our work. He is the purpose of it.

He is not an outsider on our business. He is a part of it.

We are not doing him a favor by serving him

He is doing us a favor by giving us an opportunity to do so”.

Thus the survival and growth of a business depend upon the satisfaction of consumers. But unfortunately, the consumer is the forgotten man of modern India, the focal point of all the business activities was a production with the selfish motives of business and only with the lip service to the consumer and they never bothered for the satisfaction of the consumer. In this regards the importance of standardization was realized as it provides

an important communication link between the consumer need and procedures capabilities efforts were therefore put in diverse fields of the economy with the objective to prepare standard and relating to products and procedures. Thus various Indian standards marks certificates emerged.

During the pre-Independence period, standardization activity was sporadic and confined mainly to a few Govt. purchasing organization. However, immediately after independence, economic development through coordinated utilization of resources was called for and the govt. recognized the role of standardization in food industries to competitive efficiency and quality production.

The Indian standard institution (ISI) was, therefore, set up on 6th January 1947 as a registered society, under a Government of Indian resolution. The Indian standard Institution gave the nation the standard it needs for nationalization, orderly industrial and commercial growth, quality production and competitive efficiency. However, in 1986 the government recognized the need for strengthening this national standards body due to the fast-changing socio-economic scenario and according to its statutory status. Thus came the Bureau of Indian standards act 1986 and on 1st April 1987, newly framed bureau of Indian Standards took over. Thus Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), The national standards Body of India, resolves to be the leaders in all matters concerning standardization certification and quality.

BIS is a voluntary Standard

There are two organizations dealing with the voluntary standardization and certification system in food. Bureau of Indian Standards looks after the standardization of product and standardization of raw agricultural produce falls under the Directorate of marketing and inspectors. The activities of BIS are two-fold, formulation of Indian standards and their implementation by promotion and through a voluntary and third-party certification system.

BIS has a record, standards for most of the processed foods, their standards in general covers raw materials, permitted and their quality parameters, the hygienic condition under which the product is manufactured and packaging and labeling requirements.

Standardization Benefits to Consumers

- Standardization aims to exercise control, which results in the improvement of quality.
- Standards enable a product, process or service to fulfill a particular need.
- Standardization brings assurance of product quality and services.
- Standardization aims to protect health.
- Standards are also developed to safeguard the environment and preserve nature from the result of pollution.
- Standards also provide useful information to the consumer about the product through informative labeling.

Certification Marking

Certification provides third-party assurances to the consumer of the quality of the product on service. The Bureau is providing following types of quality certification services.

- Quality system certification
- Eco-mark
- Environment management system certification.
- Hazard analysis and critical control point (HACCP) based quality system certification scheme for the food industry.

Quality System Certification Scheme

Quality system certification is done against IS/ISO 9000 series of standards. The scheme was launched by Bureau of Indian standards in September 1991. Under the scheme companies after having installed quality system can apply to the Bureau for assessment and issue of license for quality system certifications. The assessment is caused out by trained assessors as per the international practice over 15 officers of the Bureau have qualified as lead assessors. The system and procedures followed for quality system certification are similar to those of other certified bodies in Europe. The Bureau of Indian standard scheme has been accredited by Road voor accreditatie, in Netherland is one of the leading accrediting agencies in the world. The license is granted for an initial period of three years.

Eco-Mark

The ministry of environment and forests has designated Bureau of Indian standards to operate the Eco-Mark. In addition to the quality requirement given in the relevant standards, the product has to conform to the provisory for Biodegradability use of environment-friendly raw materials and other regulations, which has an impact on the environment. A special mark, which depicts the standard mark and Eco logo, would be put on the product.

Environment Management System

In the wake of increasing public awareness about the environment which has become an important factor in the decision making the process of the organizations, Bureau of Indian standards has launched environment management system (EMS) certification as per IS /ISO 14000 series and standards. Their standards are the adoption of an identical to the internationally accepted ISO 14000 series of standards on – Environmental management system – Environmental management system certification is to demonstrate the organization's capabilities for compliance/conformity to the legislative and regularly requirement, protection of the environment, prevention of pollution and for continual improvement in environmental performance.

HACCP Based quality system certification scheme for the food industry

The HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) based quality system certification as per IS/5000 is tailor-made to suit the food industries. Food industries can get two certifications, one for Food safety and other for quality assurance system under HACCP certificates schemes. The system is operated against IS

15000 which is identical to guidelines issued by Codex Alimentarius Commission the advantage of going for HACCP certification scheme is beneficial because of it

- Reduce contamination
- Reduce recall/product destruction
- Provides market protection
- Provides preferred supplier status.
- Transforms commodities into branded products.
- Ensures international acceptance.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The design includes an outline of what the research till do from writing the hypothesis and its operational implication to the final analysis of data. Generally, the design, which minimizes bias and maximizes the reliability of the data collected and analyzed is considered a good design.

The following is the research design adopted for the study.

- Statement of the problem
- Objectives
- Research Methodology
- Limitations

Statement of the Problem

Production, sales, and consumption are generally taken for granted as one who has anyhow to buy in orders to live. Adulteration, variation in the contents of the park use of descriptive or fractional weight is all the ways and means by which the consumer is exploited to the maximum extent possible. Our govt. has always been aware of the plight of consumer and has passed many laws and they have been amended from time to time to ensure better protection of the consumers against different forms of exploitation. This call for the establishment of a well-regulated and independent mechanism to provide quality goods, series, and utilities of the satisfaction of the consumer. Bureau of Indian standards, The national standards body, it looking after the consumer interest through its major activities namely standards formulation and certification making which prescribes the optimum level of quality, safety, and performance of relevant products and method of their practical evaluation. Thus it is the imperative need of the hour to study about the significant role of Indian standards for food products to the public through its standardization schemes, awareness programmes, and a service keeping this in view the study is focused to analyze the consumer preferences towards standardized food products.

- Objectives of the study
- Methodology of the study

Objectives of the Study

- To study consumer awareness of standardized food products.
- To study the factors influencing consumer preferences regarding standardized food products.
- To study the factors which influence the consumer to go in for nonstandard food product

Methodology of the study

Source of Data

The study has used primary data and interview schedule method was prepared for the purpose of collection of data from the respondent.

Statistical Tools used in the Study

The following are the statistical tools applied for the analysis of data collected.

- Percentage Analysis
- Average Rank Analysis

Limitations of the study

- The products are categorized into milk and milk products, Health drinks, soft drinks, packaged drinking water and ready to eat foods.
- All the products bearings BIS are not taken into study.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Bureau of Indian standards¹ has seized packaged drinking water with spacious ISI mark from the premises of Everest. Aqua industries in New Delhi. In search and seizure operation conducted by the BIS with the police, the firm was found filling packaged drinking water in 20 liters cans and 250mls glasses with fats ISI mark.

The Health Department of the Coimbatore Corporation² seized mineral water being sold without the ISI mark. The raid was conducted in railway stations, wine shop, bakeries and tea shops in several parts of the city and also in few godowns in Ramnagar and R.S. Puram, where mineral water in plastic can be kept by the distributors of a Coimbatore based leading mineral water producers.

Sreenivasa Prasad³ (2003) emphasized that assessment which forms a vital tool for perceiving and informing the quality of products should say positive actions.

According to toe Rangarao⁴ “the advent o report pouch processing technology has made the availability of shelf-stable Ready-to-eat foods a reality in the Indian market. A variety of lip-smacking Indian dishes such as Dhal Makhani, Alu Chole, Channa Masala, Kurma, Palk Panner, Sambar rice, etc, are now readily available of the shelf”.

According to Billent Sararine⁵ “The discovery of a new dish does more for the happiness of mankind than the discovery of a star”.

According to Suryaprakasa Rao⁶ "In the retort pouch, Many prices vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes of both north and south India have entered the super marked chain abroad offering an opportunity of the millennium for the Indian processed food industry".

Nankana A.N (2012)⁷ stated that assurance of quality is truly possible only by the producer, the concept of assurance by the supplier or the producer broadened to include every member of the team as the ultimate task performer. Each one needs to know his optimal role precisely and perform exactly the same and also remain updated. Each one's role is unenviable. Their contributions can be estimated, reduced to a harmless level and controlled economically. Quality is multidiscipline, multipronged and multiage sharpen weapon to minimize the costs and maximize the returns. It gallops profits for economic growth to compact inflation and unemployment the twin chronic problem and thus ushers an era of prosperity.

INDIAN STANDARDS AN OVERVIEW

The Bureau of Indian standard product certification scheme is essentially voluntary in nature, and is largely based on ISO guide 28, which provides general rules for third-party certification system of determining conformity with product standards through initial testing and assessment of a factory quality management system and its acceptance followed by surveillance that take into account the factory quality management system and the testing of samples from the factory and the open market. All BIS certification is carried out an Indian Standards. Which has been found amenable to product certifications?

A large number of operational elements of the Bureau of Indian Standards product certificates scheme correspond with the requirements of ISO guide 65. Special attention is gain to multidisciplinary areas such as energy consecration, environmental protection, rural development, and safety.

The objectives of BIS are:

- Harmonious development of standardization, marking and quality certification.
- To provide a new thrust to standardization and quality control.
- To evolve a national strategy for according recognition to standards and integrating them with growth and development of production and exports.

Goods Covered

The Bureau has already granted a license to the manufacturer of animal feeds, baking aids, dairy products, food products, coal form solids food color preparations, charring gum and bubble gum, pesticide formulations, liquors, organic and inorganic chemicals, jute bags and fabrics etc.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

- Percentage Analysis
- Average Rank Analysis

Percentage Analysis

Table No: 1
Age group of the respondents

S.No	Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Below 20 Years	77	25.7
2.	20 Years - 30 Years	120	40.0
3.	30 Years - 40 Years	66	22.0
4.	Above 40 Years	37	12.3
	Total	300	100

From the above table, it is found that 25.7% of the respondents are below 20 Years, 40% of the respondents are between 20 Years - 30 Years, 22% of the respondents are between 30 Years - 40 Years and 12.3% of the respondents are above 40 Years.

Majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 20 years -30years

Table No: 2
Gender of the respondents

S.No	Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Male	142	47.3
2.	Female	158	52.7
	Total	300	100

It is understood from the table that 47.3% of the respondents are male and 52.7% of the respondents are female.

Majority of the respondents are female.

Table No : 3
Educational qualification of the respondents

S.No	Educational Qualification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	No Formal Education	8	2.7
2.	School Level	95	31.7
3.	College Level	169	56.3
4.	Professional Degree	28	9.3
	Total	300	100

Table 3 reveals that out of the total respondents taken for study 2.7% of the respondents have no formal education, 31.7% of the respondents are in School Level, 56.3% of the respondents are College Level and 9.3% of the respondents are Professional Degree.

Majority of the respondents are qualified with college-level education.

Table No: 4
Occupational status of the respondents

S.No	Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Agriculture	31	10.3
2.	Business	91	30.3
3.	Employed	97	32.3
4.	Professional	37	12.3
5.	Any Other	44	14.7
	Total	300	100

It is understood from the table that 10.3% of the respondent's occupation status is agriculture, 30.3% of the respondents are a businessman, 32.3% of the respondents are employees, 12.3% of the respondents are professional and 14.7% of the respondents are in some other occupations.

Majority of the respondents belongs to the employee category.

Table No: 5
Family monthly income level

S.No	Income Level	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Below Rs 10,000	20	6.7
2.	Rs 10,000 - Rs 20,000	108	36.0
3.	Rs 20,000 - Rs 30,000	91	30.3
4.	Rs 30,000 - Rs 40,000	53	17.7
5.	Above Rs 40,000	28	9.3
	Total	300	100

It is found from the table that 6.7% of the respondents monthly family income is Below Rs 10,000, 36% of the respondents income is between Rs 10,000 - Rs 20,000, 30.3% of the respondents income is between Rs 20,000 - Rs 30,000, 17.7% of the respondents income is between Rs 30,000 - Rs 40,000 and 9.3% of the respondents are earning Above Rs.40,000.

Majority of the respondent's monthly income is between Rs 10,000-Rs20,000

Table -6
Ranking of respondents knew about the products bearing ECOMark

Rank Product List	1	2	3	4	5
Milk and milk products	37	28	25	37	33
Health Drinks	12	32	20	56	40
Soft Drinks	46	31	43	26	14
Packaged drinking water	49	50	18	22	21
Ready to eat foods	17	19	53	19	52

It is confirmed that by considering respondent's knowledge about products bearing ECO mark, packaged drinking water got the 1st rank, soft drinks got 2nd rank, milk and milk products got 3rd rank, ready to eat foods got 4th rank and health drinks got the 5th rank.

Majority of respondents have the knowledge of Eco mark on packaged drinking water and ranked as 1st.

Table No: 7

Difference between standardized and non-standardized food products

S.No	Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	278	92.7
2.	No	22	7.3
	Total	300	100

It is found from the table 7 that 92.7% of the respondents are found some difference between standardized and non-standardized food products and 7.3% of the respondents not found any difference between standardized and non-standardized food products.

Majority of the respondents found some difference between standardized and non-standardized food products.

Average Rank Analysis

Table 8 describes the age wise average rank and a final rank of the respondents on the Indian standards marks of the various products.

Table -8
Average Rank – Age and knowledge of Indian standard marks

Knowledge of Indian standard marks		Milk and milk products	Health drinks	Soft drinks	Packaged drinking water	Ready to eat food
Below 20 years	AR	2.75	2.73	3.12	2.90	3.53
	FR	2	1	4	3	5
20yrs – 30 yrs	AR	2.68	2.87	2.89	2.72	3.44
	FR	1	3	4	2	5
30yrs – 40 yrs	AR	2.65	2.74	2.76	2.58	3.82
	FR	2	3	4	1	5
Above 40 yrs	AR	2.89	2.57	3.16	2.51	3.70
	FR	3	2	4	1	5

It is found from table 8 that the respondents below 20 years have knowledge of Indian standard marks and given high priority for health drinks followed by milk and milk products. Respondents of 20 years – 30 years have given high priority for milk and milk products followed by packaged drinking water. Respondents of 20 years – 40 years have high knowledge of Indian standard marks for packaged drinking water followed by milk and milk products and respondents above 40 years are given high priority for packaged drinking water followed by health drinks.

It is concluded that the majority of the respondents have high knowledge level of Indian standard marks for the package drinking water.

Table -9
Average Rank – Educational qualification and Awareness of Eco mark

Awareness of ECO mark		Milk and milk products	Health drinks	Soft drinks	Packaged drinking water	Ready to eat food
No formal education	AR	2.38	3.00	2.63	2.50	3
	FR	1	4	3	2	4
School level	AR	2.25	2.49	2.51	2.21	2.49
	FR	2	3	4	1	3
College level	AR	2.89	2.97	2.89	2.79	2.88

	FR	3	4	3	1	2
Professional level	AR	2.50	2.82	3	1.82	2.04
	FR	3	4	5	1	2

It is found from the table 9 that the majority of the respondents with no formal education are highly aware of eco-mark scheme proposed by Bureau of Indian standard marks for milk and milk products followed by packaged drinking water and respondents at school level are aware on packaged drinking water followed by milk and milk products respondents at college level are highly aware on packaged drinking water followed by ready to eat foods and respondents at professional level are highly aware of Eco marks scheme proposed by Bureau of Indian standards for packaged drinking water followed by ready to eat foods.

It is concluded that the majority of the respondents have the awareness of product bearing Eco mark scheme proposed by the Bureau of Indian standards for packaged drinking water.

Table -10**Average Rank – Educational qualification and Quality assurance for the standardized food product**

Quality assurance for the standardized food product		Educational Qualification	Milk and milk products	Health drinks	Soft drinks	Packaged drinking water	Ready to eat food
No formal education	AR		2.50	2.75	3.00	2.62	3.25
	FR		1	3	4	2	5
School level	AR		2.33	2.32	2.41	2.40	2.30
	FR		3	2	5	4	1
College level	AR		2.64	2.72	2.75	2.78	2.83
	FR		1	2	3	4	5
Professional level	AR		2.00	2.36	2.14	2.14	2.75
	FR		1	4	2	2	5

It is found from the table 10 that the majority of the respondents with no formal education are of the opinion that quality assurance is most essential for milk and milk products followed by packaged drinking water. Respondents at the school level are of the opinion that quality assurance is most essential for health

drinks followed by ready to eat foods. Respondents at the college level have given high priority for milk and milk products followed by health drinks and respondents at the professional level are of the opinion that quality assurance is most essential for milk and milk product followed by soft drinks and packaged drinking water.

It is concluded that majority of the respondents with no formal education and professional level are of the opinion that quality assurance is most essential for the milk and milk products.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION:

- Majority of the respondents belongs to the age group of 20 years - 30years, are female, are having college-level education, working as employed, earning a family monthly income of Rs10,000 – 20,000.
- Majority of respondents have the knowledge of Eco mark on packaged drinking water and ranked as 1st.
- Majority of the respondents found some difference between standardized and non-standardized food products.
- Majority of the respondents in the age wise have high knowledge Indian Standard marks for the package drinking water.
- Majority of the respondents at school, college, and professional level are aware of Eco mark for packaged drinking water.
- Majority of the respondents with no formal education, college level, and professional level are of the opinion that quality assurance is most essential for milk and milk products.

RECOMMENDATION:

On the basis of the results of the study, the following recommendations are made

1. Awareness about standard marks

It is found from the table that majority of the respondents are aware of only the ISO certification mark issued by BIS whereas the awareness about other certifications is low. Hence the authorities should take the necessary steps to educate the customer about the several certification marks through extensive advertisements.

2. Awareness programmes

The study shows that the awareness program conducted by the BIS/AGMARK/FPO is not reachable to the general public. In order to educate them, it should take necessary steps to conduct programmes in villages and it should create awareness by publishing in books, journals etc. It can also telecast advertisements on television about awareness programs.

3. Creating confidence

Most of the respondents are of the opinion that standardized food products create confidence about the products. Adulteration is more serious in case of food products which leads a consumer to be more careful and caution them while they deal with food products. Hence, the assessments, system, and procedure followed by

the institutions should be satisfactory and should be equivalent to that of foreign standards. The procedure for obtaining a license for producing quality foods should ensure foreign standards.

CONCLUSION

In the present busy world, time is an important factor and consumers are the king in the world of marketing. Standardization is an effective tool to create assurance for quality and safety and makes the purchase easy. Standardization provides an important communication link between the consumer and the producer. Therefore, the respective authorities can take the necessary steps to improve the quality by making the procedures for obtaining the license more stringent. When the food processing industry is not up to the mark, the authority should take strict action and make them follow the standards.

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