

IS-MARK AND ISO : CONSUMER AWARENESS AND MANAGERS' PERCEPTION

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Based on a survey, this paper reveals that the adoption and implementation of the IS-mark and the ISOs has been one-sided on the part of the companies who, after getting the ISO certification and/or the IS-mark, do not bother about the education of the consumer. The buyers in India do not care much for the product quality and go by the low price and the free gifts offered with the product. The confession of the buyers regarding the availability of a glamorous product at low price and/or the company's glossy promotion being the major purchase-influencing factors negates the thinking of companies which claim to have achieved success because of the ISO certification.

I. INTRODUCTION

Standards are the criteria against which to judge the results. They serve as a yardstick for measurement of the results achieved and as a basis for comparison with actual accomplishment. Standards are necessary in every field of life, particularly in the industrial activities of production and marketing. Unless goods produced are of a certain standard, they will not attract the customer who wants an assurance as to quality and other aspects of the product. Thus, the basic purpose of standards is consumer protection against supply of sub-standard goods and services.

This purpose can be achieved through standardisation – a system by which standards and values are established which provide a stable basis essential for growth and communication, understanding and exchange of ideas, goods and services. It is essentially an act of simplification as a conscious effort of the society and not only results in the reduction of the existing complexity but also in the prevention of unnecessary complexity in future.

Objectives of Standardisation

In the 1957-Lisbon meeting of the Standing Committee for Study of

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Scientific Principles of Standardisation (STACO), one of the subjects adopted for the study concerned the objectives of standardisation in general, as well as at the international, national and individual level. In order to get a right perspective of the objectives of standardisation at the various levels, it is pertinent to examine these levels and establish their relationship with other major attributes of standards. This can be done by considering 'Standards Space' with 'subjects', 'aspect', and 'level' constituting the three areas of reference (Verman, 1973, p.67).

The 'subject' area covers almost all the aspects of economic activities including engineering, industry, construction, agriculture, commerce and science. Corresponding to the subject matter of standard, or rather the objects being covered by it, a point on the X-axis of the standards space is assigned to it. The 'aspect' area includes all the aspects of the subject being covered. Standards differ in form and type depending on a particular aspect of the subject being covered. These may be a set of nomenclature or set of terms, a specification for quality, composition of a material, an instrument, a machine or a structure and a method for test or analysis to evaluate specified characteristics of a material or a chemical. This leads to an X-Y plan in which all the discrete points corresponding to each

'subject-aspect' combination assume significance. The third dimension, Z-dimension, defines the operational level of a standard or the domain in which it may be applicable. Standards may be individual standards, company standards, association or trade standards, national and international standards (e.g., ISO 9001).

Any standard can be fixed by a discrete point provided the diagram is made sufficiently extensive and detailed in the X-direction. Certain standards may have to be represented by more than one point if they deal with more than one subject or aspect or are adopted at more than one level. But it is to be noted that for each subject-aspect combination, there can be only one point at the international level. But for national standards there may be as many points as there are nations having national standardisation bodies.

Multiplicity of variables along the aspect axis of standards space shows the growth of the complexity in standardisation during the past several decades and there is no indication that this growth has reached a saturation point. On the contrary, judging from the rate of present day science and technology, there is every reason to believe that many a new variable will continue to be added to the standards space, although it may be taken that the level-axis may

remain more or less as conceived (Sherman, 1966, p. 34)

Benefits of Standardisation

Many advantages accrue from standardisation to different sectors of economy such as producers, consumers, trade and technologists, although its value cannot be precisely estimated in terms of economic benefits derived. The benefits include accepted methods and materials for expediting designs, guidance for the formation of research and development programmes, rationalisation of the processes of manufacture, elimination of waste and material effort, better value for money spent, convenient method for settling dispute with suppliers and workable basis for acceptance or rejection of goods and for dealing with consequential disputes.

The benefits of standardisation come at a cost. Consequently the question of economics of this activity arises very often. The opinions on the assessment of the benefits of standardisation vary considerably. On the one hand, one set of authors opines that although the contribution of standardisation is immense, it is incalculable because there is no basis of comparison. On the other, another school of thought is that the implementation of standards usually requires management decisions and these decisions require a reliable

calculation of the expected results of implementation. The economic effects of standardisation can, therefore, be calculated by mathematical models. This is especially valid in smaller and more definite fields like within a company.

As a result of systematic research and evaluation of practical experience, two approaches were developed to estimate the standardisation benefits, namely, quantitative assessment methods and qualitative assessment methods (Frentrend, 1966, p. 15). The application of these methods depends upon the nature of the standard and the reliability of the data available. The benefits of standardization can accrue only after an awareness about the standard marks like IS-mark, Agmark and ISOs.

II. TWO-DIMENSIONAL EMPIRICAL STUDY

In order to measure the extent of buyers' awareness about the Bureau of Indian Standards' Product Certification Scheme (IS-mark) and the Quality Systems Certification Scheme as per ISO 9001 (both referred to as 'standards' in this study) and the companies' perception of the same, the authors conducted a study of 1500 buyers and 20 companies. The study, based on an opinion survey, was limited to the metropolitan city of Delhi. The city was divided into five zones of East, West,

North, South and Central. Care was taken to include an equal number of buyers from the five zones resulting in 300 buyers from each zone.

The buyers were categorised in three categories: (1) working people, (2) housewives, and (3) students. Students were considered as a separate category as a number of post-graduate courses in Delhi university and private educational institutions include Total Quality Management as a separate paper.

The questions asked included the following : (1) Are you aware of the IS-mark and ISO 9001?; (2) Do you know the significance of these marks?; and (3) Can you suggest some changes in the current standardisation schemes?

Products included were gas burners, helmets and LPG cylinders. The companies producing these products were also queried on the same lines with the following questions : (1) Do you feel that the buyers are aware of IS-mark and ISO 9001?; (2) Do the buyers know their significance?; and (3) Does the marking of your product and/or company with IS-mark and/or ISO help in increasing your market-share and customer satisfaction?

Objective

The main objective of the study was to match the buyers' knowledge about

ISOs (9000 and 9001) and IS-mark and the companies' perception of the same. This was done in order to check the ISO and IS-mark schemes' actual implementation by the companies and the claims of the BIS regarding the education of the buyer. In addition, the effectiveness of the promotional efforts of the companies using ISOs as their main selling technique was tested.

Relevance

The study is relevant for several reasons.

- Two-dimensional study, a pioneer in its field in India, is relevant because of the economic and cultural differences between the developed and the developing countries. The generalisations drawn on the basis of the research carried out in the developed countries cannot be accepted in the developing countries.
- The study of the awareness about the standards, national and international, becomes more relevant in the current era of globalisation.
- The study is a pioneer in testing the basic knowledge about standards amidst the claims of companies and the BIS regarding consumer education in quality and value-for-money.
- Despite the efforts of the BIS and the companies, many critical issues

have remained unanswered. These include the following : (a) Is the buyer aware about the BIS, IS-mark and ISO series of standards?; (b) Is he convinced that IS-mark guarantees quality products?; (c) Does he still prefer non-IS-marked products even when similar IS-marked products are available in the market?; (d) Is he satisfied with the performance of IS-marked products?; and (e) Does he have any suggestions about improvements in IS-marked products?

These questions have become more relevant in the race for ISOs by companies in their quest of being branded an ISO company and the consumer psychology of owning a product having an international certification.

The option available to the company to choose between the IS-mark for its product or ISO for itself or both results in a choice of ISO necessitated by an increasing competition, global products and products produced by MNCs adhering to ISO and available at cheap prices. This results in an erosion of small and domestic firms which cannot fulfill the minimum requirements needed for ISO thus leading to a monopolistic competition situation where a few big business houses earn exorbitant profits and the buyer is left with a limited choice between the devil and the deep sea.

The original objective of import substitution, incorporated in the constitution of the BIS, has been replaced in practice by an entirely opposite objective of internationally acceptable products produced by MNCs in India or imported from outside. This has resulted in an erosion of self-sufficiency, another objective originally set by the BIS.

III. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theoretical basis for the study is summarised under the following heads.

Company and Standards

In the complex realm of standards, company standardisation holds a particularly important position because it is at this level that the company interests begin to function and organised effort becomes predominant. In addition, the company level not only generates standards for the individual level but also helps in gathering practical data and experience necessary for next higher levels of standards, namely, the industry and national levels. Furthermore, company level consists of the most prolific users of higher level standards, namely, industry, national and international standards.

Company-level standardisation is quite advanced in the USA. However, during the past few decades, it has also become quite widespread in the UK and

Europe. Among other parts of the world, Australia, India and Japan may be mentioned as having established a viable movement towards company standardisation. This has resulted in the formation of professional bodies including the BIS in India, Standards Engineers Society in the USA, Standards Associates Section in the UK and Japanese Standards Association. These organisations help in promoting the cause of standardisation, in general, and in advancing the theory and practice of company standardisation, in particular.

The activities of the company's standards department have a far-reaching impact on the working of the company. Although the benefits reaped by standardisation cannot always be assessed quantitatively, their qualitative impact has been widely acknowledged. (Griffin, 1958, p. 51-66; Sen, 1963, p. 13-14; Arnold, 1965, pp 4-6; Joynt, 1966, p.1, pp. 11-14).

In the countries where industry-level standardisation is well-developed, company's standards departments often work through association of trade, industry and profession. Thus, from the individual level to the international level, standardisation presents a continuous two-way traffic of support through participation upwards and through a supply of authoritative technical documentation downwards.

Consumer and Standards

The aim of every standard is to safeguard the interest of the consumer. However, in order to completely satisfy different classes of the buyers, it is important that the standards finally established should satisfy all the varying needs. The formation of retail cooperatives and consumer associations are an attempt towards providing a solution to the problem of supply of good quality products/services at reasonable prices to the buyers. Their main line of activity is centered around comparative testing of the consumer goods and dissemination of the information relating to the results of such tests to their members and outsiders.

Standards meant for the consumers differ in one way from other standards. Unlike other bodies interested in the standards, a consumer is not so much interested in knowing about the materials and the processes used in manufacturing, or to the extent to which the specification requirements have been met or exceeded, as he is interested in knowing the quality of the product and its durability (Boggis, 1965, p.14).

Some consumer activists feel that most consumer standard programmes have been oriented to cater to the product's needs because it is the vested interests

which subsidise organisations and support their operations (*ibid.*, p.15). On the other hand, there is an ample evidence to indicate that many National Standards Bodies (NSBs) satisfy the consumer demands for standards and the associated services, namely, certification marking and information labeling. In certain countries, NSBs have organised consumer advisory groups within their own framework such as Women's Advisory Committee in the British Standards Institute, which, with the help of the BSI resources, attempts to spread consumer education among the housewives.

ISO 9000 Series : Product vs. Systems Approach

The goals of an improvement in the market share of products and/or services, enhancement of customer satisfaction and a reduction in the processing time for execution of orders or completion of projects can be achieved by adoption of Quality Management System (QMS). It is based on eight principles : (1) customer-focused organisation, (2) leadership, (3) Involvement of people, (4) process approach, systems approach, (5) continual improvement, (6) factual approach to decision-making, and (7) a mutually beneficial relationship.

The basis of QMS world-wide is the ISO-9000 series of standards. The origin of

these standards can be traced to the defence standards used in the UK and USA from which the British Standards Institution developed BS 5750 series of standards. International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) used the British standards as the basis for development of the ISO 9000 series in 1987. The series was first revised in 1994 and the second revision was in 2000 resulting in the present version of ISO-9000 series.

The core ISO-9000 series of standards includes the following : (1) ISO:9000:2000 – Quality Management Systems-Fundamentals and Vocabulary; (2) ISO 9001 : 2000 – Quality Management Systems-Requirements; and (3) ISO 9004 : 2000 – Quality Management Systems – Guidelines for Performance Improvements.

ISO 9004 : 2000 replaces ISO 8402 : 1994 and ISO 9000 (Part 1) : 1994 and establishes a starting point for understanding the ISO 9000 series and defines the fundamental terms and definitions used. ISO 9001 : 2000 replaces ISO 9001 : 1994, ISO 9002 : 1994 and ISO 9003 : 1994. This is the standard for the assessment of the company's ability to meet customer and regulatory requirements. It is now the only standards in the ISO 9000 family against which third party certification will be carried out. However, till the end of 2003, the earlier standards would also

be used for certification. ISO - 9004 : 2000 is a guideline standard which provides guidance for continual improvement to benefit all the parties through sustained customer satisfaction.

QMS is, thus, more broad-based than manufacturing to product specifications. The differences between the product certification and quality systems certification are : (1) The product certification system deals with the product specification whereas the quality system deals with ISO-9000 series; (2) The former is product-centric while the latter is system-centric; (3) The former is compliance focused while the latter is customer focused; (4) The former is technology-driven while the latter is leader-driven; (5) The former has an output approach while the latter has a system approach; and (6) The former has data based decision-making while the latter has fact based decision-making.

National Standards Body

In India, standards and specifications were first used by a major purchase and construction organisation of the government and the industry. The inspection wing of Indian Stores Department set up in 1922 issued 793 standards by 1939; primarily for the purchase and inspection for government stores. Another important development was the formation of Central Standards

Office for railway in 1925 for railways equipment, stores and design.

Recognising the need for standardisation to accelerate industrial growth and to promote international trade and transfer of technology, the Planning Committee, set up in 1938 under the Chairmanship of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, recommended the establishment of a national standards body. This resulted in setting up of the Indian Standards Institution, in 1947. The new imperatives for industrial development, the thrust for quality and the need for greater adoption of standards for harmonised national efforts led to the reconstruction of the ISI as a statutory body, namely the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) in 1987, through the BIS Act, 1986.

The major functions of the BIS are : standards formulation, certification marking and quality assurance, conformity testing and the promotion of standards. With the advent of the ISO 9000 series, the BIS has introduced Quality Systems Certification Scheme in accordance with the IS/ISO 9000 standards. Being the national standards body, the BIS is represented in the technical committee of ISO/TC 176, which is responsible for formulating the ISO 9000 series. The BIS Quality Systems Certifications Scheme (QSC) is accredited by Raad voor Accreditatie

(RvA), Netherlands for 22 major sectors of the national economy.

The BIS's OSC services are offered at competitive rates and concessions for small-scale industry and corporate bodies (group concessions) are provided in the application and the licence fee. Recently, the BIS decided to extend concession to small enterprises which employ less than 25 persons and a capital of less than one crore rupees. This concession also extends to schools, colleges laboratories, libraries, health care establish-

ments, training institutes, polytechnics irrespective of their size and capital investment provided they are established under the Central or any State government or in the public sector.

IV. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The major findings of the study are described under the following heads :

Consumers' Awareness about IS-mark and ISOs

The results of the survey are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 : Buyers' Awareness about IS-mark and ISOs

Buyer category \ Awareness dimension	Familiarity with IS-mark	Significance of IS-mark	Familiarity with ISOs (9000, 9001)	Significance of ISOs	Scope for Improvement		
					Y	N	DK
Working people (N=500)	342 (68.4%)	167 (33.4%)	360 (72.0%)	90 (18.0%)	150	40	67
Housewives (N=500)	250 (50%)	34 (6.8%)	85 (17.0%)	10 (2.0%)	02	03	39
Students (N=500)	100 (20.0%)	10 (2.0%)	240 (48.0%)	100 (20.0%)	10	30	70
Total	692 (39.09%)	211 (14.06%)	685 (45.66%)	200 (13.33%)			

Note : Y - Yes; N-No, DK-Don't Know.

As is evident from the table, only a small number of buyers (39.09%) are familiar with the IS-mark. The number of buyers familiar with ISOs is only slightly higher (45.66%). This indicates the low level of

awareness about the IS-mark and ISOs among the buyers despite the promotional strategy of the companies and the BIS.

The number of buyers having knowledge about the significance of the IS-mark is

dismally low (14.06 %) with an almost similar pattern by the buyers having knowledge of the significance of ISOs (13.33 %). This is despite the celebration of the World Standards Day in India, existence of various voluntary organisations, promotional efforts of the companies and the BIS and the inclusion

of quality control as a subject in the university and private academic institutions.

Managers' Perception

The results of the survey are summarised in Table 1.

Table 2 : Buyers' Awareness of IS-mark and ISOs : Managers' Perception

BC		Working People				Housewives				Students			
PB	AD	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
0-10%													
10-20%									70				
20-30%							20		30				
30-40%					66.6		80					33.3	
40-50%			83.3		33.3	66.6		66.6		93.3	66.6		76.6
50-60%			16.6			33.3		33.3		6.6			23.3
60-70%													
70-80%		83.3			10								100
80-90%		16.6			90								
90-100%													

Note : *BC-Buyer Category
PB-Percentage of Buyers
AD-Awareness Dimension

AD1-Familiarity with ISI-mark
AD 2- Knowledge about full significance of IS-mark
AD3 - Familiarity with ISOs
AD4 - Knowledge about full significance of ISOs

As is evident from the table, an overwhelming majority of the managers of the responding companies (83.3%) perceive that 70-80 percent of the working people are familiar with the IS-mark and 40-50 percent are aware, about its significance. As far as the managers' perception about buyers'

awareness of the ISOs is concerned, an overwhelming majority of the managers (90.0 %) perceive that 80-90 percent of the working people are aware about ISOs and two-thirds of the managers perceive 30-40 percent of the working people as having knowledge about the significance of the ISOs.

Two-thirds of the managers perceive that 40-50 per cent housewives are familiar with the IS-mark and the ISOs and an overwhelming majority of the managers (80 percent) perceive that 30-40 per cent housewives have knowledge about the IS-mark. A large majority of the managers (70 %), perceive that 10-20 percent housewives have knowledge about the significance of the ISOs.

Almost all the managers (93.3 %) perceive that 40-50 percent students are aware of the IS-mark and a large majority of the managers (66.66 %) perceive that a similar number of the students have knowledge about the significance of the IS-mark. All the managers perceive the awareness of IS-mark of 70-80 percent students and an overwhelming majority of the managers (76.6 %) perceive that 40-50 percent students have knowledge about the significance of the ISOs.

Consumers' Awareness vs. Managers' Perception of Awareness

A comparison of the results shown in Table 1 and Table 2 reveals the following points :

- There is a discrepancy in the number of the working people being aware of the IS-mark and its significance and the managers' perception regarding the same. The results indicate that only 33.4

percent of the buyers in this category have knowledge about the significance of the IS-mark whereas an overwhelming majority of the managers perceive that 40-50 percent of the working people are knowledgeable.

- The managers' perception about the working people's awareness and knowledge of the ISOs also does not match the actual number of buyers in the category being aware about the ISOs. The number of the buyers aware of the ISOs is much less than the number perceived by the managers as being aware. This is particularly true in the case of the awareness dimension measuring the knowledge about the full significance of the ISOs.
- A wide gap exists in case of the awareness dimension measuring the knowledge of the housewives regarding the significance of the IS-mark and managers' perception of the same. Only 6.8 percent housewives have knowledge of the significance of the IS-mark whereas an overwhelming majority of the managers perceive that 30-40 percent housewives have such knowledge.
- Similarly, an equally wide gap exists

in the dimension measuring the housewives' awareness and knowledge about the ISOs and the companies' perception of the same. A small number of the housewives (17%) are aware of the ISOs whereas a large majority of the managers perceive that 40-50 percent housewives are aware of the same. In addition, a negligible number of the housewives (6.8 percent) have knowledge about the significance of the ISOs whereas a large majority of the managers perceive that 10-20 percent housewives have such knowledge.

A clash also exists in the comparison of students' awareness and knowledge about the IS-mark and the managers' perception of the same. Only 20 percent students are aware of IS-mark whereas almost all the managers perceive the awareness of 40-50 percent students. A very insignificant number of the students (2 %) have knowledge about the significance of IS-mark whereas a large majority of the managers perceive the awareness of 40-50 percent students regarding the same.

The comparison of the number of students aware and knowledgeable about the ISOs and the managers' perception of the same reveals

another clash. Less than half (48.0 percent) of the students are aware about ISOs whereas all the managers perceive the awareness of 70-80 percent students. Similarly, a small number of students (20.0 percent) have knowledge about the full significance of the ISOs whereas an overwhelming majority of the managers perceive that 40-50 percent students have such knowledge.

V. A DYADIC-SYNERGISTIC MODEL OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The findings of the study led to the development of a model which is based upon the Kaizen approach to TQM and is not only amalgamation of the product certification system and the quality certification systems but is an improvement over the two approaches. It emphasises the dyadic relationship between the consumer and the company and includes not only a continual improvement in the product and the system but also the developments in the post-complaint phase.

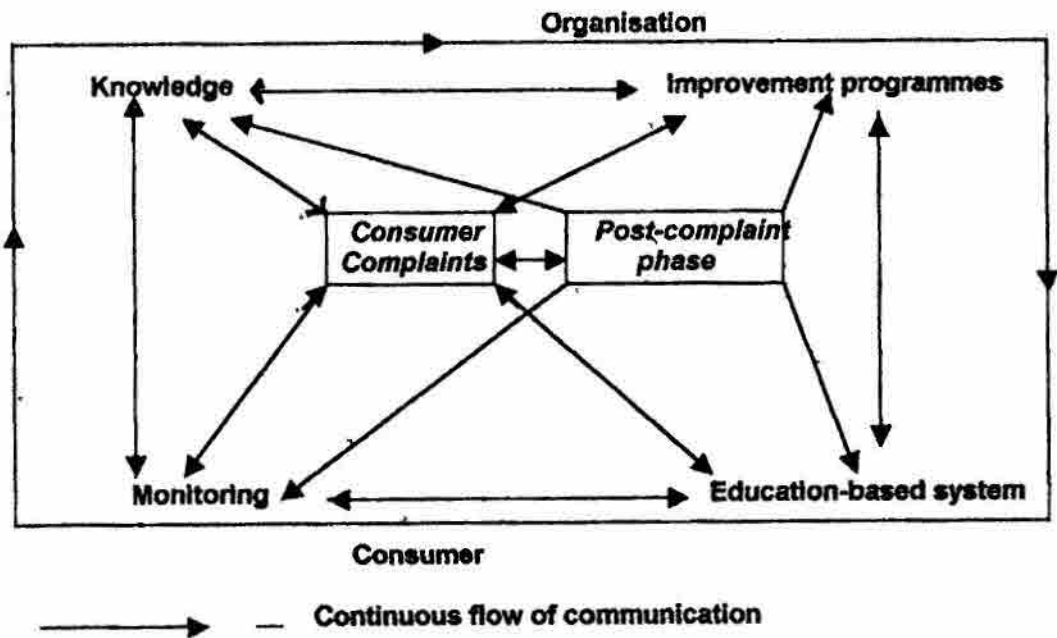
The salient features of the model are: (1) A definitive approach to the system from the production till post complaint feedback; (2) A concurrent cum feed-forward approach; (3) A combination of knowledge (rather than mere information) and an ability to improve that

knowledge; (4) A dyadic relationship between the company and the consumer; (5) A synergistic approach more broad-based than the systems approach; (6) A continual improvement programme (including training and audit) regarding specifications as well as people; (7) A sharp focus on the post-

complaint phase and final satisfaction/dissatisfaction; (8) A consumer education-based system through continual communication; and (9) A continuous monitoring of the implementation of above-mentioned constituents.

The model for quality management is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1 : Dyadic Synergistic Model of Quality Management



The model suggests a two-way relationship between the central factor (consumer complaints) and the four parameters (knowledge, improvement programmes, education-based systems and monitoring) and a one-way relationship between the other central factor (post-complaint phase) and the four parameters.

The present series facilitates complaint-redressal by enabling the consumer to

easily identify the complaint areas in the system. The suggested model, by incorporating a continuous monitoring of the developments in the post-complaint phase and a training specification vis-a-vis complaint-handling, recommends not only the redressal but also the prevention of complaints. Learning from complaints forms the core element of this model.

A continuous communication with the

consumer is the nucleus of the suggested model. The communication focusses on the consumer's post-sale feedback, consumer complaints and education programmes regarding IS-mark and ISO schemes.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The claims of the BIS and ISO-certified companies regarding the promotion of the product in a way that would educate the consumer have been negated by the findings of the survey. The findings of the survey are suggestive of the fact that the adoption and implementation of the IS-mark and the ISOs has been one-sided on the part of the companies who, after getting ISO certification and/or the IS-mark, do not bother about the education of the consumer and assume that the word 'internationally certified' will satisfy the quality demands of the consumer. This leads to an absence of the two-dimensional relationship between the consumer and the company.

The results indicating the lack of knowledge about the IS-mark and the ISOs and their implications becomes particularly significant in the era of globalisation and world markets. The survey has revealed that the buyer in India is still quite backward in his approach to quality of the product and

goes by the low price and the free lures available with the product.

During the course of the interview, the buyers revealed that while purchasing the product, they are lured towards glamorous products having the word 'international' in the company's name or on the package of the product or its promotional strategy. The confession of the consumer regarding the availability of a glamorous product at low price and/or the company's glossy promotion being the major purchase-influencing factors negates the thinking of the companies who claim to have achieved success because of ISO certification.

The glossy packaging, cheap prices and the word 'international' lures the consumer even if he does not know the meaning or implication of ISO. The small producer, on his failure to get the ISO, cannot compete in the market leading to (1) unnecessary erosion of his own profits, (2) monopolistic situation in the market, (3) dependence on imported products produced by MNCs. (4) an increase in unemployment, and (5) a sharp reduction in domestic production leading to a sluggish economy.

The study has significant implications for marketers, consumers and consumer protection policy-makers. The choice between the IS-mark for the product or ISO for the company or both does not

really provide a choice in the real sense. The solution lies in either completely abolishing the choice which is impractical on the face of it or improving the conditions that need to be fulfilled to get the IS-mark to make Indian standards at par with the international standards.

The current system of standardisation can be improved if the national standards body, the BIS, considers the following measures. These are merely suggestive in nature and are based upon the findings of the study.

- The BIS may improve its promotional strategy. It may, either on its own or with the help of manufacturers, show small programmes on television which contain information on a particular product, its production process, its testing procedure for IS-mark and the criteria for being eligible for IS-mark. In addition, the BIS may arrange for the availability of pamphlets, handbooks and other informative material at bookshops in order to make them more accessible to the consumers.
- The BIS may promote the IS-mark as a brand rather than as a mark signifying quality as the study has revealed that one of the major reasons for not purchasing the IS-

marked product was that the consumer was brand loyal to the product he purchased even if that product was non-IS-marked. This would also require the willing co-operation of the manufacturers who would not hesitate to make the IS-mark a partner brand.

- At present, the consumers have no platform for voicing their lack of awareness about the IS-mark and the ISOs and other suggestions. This has resulted in their becoming indifferent to the various aspects of the BIS and the IS-mark. The various lectures organised by the BIS on consumer awareness and the celebration of World Standards Day on 14th October, each year, are not sufficient for the awareness-building about the rôle of the BIS, the IS-mark and the ISOs. The BIS may organise a separate research department which would undertake periodic surveys among the consumers.

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