

SME Quality Standards in India - An Overview

K.Mohanasundaram¹, Dr. B.Mohandhas²

¹Doctoral Research Scholar, Department of Management Studies, Periyar University, Salem

²Assistant Professor and Head of DOMS & Mentor, Sri Moogambigai Arts and Science College for Women, (Affiliated to Periyar University, Salem) Dharmapuri

Abstract - Today's business environment and the nature of the term quality itself imply that the quality concept is an ever-changing one, hence, continuous attention must be paid in order to catch up with the ever-changing quality standards to control moving targets in an internationally competitive market. Quality initiatives have been a part of an organization strategy irrespective of the size of the organization. Standardization is the Central sector scheme started with the objective for promoting standardization of quality. Quality standards for products are framed based on their intrinsic quality and extrinsic activities of an organization for the making of product. Manufacturers often sell their products with a quality mark of a product certification body. Quality marks are meant to communicate the added value of the product. The extra quality may refer to one or more aspects that a consumer may be unsure about. Such aspects can be environmental impact, product quality, safety and hygiene, production standards, the absence of additives or preservatives, etc. Overall, a quality mark gives the consumer a visual and easily identifiable quality assessment tool, originating from a reliable source. Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), Quality Council of India, National Standardization System are mainly considered to be an authorized body to issue the certification for a product / service in Indian industry. This paper discusses the role of Bureau of Indian Standards to ensure quality products and to get an insight on the quality standards that are practiced in the small and medium enterprises in India to protect the consumer rights which will improve the organizational performance.

Index Terms - BIS, National Standardization System, Small and Medium Enterprises.

INTRODUCTION

The term "quality" has a relative meaning. This is expressed by the ISO definition: "The totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs".

It is simply to say that a product has good quality when it "complies with the requirements specified by the client". On the other hand it can be defined as "delivery of reliable information within an agreed span of time under agreed conditions, at agreed costs, and with necessary aftercare". The "agreed conditions" should include a specification as to the precision and accuracy of the data which is directly related to "fitness of use" and which may differ from different applications.

Quality as a function has played a pivotal role in the highly competitive manufacturing environment. Quality management is a system that serves to control quality in the critical activities of an organization by bringing together resources, equipment, people and procedures. It includes the determination of a quality policy, creating and implementing quality planning and assurance, and quality control and quality improvement.

A quality standard is a detail of the requirements, specifications, the various guidelines and characteristics to be able to meet it quality by the product in order to meet the purpose of the product, process or the service.

Government of India has created some standards for almost every product to protect the economic interests of all citizens and especially the consumer rights. These standards are like AGMARK for agricultural products, ISI mark for electric products, BIS mark for gold ornaments and "FPO mark for all the processed fruit products.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the role of Bureau of Indian Standards to ensure quality products.
- To get an insight on the quality standards that are practiced in the small and medium enterprises in India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on the secondary sources.

DISCUSSION

Overview of National Standardization System

Standard: A Standard is document established by consensus and approved by a recognized body that 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.

Benefit of standards:

- Cost reduction through standardization
- Product safety and liability
- Benefits for the economy as a whole
- Safety, Health & Environmental Protection
- Removal of Trade Barriers
- Trade & Competitive advantage through standards
- Compatibility & Interchangeability
- Consumer Protection

Bureau of Indian Standards

The Erstwhile Indian Standards Institution (now Bureau of Indian Standards) was established in the year 1947 with the objective of harmonious development of standardization activity in India. The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) was established under the BIS Act, 1986 for the harmonious development of the activities of standardization, marking and quality certification of goods and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. A new Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016 which was notified on 22nd March 2016, has been brought into force with effect from 12 October 2017 that reinforces the activities of BIS in respect to standardization and certification of goods, articles, processes, systems and services.

The Bureau is a Body Corporate consisting of 25 members representing both Central and State governments, Members of Parliament, industry, scientific and research institutions, consumer organizations and professional bodies, with Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution as its President and with Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution as its Vice-President.

BIS has been providing traceability and tangibility benefits to the national economy in several ways – providing safe reliable quality goods; minimizing health hazards to consumers; promoting exports and imports substitute; control over proliferation of varieties etc. through standardization, certification and testing.

Some of the objectives of Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) are

- Providing contemporary, timely, need based and user-friendly national standards taking into account technological developments, and national trade and consumer interests;
- Ensuring active involvement in the development of International Standards to put forth India's viewpoints effectively, keeping in view India's trade interests so as to result in the formulation of an International Standards with which Indian Standard could be harmonized and adopted under dual numbering scheme;
- Building brand image of BIS through enhanced publicity measures;
- Web enabling of the Certification Marks Management System (CMMS);
- Intensified efforts for training in the field of Standardization, Certification and Testing;
- Expanding types of product certification by BIS and design separate Standard Marks for new Certification Schemes to distinguish the various kinds of quality assurance schemes for the consumer.
- Improvement of Market surveillance of BIS certified products;
- Establishment of Trade Facilitation Cell in BIS to reach the common consumer with the help of consumer organizations;
- Introduction of Unique Identification of Hallmarked Article (UID) to protect consumer from being cheated and to facilitate traceability of hallmarked jewelry.
- New Certification Schemes for process, services and systems.

The standards process in India is largely government led, with Bureau of Indian Standards publishing majority of voluntary products and services related Standards. Other specialist bodies develop and publish standards in their domain areas. A few large public-

sector organizations also publish Standards for their own use.

Formulation of Indian Standards is one of the core activities of BIS. The standards development work is distributed over 15 Division Councils that have in turn established over 650 Technical committees.

Representing diverse areas of economy and technology as follows :

- Chemical
- Civil Engineering
- Electrotechnical
- Electronics and Information Technology
- Food and Agriculture
- Management and systems
- Mechanical Engineering
- Service sector
- Medical Equipment and Hospital Planning
- Metallurgical Engineering
- Production and General Engineering
- Petroleum and coal related products
- Textile
- Transport Engineering
- Water Resources

The committee structure is designed such as to bring together all those with substantial interest in a particular field, so that standards are developed keeping in view the balance of interests among the relevant stakeholders like manufacturers, users, technologists and regulators and after taking into account all significant view points through a process of wide consultation. Decisions in BIS technical committees are reached through consensus

There are more than 19500 standards formulated by BIS so far through about 1000 technical committees involving more than 15000 experts. These standards are subject to periodic review resulting in their reaffirmation, amendment, revision or withdrawal as may be required.

Types of standards

- product standard
- method of test
- terminology
- dimensions
- system standards
- code of practice

- safety standards

One of the challenges to standardization in India in the present day context will be to reduce the time take for formulating new standards in emerging areas both in the manufacturing and service sectors. Traditionally BIS has predominantly focussed on formulating standards for the industrial economy. However, with the expansion of BIS's mandate to set standards for the service sector as well, it will need to develop both skill sets and required knowledge base for undertaking this task.

CONCLUSION

All organizations, large or small, have an established way or system of doing business. A quality management system is about how an organization manages its business activities which are associated with quality of service. It helps an organization to build systems which enable it to provide quality service consistently. Government of India has created some standards for almost every product to protect the economic interests of all citizens and especially the consumer rights.

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