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Consumer wakefulness on standardization of victuals

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Abstract

The Indian standard Institution gave the nation the standard that needs for nationalization, orderly industrial and commercial growth, quality production and competitive efficiency. Bureau of Indian standards, the national standards body, is 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. The presence of 151 marks on a product provides a third party guarantee to the common consumer about the quality and also it ensures better satisfaction to the consumer. Hence, in order to safeguard the health and need of the consumer, the manufacturing process should be strictly assessed by the respective authority and moreover our standard food products are not up to the standards of foreign products.

Keywords-Bureau of Indian Standards, Standards Formulation, Certification, Third party guarantee, Consumer, Evaluation

1. Introduction

In a developing economy like India where there exists a free competitive market, due to the attractive price, finish good packaging and sweet salesmanship, the consumer is not able to judge the quality of the product needed by him. The ordinary consumer lacks technical know-how. They neither have any organizations or any other resources to set-up any facilities for comparative testing or information labeling. 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 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.

1.1. Statement of the problem

Consumers constitute the largest unorganized body in the country and protection of their interest and right is a vital importance in a welfare country like India. Consumer is the most centrifugal element in the circle of investment. Adulteration, variation in the contents of the park use

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of descriptive or fractional weight is all the ways and mean by which the consumer is exploited to the maximum extent possible. Bureau of Indian standards, the national standards body, is 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. The presence of ISI marks on a product provides a third party guarantee to the common consumer about the quality and also it ensures better satisfaction to the consumer. 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 programs and a service keeping. The study is focused on analyzing the awareness and preferences towards standardized food products.

1.2. Objectives of the study:

- To study the consumer awareness of standardized food products.
- To analyze the consumer behavior relating to the standardized food product.

2. Review of literature

The Bureau of Indian standards¹ has seized packaged drinking water with spurious 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 spurious ISI mark.

Ratnabhushan² (2003) stated that according to the study conducted by consumer coordination council regarding public awareness on food quality, safety norms, the consumer awareness about the need for food quality were satisfactory. The consumers are concerned about the manufacturing details of food products, ISI / AGMARK indication as for quality of seals.

Sharad Yadav³ (2003) pointed that formulation and implementation of standards play a very important role in protecting the interest of consumers because in India a big majority of the consumers are unaware whether they are getting the desired quality of the product of services for the price being paid by them.

Sreenivasa Prasad⁴ (2003) emphasized that assessment which forms vital tool for perceiving and informing the quality of products should say positive actions.

Editors of fortune⁵ stated that the constant increase in the variety of goods offered to consumer, the growing tendency to buy more goods on the multiplicity of brand offered to him, the frequency of relatively small quality differential and to broadly differing services offered by stores, all combine to add to the difficulty of the consumers choice and to stress the importance of his being able to buy with intelligence, limited incomes of most of the consumer accent their problem of choice making.

3. Research methodology

The research methodology is the specification of the method of acquiring the information needed to structure or to solve the problem. It is not considered to be the decision of facts but also building up the data knowledge and to discover the new facts involved in the process in the dynamic change in the society. The research is aimed to study the customer perception towards standardization of products.

3.1 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.

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3.2. Sample design**Population and sample size**

- ✓ The sample size consists of 300 respondents.
- ✓ The population for the study consists of the general public.

3.3. limitation of the study

- ✓ Some of the respondents can hide the real information.
- ✓ A sample size cannot always represent the whole population.
- ✓ Research covered only by the consumer of Coimbatore.

4. Statistical tools used in the study

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

- Percentage Analysis
- Chi-square Analysis

Percentage analysis

Table No: 1
Age group of the respondents

Si.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

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Table No: 2
Gender of the respondents

Si.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 has 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

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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 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 employee category.

Table No: 5

Family type of the respondents

S.No	Family Type	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Joint Family	92	30.7
2.	Nuclear Family	208	69.3
	Total	300	100

From the table, it is found that 30.7% of the respondents belong to joint Family and 69.3% of the respondents belong to nuclear Family.

Majority of the respondent belongs to the nuclear family.

Table No: 5

Awareness of the standards given to the products

S.No	Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	282	94.0
2.	No	18	6.0
	Total	300	100

It is known from the table 94% of the respondents are aware of the standards given to the products and 6% of the respondents are not aware of the standards given to the products.

Majority of the respondents are aware of the standards given to the products.

Table no: 6

Awareness level towards Indian standard marks

Awareness level Certifications	Aware		Not Aware		Total No. of Res.
	No. of Res.	%	No. of Res.	%	
ISO	278	98.6	4	1.4	300
AGMARK	251	89.0	31	11.0	300
FPO (Food Processing)	156	55.3	126	44.7	300

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Organization)					
HACCP (Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Point)	45	16.0	237	84.0	300
Environment Management System	111	39.4	171	60.6	300

Table 9 reveals that 98.6% of the respondents are aware of the ISO Indian standards mark and 1.4% of the respondents are not aware. 89% of the respondents are aware of the AGMARK Indian standards mark and 11% of the respondents are not aware regarding the FPO standards 55.3% of the respondents are aware and 44.7% of the respondents are not aware. 1.6% of the respondents are aware of the HACCP Indian standards mark and 84% of the respondents are not aware and 39.4% of the respondents are aware of the Environment Management System Indian standards mark and 60.6% of the respondents are not aware.

Majority of the respondents are aware of ISO Indian standard mark for the food products.

Chi-square analysis

Hypothesis: The personal factors of the respondents have no significant influence on the member of family insist on purchase standardized food products.

Table -7

Chi-square value – personal factors and the member of family insisted on purchasing standardized food products

Personal details	Chi-square value	Tabulated value	Significant
Age	24.77	16.919	Significant
Gender	1.02	7.815	Significant
Marital Status	19.68	7.815	Significant
Educational qualification	61.04	16.919	Significant
Occupational status	30.25	21.026	Significant
Family income level	32.09	21.026	Significant
Type of family	11.69	7.815	Significant

Significant (chi-square value \geq tabulated value)

It is found from the table no.2 that the hypothesis is rejected (significant) in six cases and in other cases, the hypothesis is accepted (Not significant).

It is concluded that the age, marital status, educational qualification, occupational status, family income level and type of family have significant influence in the member of the family insist on purchasing standardized food product and gender do not have significant influence.

5. Findings & recommendations

5.1. Findings

- Majority of the respondents belongs to the age group of 20 years - 30years, are female, are having college-level education, working as employed, and belongs to the nuclear family.

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- Majority of the respondents are aware of the standards given to the products.
- Majority of the respondents are aware of ISO Indian standard mark for the food products.
- The age, marital status, educational qualification, occupational status, family income level and type of family have significant influence in the member of the family insist on purchasing standardized food product and gender do not have significant influence.

5.2.Recommendations

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

- **Customer preferences**

It is found from the table that majority of the respondents are considering the quality as the essential factor while purchasing the food products and hence necessary steps must be taken by the Bureau of Indian standards in order to ensure the quality according to foreign Standards.

- **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 necessary steps to educate the customer about the several certification marks through extensive advertisements.

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. Hence, in order to safeguard the health and need of the consumer, the manufacturing process should be strictly assessed by the respective authority and moreover, our standard food products are not up to the standards of foreign products. Therefore, the respective authorities can take necessary steps to improve the quality by making the procedures for obtaining the license more stringent.

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