

NURTURE THE NATURE

Forest Certification- Call of the day

By

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1. The demand of the society is graduating towards trusted quality products, reliable services and sustainable processes. All manufacturers, suppliers and marketer are trying to win over the trust of ultimate consumers. The efforts of marketers are now witnessing a transition from consumer satisfaction to consumer delight and ultimately to consumer affection. The affection for a product or service comes from the trust which a product or service entails. This trust ultimately creates affection and mind space for the product or service. Eventually, in the competitive markets, the marketers strive to occupy the mind space of consumer for the product.

2. The trust of consumer emanates from trust building exercises as standards, SOPs, certifications, voluntary as well as regulatory standards, third party audits. standards as business tools that should be managed alongside quality, safety, intellectual property, and environmental policies. Standardization leads to lower costs by reducing redundancy, minimizing errors or recalls, and reducing time to market. These interventions help in brand building for the quality products. These standards / SOPs need to be audited and certified by an accredited agency. Transparency, accountability and integrity is subsumed in certification. A product with certification mark immediately catches attention of consumers who gets value for money. Many quality management standards provide safeguards for users of products and services, but standardization can also make consumers' lives simpler. A product or service based on an international standard will be compatible with more products or services worldwide, which increases the number of choices available across the globe.

3. Section 2(1) (e) of Indian Trade Marks Act defines a certification mark as "a mark capable of distinguishing the goods or services in connection with which it is used in the course of trade which are certified by the proprietor of the mark in respect of origin, material, mode of manufacture of goods or performance of services, quality, accuracy or other characteristics from goods or services not so certified".

4. In the present day socio-economic and ecological context, Certification is the call of the day. For products or services certification is considered necessary from marketing point of view. Global e-marketing and e-solution platforms are providing the standardised protocols of services. Society is graduating towards certified products, certified

services, certified institutions, certified degrees, which lead to sustainability and value to the product, service or process. Let us scan the certified products and services around.

5. Food related certifications



AGMARK is a certification mark employed on agricultural products in India, assuring that they conform to a set of standards approved for 222 different commodities spanning a variety of pulses, cereals, essential oils, vegetable oils, fruits and vegetables and semi-processed products. It is monitored by Ministry of Agriculture.



Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) supervises the food safety standards and promotes public health through regulations. FSSAI is an autonomous body established under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India. It monitors the quality of food items through 198 laboratories. FSSAI mandates the manufacturers to mention the contents, display of date of manufacturing/ expiry etc. FSSAI enforces FPO mark as certification mark mandatory on all processed fruit products.



The FPO mark guarantees that the product was manufactured in a hygienic 'food-safe' environment, thus ensuring that the product is fit for consumption. A FPO license is, in fact, necessary to start a fruit processing industry in India. The agency that develops standards for this purpose and that which issues the mark is the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India.

India Organic is a certification mark for organically farmed food products which conforms to the National Standards for Organic Products established in 2000 without the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, or induced hormones. The certification is issued by testing centres accredited by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) under the National Program for Organic Production of the Government of India

A geographical indication (GI) tag is an "indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a member, or a region or a locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or characteristic of the good is

essentially attributable to its geographic origin." Darjeeling tea became the first GI tagged product. BY now, 321 had been added to the list.

6. Safety related Certifications



Certification by Police department about fire proofing, fire protection and fire safety of a building, Mall, theatre or shopping complex is a must. The certificate Passive fire protection (PFP) attempts to contain fires or slow the spread, such as by fire-resistant walls, floors, and doors. PFP systems must comply with the associated listing and approval use and compliance in order to provide the effectiveness expected by building codes



ISO has developed a standard that will help organizations to improve employee safety, reduce workplace risks and create better, safer working conditions, all over the world. The standards follow generic management system approaches such as ISO 14001 and ISO 9001. It takes into account International Standards OHSAS 18001, the International Labour Organization's ILO-OSH Guidelines, various national standards and the ILO's international labour standards and conventions. ISO 45001 - Occupational health and safety evolved in 2018 specifies requirements for an occupational health and safety (OH&S) management system, with guidance for its use, to enable an organisation to proactively improve its OH&S performance in preventing injury and ill-health.

Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India provides general information about drug regulatory requirements in India. National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers known as NABH is committed to support improvement of quality of healthcare service in our country for all strata of the population through various methodologies and tools to supplement the efforts of the providers of healthcare service and the requirements of the system at various levels.

NABH therefore intends to be a robust, accessible and competent organisation to compliment the healthcare system to improve its efficiency and the predictability of healthcare outcomes. Govt. of India has authorized NABL as the sole accreditation body for testing and calibration laboratories. The objective of NABL is to provide third party assessment of quality and technical competence. The international standard currently followed by NABL is ISO 15189, specific for medical laboratories.

7. Environment related Certifications



Ecomark is a certification mark issued by the Bureau of Indian Standards (the national standards organization of India) to products conforming to a set of standards aimed at the least impact on the ecosystem. The marking scheme was started in 1991. One of the purposes of the mark is increasing awareness among the consumers towards reducing environment impact. The mark is issued to various product categories and the development of standards for more products is in progress.

a. Pollution standards

Bharat stage emission standards (BSES) are emission standards instituted by the Government of India to regulate the output of air pollutants from internal combustion engines and Spark-ignition engines equipment, including motor vehicles. The BS standards and the timeline for implementation are set by the CPCB.

In 2016, the Indian government announced that the country would adopt BS-VI norms by 1st April, 2020. It will increase the cost of the vehicles. However, this increase in private cost is offset by savings in health costs for the public, as there is lesser amount of disease causing particulate matter and pollution in the air. Exposure to air pollution can lead to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, which is estimated to be the cause for 6.2 lakh early deaths in 2010, and the health cost of air pollution in India has been assessed at 3% of its GDP.

b. Energy conservation/Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)



BEE star rating is simple: the appliance is rated on a scale of 5 for their energy efficiency. Higher the rating more energy efficient it is which means it will consume lesser electricity. Star ratings start with 1 which is the lowest (least efficient) and goes up to 5 which is the highest (most efficient). The star rating on various appliances like AC, refrigerator, Fans, Pumps, Water Heaters, etc is mandatory required to have BEE rating.

8. Quality related certification

a. Items of common Use



BIS hallmark certifies the purity of the metal in gold as well as silver jewellery sold in India. It certifies that the piece of jewellery conforms to a set of standards laid by the BIS.



Silk Mark is a certification mark for silk textiles founded by Central Silk Board. The mark certifies that the piece of textile which bears the mark is made of pure natural silk.



The Woolmark logo owned by Australian Wool Innovation Limited (AWI) is one of the world's most recognisable textile symbols. It indicates that a product bearing the mark is made from 100 per cent Pure New Wool.



The handloom mark give the authentic proof that the product is handloom.

These certifications give confidence to the consumers that the products meet key performance standards.

b. Hardware/ Software certification/ Vendor certification

To obtain certification, the hardware or software has to conform to a set of protocols and quality standards that are put in place by the original creator of technology. The process of certification ensures that the products made by different manufacturers are standardized and are compatible with each other as indicated in hardware or software platform. Cisco certification, Sun Certification, Novell Certification, Microsoft's certification, Linux certification certify that the hardwares are compatible with associated softwares. Third-party certification, are also obtained through an independent body wherein the hardware or software has to conform to a set of quality standards determined by the third-party.

c. Education Related Quality Certifications

An accredited degree is recognized for meeting specific educational standards, which have been set by an accrediting agency. UGC presently set standards maintains standards of teaching in universities. UGC also conducts NET (National Eligibility Test) a mandatory requirement for appointments of teachers in colleges and universities along with CSIR. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council under UGC is an organisation that assesses and accredits higher education Institutions in

India. AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education) is responsible for proper planning and coordinated development of the technical education and management education system in India and also accredits postgraduate and graduate programs under specific categories. Association of Indian Universities) evaluates the courses, syllabi, standards and credits of foreign universities pursued abroad and equates them in relation to various courses offered by Indian Universities.



National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is an autonomous body established by the University Commission of India (UGC) to assess and accredit institutions of higher education in the country. NAAC has identified seven criteria for assessment procedure. National Board of Accreditation (NBA), India was established by AICTE as an autonomous body under section 10(u) of AICTE act, 1994 for periodic evaluations of technical institutions & programs basis according to specified norms and standards as recommended by AICTE council. It is the only authorized body in India entrusted with the task of undertaking accreditation of technical education programs. Besides, professional councils are there who authorise and regulate the incumbents to do their practice as lawyer, dentist, nursing, medicine, pharmacy, teaching, veterinary practices.

National Council for Teacher Education oversees standards, procedures and processes in the Indian education system. The main objective of the NCTE is to achieve planned and coordinated development of the teacher education system throughout the country, the regulation and proper maintenance of Norms and Standards in the teacher education system and for matters connected therewith. National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology earlier known as DOEEAC accredits institutes/organizations for conducting courses in IT in the non-formal sector.

9. Profession related certifications

a. The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) national professional accounting body responsible for licencing and regulating body of financial audit and accounting profession. Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) develops and regulates the profession of Company Secretaries that was constituted under the Company Secretaries Act, 1980. Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) conducts FTII Entrance Examination for the candidates who wish to pursue their career in Film and television industry.

b. Bar Council of India regulates the legal practice and legal education in India. Dental Council of India regulates dental education and the

profession throughout India. Distance Education Council is responsible for the promotion and coordination of the Open University and distance education system and for determination of its standards. Indian Nursing Council regulates and monitors uniform standard of nursing education for nurse midwife, Auxiliary Nurse. Medical Council of India grants recognition of medical qualifications, gives accreditation to medical schools, grants registration to medical practitioners, and monitors medical practice in India. Pharmacy Council of India regulates the pharmacy education and profession whereas veterinary Council of India regulates veterinary practice in India. But recently, these are proposed to be dissolved and replaced with a common statutory body known as National Commission for Human resources for Health.

National Accreditation Board for Education and Training (NABET), one of the constituent Boards of QCI, offers accreditation to the Training Courses/Course Providers in various areas including Quality Management Systems, Environment Management Systems, Occupational Health and Safety Auditors etc. NABET is also accrediting schools and vocational training courses. The Boards of QCI are working with various ministries and operating many accreditation schemes supporting national initiatives, in the field of Hospitals and Healthcare services, Vocational training, Food Safety, Panchayats, Schools, Micro Small and Medium Enterprises, etc.

10. Sustainable Tourism certification

a. The Ministry of Tourism, GOI has developed a set of standard criteria and indicators for assessment of quality of responsible management of the accommodation and working of the tour operators, taxi operators in the country. Ecotourism Society of India (a society formed under the guidance of Ministry of Tourism) is roping in many agencies for certification of sustainable tourism practices.

b. Agencies are offering third party certifications for national scheme like Sustainable Tourism Criteria of India (STCI) and international scheme like Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC). Both the schemes laid down requirements of sustainability practises to be followed by accommodation sector in order to conform with these benchmarked criteria and indicators.

11. Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Certification

a. SFM is relatively new dimension in the series of certifications. Forest certification, now a global movement initiated in 1990s after Rio Earth Summit, is a sustainability based non-regulatory conservation tool designed to promote sustainable management of forests and trees outside forests by an independent third party in accordance with the standards that address sustainable forest management, environmental protection as

well as social and economic welfare of the workers and dependent communities. It is now becoming a business mandate too as several developed countries have put trade restrictions on import of non-certified timber, non-timber forest products and wood-based goods into their countries. Further, there is a positive consumer driven demand for certified forest produce in the world markets, where consumers preferentially choose products sourced from responsibly managed forests, which are certified. Therefore, it is imperative for the Indian forestry sector also to tune itself to this growing need for sustainable forest industry. The forest-based industries in India, particularly the paper, boards, plywood, medium density fibreboard, furniture and handicrafts, etc. have been pushing for forest certification to enhance their market accessibility to western markets including European Union and USA.



b. There are at present two Forest Management schemes, internationally widely used and well accepted Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certification of UK and recently developed India specific National Council of Certification of Forests (NCCF) Certification Standards based on Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). With endorsement of PEFC, many countries have evolved their own certification process and standards.

c. The Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF) is a non-profit organisation registered under the Societies' Registration Act, 1860, with the main objective of developing a globally aligned certification programme in India, which addresses the concerns for sustainable management of forests and the plantations. It also endeavours to make the Indian wood and forest fibre-based industry globally acceptable. NCCF has developed Certification Standard for SFM through a multi-stakeholder Standard Development Group, represented by distinguished professional foresters, representatives from the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) and the Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM) of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Quality Council of India, distinguished professional foresters, representatives of the State Forest Departments and State Forest Development Corporations, IUCN, WWF, CII, ICIMOD, Indian Papers Manufacturers Association (IPMA), ITC-PSPD, Export Promotions Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), Chemical and Allied Export Promotion Council of India (CAPEXIL), CIBART, certification bodies and many more.

d. The NCCF-SFM certification standard is India specific and internationally benchmarked, involving key elements of existing models in India such as the Bhopal India Process of the IIFM, the National Working Plan Code 2014 and provisions of the National Forest Policy for promotion of afforestation, sustainable utilization of forest products and growth of the forest-based industries. Further to inform that besides MoEF&CC, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and the Export Promotions Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), Ministry of Textiles and many State Forest Departments have also been closely associated in the standard development process. The certification scheme has also been accredited by the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB).

e. In India, ITC, Bhadrachalam and TFDPC, Tripura were the first to get their Bamboo plantations and Rubber and Bamboo plantations certified. Later UP Forest Corporation also got 8 of its divisions certified through FSC. The certification processes have yielded results in terms of better acceptability and premium into international markets. With the development of country specific standards by NCCF, now the departments are relying more on NCCF.

f. The certified wood or paper or any other related product coming into the market has the premium if the wood is certified that it is coming from sustainably managed forests or responsibly managed forests. It also certifies the chain of custody to verify the origin of product. Sustainability related certifications takes into account the safety, traceability, sustainability related issues. The products are certified by a particular standard. With third-party forest certification, an independent organization develops standards of good forest management and independent auditors issue certificates to forest operations that comply with those standards.

g. Recently, bamboo has emerged as a key thrust area for the Tripura's industrial development, supporting livelihood-based approach with higher premium in international markets. It will also help in doubling farmers income through the premiums. The pole vaults, Bamboo furniture, flutes, fishing rods, restructured bamboo wood and handicraft items command a premium if certified. The economic cost of certification would be much less than the economic benefits accruing to the forestry sector. The exploitation within sustainable limits, adherence to laws of the land, removal of illegalities, certified chain of custody will help in increasing the economic returns and improved ecosystem services

h. The certification process will not only enlarge scope of employment for auditors, verifiers and enforcement machinery but also provide satisfaction to public at large that they are not cheated by unscrupulous timber traders. The process has to be adopted at a faster pace for quick economic gains. With continuing progress in forest management practices

and the development of international trade in forest products, it becomes important to improve the forest certification process. This can be achieved by improving the forest management system, constructing and perfecting market access mechanisms for certificated forest products, and increasing public awareness of environmental protection, forest certification, and their interrelationship.

12. Thus, certification is beneficial to businesses as standards are important to the bottom line of every organization. Businesses and organizations complying to quality standards globally helps products, services, and personnel cross borders and also ensures that products manufactured in one country can be sold and used in another. Standardisation makes the life simpler for the consumer. A product or service based on an international standard will be compatible with more products or services worldwide, which increases the number of choices available across the globe. The time constrained consumers and evolving e- markets are here to stay even after COVID pandemic. The future e- markets look for certified products, processes and services.
