

MYTH 1

There is no difference in quality of product bearing

Mark and having 'as per IS' or 'conforming to IS'

marked on it.

FACT 1

The presence of Mark on a product signifies that the product carries an independent, third-party certification of the Bureau of Indian Standards.

It means that the product has been produced and tested in accordance with a well-defined Scheme of Testing and Inspection (STI), which is a part of the licence granted to a manufacturer for the use of Mark, and conforms to the relevant Indian Standard, for example, IS 366 in case of electric irons.

On the other hand, if any product carries on it 'as per IS' or 'conforming to IS', it merely represents a CLAIM by the manufacturer. It is up to you, as a consumer, to accept that claim on its face value or verify it by subjecting that product to some tests.

Obviously, as a common consumer, you are not equipped to test any product other than visually examining it. Therefore, a third-party certification of the kind which the Mark provides is valuable because then you do not have to worry about the quality of the product and can buy such a product with confidence.

Does that clear the misconception you may be having, dear consumer?

MYTH 2

The presence of Mark on a product significantly adds to its cost.

FACT 2

A manufacturer, holding a licence for the use of Mark, pays to BIS what is called the 'Marking Fee'—a sort of royalty—based on the quantum of production covered with Mark and to cover surviellance costs incurred by BIS.

The fee charged by BIS is very nominal — literally peanuts; for example, 90 paise per electrical iron costing in the range of Rs. 300/- to Rs. 500/-, 7.5 paise per 50 kg bag of cement costing about Rs. 150/-.

This means that for a manufacturer who is already producing a quality product, by which we mean a product conforming to the national standard, adding the third-party certification in the form of Mark, does not increase the cost of the product significantly at all.

Therefore, if you find in the market that a product without Mark costs significantly less, it is likely that its manufacturer is sacrificing one or more of the following essentials for a quality-conscious manufacturer, which BIS insists upon:

- commitment to producing quality goods.
- use of appropriate quality raw-materials and/or components.
- having his own requisite infrastructure for production and testing of the product as per the relevant Indian Standard.
- exercising suitable in-process checks during production and inspecting the finished products on the basis of the Scheme of Testing and Inspection prescribed by BIS.
- having suitably qualified and competent technical personnel to man his production and quality control set-ups.

Now, Dear Consumer, you know that the sales talk of the cost having gone up merely by the presence of II-Mark is well and truly a myth.

Each product bearing Mark is individually inspected and tested by BIS.

FACT 3

The BIS Certification Scheme operates on the basis of the Scheme of Testing and Inspection which prescribes, among other things, frequencies at which various tests are to be carried out by the manufacturer.

The manufacturer is obliged to use Mark only after testing each batch for conformity to the relevant Indian Standard.

Therefore, each and every batch leaves a manufacturer's premises with Mark only after ensuring its conformance to the relevant Indian Standard in all respects.

Contrary to what you believe, hundred percent testing of entire production is NOT the norm. Because, it is a scientifically-proven fact (don't bother how) that cent-percent inspection is neither necessary nor always possible. It does not eliminate defectives altogether, is not cost-effective and is highly time consuming. At times, it is not even practicable especially when the tests are destructive, for example, burst test for an LPG cylinder. In other words, hundred percent testing, i.e., testing all items of the production, adds very little information with regard to the quality of the product.

What is then the significance of BIS Certification Scheme? BIS supervises the operation of the Scheme by the manufacturer by organizing surprise inspections to his premises for testing samples in the factory and also drawing samples for testing in independent laboratory.

BIS also draws samples directly from the market/consignees to monitor quality of Marked products as sent to the market by the manufacturer.

BIS Certification Scheme is, therefore, cost-effective and advantageous both to consumers and manufacturers. It provides a third-party certification of quality to the consumer and a powerful mechanism for constant monitoring of quality of the product to the manufacturer.

So, Dear Consumer, does it clear Myth 3?

MYTH 4

A licence for the use of Mark, once granted to a manufacturer, is for ever, and not supervised.

FACT 4

The BIS Certification Scheme is basically operated by the manufacturer and supervised by BIS.

A licence is granted in the first instance for a period of ONE YEAR only. During the year, the performance of the manufacturer is monitored on the basis of:

- reports of inspections of the factory by BIS inspecting officers.
- test reports of samples drawn from the factory and tested in independent laboratory.
- test reports of samples taken directly from the market/consignees for independent testing.

Unsatisfactory reports lead to actions by BIS ranging from temporary stoppage of use of Mark (until such time the manufacturer takes suitable corrective measures and demonstrates them to the satisfaction of BIS) to cancellation or expiry of the licence in case of serious lapses.

At the end of the year, the entire performance is evaluated and a decision to renew or not renew the licence is taken. The renewal is also done for a period of ONE YEAR AT A TIME and the manufacturer is obliged to apply for renewal to BIS each year. However, a licence may be renewed for a period of two years at the request of the licensee, provided he pays the advance minimum marking fee for both the years along with the renewal application.

So much for Myth 4, dear Consumer.

DESPITE SUCH AN ELABORATE QUALITY ASSURANCE SCHEME, ARE YOU STILL UNHAPPY WITH THE QUALITY OF MARKED PRODUCT?

It is our endeavour to provide the common consumer with products of assured quality by way of the BIS Certification Scheme.

However, no system can assure fully defect-free products. It is just possible that occasionally a product not upto the mark may find its way into the market.

It is also possible that you may be an unfortunate recipient of such a product—but don't lose heart because we are there to help you.

BIS operates a grievance redressal machinery through its Consumer Affairs and Public Grievances Department at its Headquarters in New Delhi and Public Grievance Officers (PGOs) designated in its regional/branch offices all over India. In case you are dissatisfied on account of the quality of an Marked product, you are welcome to lodge a complaint and prompt attention shall be paid to it.

Kindly contact or write to the PGO in the nearest BIS office or to:

Director

(Consumer Affairs and Public Grievances)

Bureau of Indian Standards

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