

## A vibrant, cartoon-style illustration of a collection of household and agricultural items. In the center, a blue hand pump stands tall. To its right, a blue gas stove sits on a wooden table, with a blue pressure cooker on top. Below the stove, a red gas cylinder is connected by a hose. To the left of the pump, a pile of various items includes a yellow box labeled 'VANG PAT', a green box, a brown jar, a white box labeled 'PESTICIDES', and a blue container. In the foreground, a yellow bag labeled 'CEMENT' is next to a small blue pot on a metal stand. The background is a solid orange color.

# BUREAU OF INDIAN STANDARDS



## **BIS AND RIGHTS OF CONSUMERS**

### **CONSUMER PROTECTION — A NATIONAL COMMITMENT**

Consumer constitute the largest unorganized public body in the country and protection of their interest and rights is of vital importance in a welfare state like India. This calls for establishment of well regulated and independent mechanisms to provide quality goods, services and utilities to the satisfaction of consumers.

The Government's commitment to the cause of the common consumer is amply reflected in the enactment of *Consumer Protection Act*, 1986 which is a bold comprehensive legislation. Another Act of considerable significance to the consumer movement passed by Parliament, at about the same time, was the *Bureau of Indian Standards Act*, 1986. One of the major objectives of this Act was to make BIS another instrument of State to protect and promote consumer interest.


### **MAIN ACTIVITIES OF BIS**

The Bureau of Indian Standards, the National Standards Body, is looking after the consumer's interest through its two major activities, namely, standards formulation and certification marking.

### **STANDARDS FORMULATION**

BIS is entrusted with the task of formulation and promotion of Standards in all sectors of economy. The product standards prescribe optimum levels of quality, safety and performance of relevant products and methods of their practical evaluation.

### **CERTIFICATION MARKING**

The BIS Certification Marks Scheme, operated under the provisions of the *BIS Act*, 1986, is basically a voluntary scheme wherein manufacturers are permitted to use the Standard Mark  on their products after ascertaining their conformity to the relevant Indian Standards under a well defined scheme of testing and inspection. The presence of Standard Mark on a product provides a third party guarantee to the common consumer about its quality. To provide greater thrust to consumer protection and ensure better consumer satisfaction, the Government of India has made BIS Certification mandatory for items of mass consumption and those affecting the health and safety of consumers.

### **BIS AND RIGHTS OF CONSUMERS**

The two major activities of BIS — Standardization and Certification — encompass all the elements essential for promoting following six rights of the common consumer as enshrined in the *Consumer Protection Act*, 1986.



- a) *Right to be protected against the marketing of goods which are hazardous to life and property* — The standards for products, which may have potential for creating danger to life and property during use or otherwise, prescribe built-in mechanisms for safety; domestic electrical appliances are common example.
- b) *Right to be informed about the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods so as to protect the consumer against unfair trade practices* — The product standards laid down by BIS invariably prescribe the information that the manufacturers should provide on their products/packing/container. BIS licensees have to necessarily provide such information on the label or the name plate affixed on the product or the container.
- c) *Right to be assured, wherever possible, access to a variety of goods at competitive prices* — Certification Marks Scheme of BIS brings certain benefits to manufacturers also who may opt for third party assurance of quality of their goods. The Bureau is constantly making efforts to attract more and more manufacturers to join the Scheme. The Bureau's endeavour is to provide the consumer with not only quality products but also a choice of quality products by bringing as many manufacturers of a product as possible under its Certification Marks Scheme. In case of compulsory certification, as in cement, vanaspati and others, the manufacturers have no choice but to join the Scheme, thus assuring availability of a product of same quality level from different manufacturers.
- d) *Right to be heard and to be assured that consumers interests will receive due consideration at appropriate forums* — From the Bureau, the apex policy-making body corporate, to various advisory committees down to the numerous technical committees, the consumer organizations have been provided a strong representation to enable them to actively voice the concern of the consumer. Of the three distinct interests - manufacturer, technologist and consumer - the consumer interest is provided dominant representation in the technical committees.
- e) *Right to seek redressal against unfair trade practices or unscrupulous exploitation of consumers* — To provide the consumers with prompt attention and speedy redressal of their grievances, BIS has a full-fledged public grievance cell functioning at its Headquarters in Delhi with public grievance officers at all its Regional and Branch Offices.

In case of any complaint about the quality of goods carrying the Standard Mark, the consumer should approach the nearest Branch Office of the Bureau. The Bureau takes complaints for speedy redressal to the satisfaction of the complainant. It is also treated as a feedback information about the quality of products reaching the hands of the consumer and takes immediate steps to identify sources/reasons of substandard production and corrective measures adopted.



- f) *Right to consumer education* — BIS has established a full-fledged Consumer Affairs Department to ensure intensive interaction with a provide service to common consumers and their organizations.

BIS is also publishing a special feature entitled 'Consumer News' in the 'Standards India', a monthly journal of BIS. The feature contains write-ups on the contents of Indian or international standards of interest to the consumers and reports the activities of conferences, seminars and workshops of consumer importance. This feature is also carried in BIS, Hindi journal 'Manakdoot.'

To create awareness among consumers regarding Indian Standards and the Certification Marks Scheme, BIS is carrying out publicity through advertisements in newspapers, radio, television, etc, to the extent possible. Popularization of Certification Marks Scheme with the help of BIS licensees is also being carried out.

BIS is organising consumer awareness programmes in association with consumer organisations, educational institutions, industries/trade associations etc.

**Brought out in Consumer Interests by :**

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