



World Consumer Rights Day Forum organized by
Institute of Policy Studies

15 March 2016

Role of Standards in Safeguarding Consumer Interests

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The National Standards Body

- Sri Lanka Standards Institution (SLSI) is the national standards body of the country
- Established under an Act of Parliament in 1964
- A semi government organization under the Ministry of Technology and Research
- Representative of Sri Lanka at the ISO



The National Standards Body....contd.

- Main function is the **formulation of national standards** and promote standardization and related activities in the country to uplift the quality of life of the nation
 - (standardization – preparation and implementation of standards)
 - Related activities - testing, calibration, certification, training, providing information)



What is a standard?

A document
established by consensus and
approved by a recognized body
that provides for common or repeated use,
rules, guidelines or characteristics
for activities or their results
aimed at the achievement of
optimum degree of order
in a given context



Levels of standards

- International e.g. ISO, CODEX
- Regional e.g. EU, SARSO
- National e.g. SLS, BIS
- Company



Types of standards

- Specifications
 - e.g. SLS 729:2010 Ready-To-serve fruit drinks
- Code of practices
 - e.g. SLS 143:1999 General principles of food hygiene
- Test methods
 - e.g. SLS 516 Microbiological test methods
- Glossary of terms
 - e.g. SLS 71:1981 Glossary of tea terms
- Symbols
 - e.g. SLS 809:1988 Recommended shipping marks for goods

Benefits of standardization

- Interchangeability



- Variety reduction



- Improved communication



- Economic benefits





Process of development of a national standard

- Identification of a project for standardization
- Formation of a Working Group consisting of stake holders
- Discussion and finalizing of the draft standard by the Working Group
- Issuing for public comments (02 months)
- Modification of the draft standard considering the comments received
- Approval by the Sectoral Committee
- Approval by the Council of SLSI
- Publishing as a national standard
- Reviewing and updating



Standards vs. Regulations



- Regulations – Compulsory in implementation
- Standards- voluntary in implementation
- However, if referred in Regulations, they become compulsory in implementation



How standards can safeguard consumer interests?

- Gives information to manufacturers on product quality characteristics
 - e.g. SLS 729:2010 Ready-To-serve fruit drinks
 - Total maximum sugar content
 - Types of preservatives allowed
 - Levels of preservatives allowed
 - Maximum levels of heavy metals
 - Microbiological safe limits etc.
- Guide manufacturers in good manufacturing practices
 - e.g. SLS 147- General principles of food hygiene and other code of practices



How standards can safeguard consumer interests?

- Through marking requirements, ensure that required information is available to the consumers and other interested parties e.g.
 - expiry date (in food products, cement etc.)
 - ingredients list- (allergic persons);
 - important information about the product (CFL bulbs- life time, energy efficiency through star rating),
 - instructions for storage
 - Warning information – caffeinated beverages- not recommended for children under 12 years
 - Drained mass in canned fish etc.

How standards can safeguard consumers?

- Helps consumers to identify products/processes that comply with standards through certification

- e.g. SLS Mark – product that conform to the standard
 - CFL bulbs- energy efficiency rating



- Helps manufacturers to develop systems that ensure food safety

- e.g. ISO 22000

- Helps manufacturers to manage the environment

- e.g. ISO 14001



How standards can safeguard consumer interests?

- Helps manufacturers to ensure health and safety of human
 - Standard on Occupational health and safety
- Standards on safety symbols
- Standard on working time (24 hour system)
- Acts as basis for regulations
 - etc.
- Thank you.