

Working on ‘one nation, one standard’ policy to maintain quality of products, services, says Ram Vilas Paswan

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The government is seriously working on setting ‘One nation, one standard’ to ensure quality products and services to consumers, Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said Thursday. Currently, the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is the only national body that frames standards. It has come out with over 20,000 standards for various products and services so far. There are also about 50-odd agencies that have framed about 400 standards in the country.

“Like ‘one nation, one ration card’, we are going to have ‘one nation, one standard’ in order to ensure quality products in the country,” Paswan told reporters. He was briefing media after chairing a meeting on this issue with senior officials of the BIS, Niti Aayog and 14 other concerned departments including Commerce and FSSAI. Paswan said there are multiple

standards in the country for single product/service and the purpose is to converge such standards with the BIS which is a recognised national body for standardisation in India.

The minister also said the BIS frames standards and cannot regulate its implementation. The concerned department should monitor or a separate regulator needs to be set up the idea which has been mooted by the government think tank Niti Aayog. Paswan said that having uniform national standards will help in making it mandatory for more products.

Elaborating, Consumer Affairs Secretary Avinash K Srivastava said other departments have their own standards. For example, the Food Safety and Standards Authority (FSSAI) has set standards on food, while Automobile Research Organisation of India makes standards for the automobile sector. "These standards need to be converged with BIS and redesignate them as one. This will help in easy implementation and monitoring of standards," Srivastava said.

BIS Deputy Director General Rajesh Bajaj said the entire process will take time and it will depend how soon other agencies are willing to converge with BIS. "Once they are ready, their standard will be redesignated. For example, if FSSAI converges its standards, then its products would be known as BIS/FSSAI," he said. On setting up of a regulator to monitor implementation of the standards, he said the Niti Aayog has suggested a separate regulator for each sector and this needs to be deliberated further.