ABSTRACT
During marketing of each product or service, it is labeled properly, so that consumers are obtain information from it. There are so many labels, standards or logos available in the world which is beneficial to the consumers to fix their buying criteria. These marks are ISI mark, ISO standards, CE- certification in Europe, Ag mark, green mark etc. Green label is one from these which is given to products or services which are not harmful to environment, that is the product, its manufacturing process, packing etc all are eco-friendly to environment. In this article, I try to study all information about green labeling.

Keywords: Green labeling, 
Eco-labeling 
NEPI: New Environmental Policy Instruments 
LCA: Life Cycle Assessment 
ISO: International Standards organization 

Eco-labeling: A new concept in Green Consumerism

Introduction:
In the modern developed technological environment the new concept which helps consumers to take decisions about the products to buy and whether they are environmentally friendly.

In the world number of eco-labeling schemes such as the German Green Spot, the Nordic Swan and the US Green Seal are used in the world. Most current eco-label programs are ‘cradle to grave’, that is, they involve some form of analysis based on the environmental consequences of their manufacture, use and disposal. The eco-labeling makes a positive statement which is use to identify the products or service as less harmful to the environment in compare with the other product.

There is a wide range of attributes which covers eco-labels such as health issues, atmospheric impacts or other environmental impacts, packaging and other industrial issues to name few. It allows consumers to make comparisons among various products or services and essentially vote their preferences in the market when making purchasing decisions.

An eco-label is a graphic symbol and/or a short descriptive text applied on a product, package, or inserted in a brochure or in another informative document that accompanies the
product and offers information about at least one and at most these environmental impacts generated by the respective product.

Based on overseas experience, appropriate eco-labeling with associated verification and certification procedures is a driver for the increased uptake of recycled content and/or sustainable products. Eco-labels belong to the class of "New Environmental Policy Instruments" (NEPIs) together with voluntary agreements, eco-taxes and tradable permits. Eco-labels are complementary policy instruments relative to traditional regulation but also to other market based instruments. They mainly rely on moral persuasion by influencing the customer's attitude toward protecting the environment and choosing eco-products and/or products with a reduced impact upon the environment.

In the world there are so many countries having their eco-labeling programs. Eco-labels may be distinguished by whether they are government sponsored or managed by the private sector. Now, there are no any standards defined by any country or organization about eco-label. Some of the voluntary, private sponsored labelling scheme do not involve the government and have two sub-categories: those with criteria imposed by third parties and those based on self-declaration by manufacturers. Eco-labels may address different types of products, which is the case of most of the existing eco-labelling schemes, and may address the services sector or both.

Eco-labels are increasingly based on the life cycle assessment (LCA) of a product. LCA informs the consumer about the transfer of environmental harm in stages of the products life cycle.

**What is "Eco-labeling":**

Basically, “An eco-label is a label which identifies overall environmental preference of a product (i.e. good or service) within a product category based on life cycle considerations”.

Eco-labels are seals of approval given to products that are deemed to have fewer impacts on the environment than functionally or competitively similar products. The rationale for basic labeling information at the point of sale is that it links fisheries products to their production process.

Eco-label is awarded by the impartial third party to all the products which satisfies all the environmental criteria, instead of a self styled symbol or a statement fixed by the company or manufacturer or service provider.

Eco-labeling is only one type of environmental [performance] labeling, and refers specifically to the provision of information to consumers about the relative environmental quality of a product. There are many different environmental performance labels and declarations being used or contemplated around the world.

Today International Organization for Standardization (ISO), fixed all the specific instruction for the overall goal of these labels and declarations is through communication of verifiable and accurate information, that is not misleading, on environmental aspects of products and services, to encourage the demand for and supply of those products and services that cause less stress on the environment, thereby stimulating the potential for market-driven continuous environmental improvement. The ISO has undertaken efforts to attempt to standardize the principles, practices and key characteristics relating to three major voluntary environmental labeling types.

A. Environmental labeling (Eco-labeling) : There are many organization in the world like ISO having third party program to award a license for authorizing or using the environmental label on
the products or services of the company. It indicates overall environmental preference of a product within its all product category based on life cycle considerations.

B. Self-declaration claims : informative environmental self-declaration claims

C. Environmental declarations (e.g. report cards/information labels) : These are voluntary programs that provide quantified environmental data of a product, under pre-set categories of parameters set by a qualified third party and based on life cycle assessment, and verified by that or another qualified third party.

**Benefits of eco-labeling :**

A **main** benefit of eco-labels is that they can help a company strengthen the brand. These are the way of addressing customer demands for more sustainable products. By adopting labels for the company provides a competitive advantage for adopt of their product and services in the market. It helps to reduce the companies risk of being attacked by a pressure group and eco-labeling organizations can provide support in responding to it. The good practices induced by eco-labeling can also reduce the risk of supply chain disruptions and help to ensure long-term access to raw materials and crops. It is also useful in satisfying investor demands. Eco-labels have the potential to raise sustainability awareness and performance across whole industries.

**Opportunities of the Eco-labeling :**

There are many industries, organization and government acknowledge two ways of opportunities that eco-labeling offer:

a. Environmental Opportunities : Eco-labeling provides economic incentives for better natural resources important for national economic welfare. It fulfills commitments made under the international agreement related to environment.

b. Economic Opportunities : Voluntary eco-labeling provides one of the least-coercive market-based mechanisms to improve conservation outcomes.

**Origins of Eco-labeling:**

The origins of eco-labeling can be found in the growing global concern for environmental protection on the part of governments, businesses and the general public. Initially, and mostly in developed countries, as commercial enterprises recognised that environmental concerns could be translated into a market advantage for certain products, a number of environmental declarations and claims emerged on and in association with certain products. These included labels with such claims as "recyclable", "eco-friendly", "low energy", and "recycled content".

Such labeling of the products attracted consumers who were looking for ways to reduce adverse environmental impacts through their purchasing choices. However, these labels also threatened to confuse consumers. Without guiding standards and investigation by an independent third party, consumers could not be certain that the companies’ assertions guaranteed that each labeled product was environmentally preferable alternative.

This concern with credibility and impartiality led to the formation of private and public organizations providing third-party labeling. In many instances, such labeling took, and continues to take the form of eco-labels awarded by programs operated at national and regional (i.e. multinational) levels.
Comparison between the three types of eco-labeling:

In the world there are two opinions about eco-label some says it is a program while the other says it is a schemes. So many third party eco-labeling systems are hybrid on the opinion due to their normal view on the eco-labeling program. These programs are related to the forestry industry, the chemical industry, etc. and treat with only one environmental issue (e.g. air quality, energy conservation, etc.). Some programs have been designed and implemented to address and recognize more than simply environmental performance aspects.

In a typical eco-labeling program, product categories and eco-labeling criteria are determined by an independent organization with assistance from a complementary technical advisory group. Generally, once a category is chosen, some form of life cycle review is conducted. This review may include raw material extraction, manufacture, distribution, use and disposal. The differentiating parameters (e.g. energy use, toxicity, etc.) are then used as the basis for criteria development.

Following table clears the comparison of the Three Types of Ecolabels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria Areas / Metrics</th>
<th>Type I</th>
<th>Type II</th>
<th>Type III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Cycle Consideration</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selectivity</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Party Verification /</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Preferred</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eco-labeling Objectives:

Now a days for government eco-labeling has become an effective tool for the development of good environmental practices and also for the business to show their identity in environmentally preferable products.

Following are the three objectives for the eco-labeling:

1. Protecting the environment: The primary objective of the eco-labeling is environmental conservation and protection. By the eco-labeling programs, the authorities seek to influence consumer decisions and encourage the production and consumption of environmentally preferable goods and the provision and use of environmentally preferable services. So by this a eco-label serves as a market-based instrument intended to bring about environmental improvement. Following are the environmental objectives may include:
   a. Encouraging the efficient management of renewable resources to ensure their availability to future generations.
   b. Promoting the efficient use of non-renewable resources.
   c. Facilitating the reduction, reuse and recycling of industrial, commercial and consumer waste.
   d. Encouraging the protection of ecosystems and species diversity.
   e. Encouraging the proper management of chemicals in products.
2. Encouraging environmentally sound innovation and leadership: Eco-labeling programs, through the awarding and promotion of an eco-label, offer a market incentive to environmentally innovative and progressive businesses.
3. Building consumer awareness of environmental issues: Eco-labeling programs can also serve to heighten consumer awareness of environmental issues and of the implications of their choices.

**Guiding Principles for Eco-labeling:**

The International Standards organization (ISO) guides some principles for the eco-labeling based on their experience. These are as follows:

1. Voluntary participation: The decisions of manufacturers, importers, service providers and other businesses to participate in an eco-labeling program must be voluntary.
2. Compliance to environmental and other relevant legislation: The main issue of an eco-labeling program are the criteria related to the environmental aspects and other legislative requirement that is compliance for the licensing condition related to environment and other factors.
3. Consideration of "fitness for purpose" and level of overall performance: Besides legislative compliance, it is also important to address the quality and performance of a product that is to be considered for eco-labeling.
4. Based on sound scientific and engineering principles: Maintenance of stringent technical requirements based on good ecological science assures consumers that they can trust the eco-label and licensing applicants that they will be treated fairly.
5. Criteria must distinguish leadership: Criteria should be developed and adopted which clearly distinguish a leadership segment of a product category from the rest of the category.
6. Criteria must be credible, relevant, attainable, and measurable/verifiable: Maintenance of stringent technical requirements based on good ecological science assures consumers that they can trust the eco-label and licensing applicants that they will be treated fairly.
7. Independence: A credible eco-labeling program should be operated by an organisation independent of vested commercial or other interests.
8. Open and accountable process: A credible program must be based on an open and accountable process that can be observed, monitored and questioned at any time.
9. Flexibility: In order to be credible and effective, programs must operate in a business-like and cost-effective manner consistent with market forces and requirements.

**Guiding Principles for Environmental Labeling according to ISO 14020:**

- Accuracy
- Avoiding unnecessary trade barriers
- Scientific basis
- Provision of information on methodology
- Life-cycle approach
- Allowance of innovation
- Minimal administrative burden open, consensual process provision of information on products

**Eco-labeling in India:**

On 8 June 2011, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-A), launched India's first Eco-label - The Green Signal - which certifies environmental preferences adopted during the manufacturing of a product or a service. The associate Professor Amit Garg is a co-promoter of...
this told that "Our Eco-label shall give a big push to the industry and service sector on being more green. The availability of such a label in India will benefit both the conscious buyers and progressive sellers. The broader parameters for assessing a product or service will be energy consumption, carbon footprints, water consumption, waste generation and management, and CSR commitments of the entity".

Eco-labeling, a concept largely prevalent in developed countries, is a voluntary environment performance certification. It labels products, on the lines to BEE's energy star rating and certain organic food certifications. Sticking to environmentally-sound products and processes is becoming increasingly important for Indian exporters in the European market. Due to increasing awareness, a number of new items are being marketed with eco-labels and products which do not qualify for such certification are bound to face resistance in Europe.

"A number of other items are already sporting eco-labels since customers prefer such products," IGEP director Dr. Kebschull said. These include computers, copying paper, linen bed & mattresses, detergents, toilet paper, tissue paper, household paper, dishwashers, refrigerators, washing machines, textile clothing, footwear, interior textiles, indoor paints & varnishes, light bulbs and soil improvers.

Governments and some NGOs have taken proactive action and introduced certain labels. In the Indian context, Rugmark denotes carpets manufactured without illegal child labour while the green dot — indicating that the packaging material with which the product is packed will be reused or recycled — is also becoming increasingly popular. These eco-labels are based on a full life cycle assessment and apply to a wide range of products, whereas product specific labels may have limited scope and apply only to a single product group or production process. Increasingly, eco-labels also incorporate quality and social aspects.

Indian Government has 10 eco-labeling notification resolution defined by the Government and its environment and forests ministry. The first resolution of notification was introduced by Ministry of environment and forests (Department of Environment, Forests & Wildlife) on 20feb.1991 and so on.

Conclusion: All the eco-friendly countries in the nation are came under one roof by the eco-labeling concept, which is beneficial to worldwide consumers for selecting the goods or services they need. So I conclude that eco-labeling to our products and services are better to sale our goods all over in the world. Specially, European countries are giving more importance to the green labeling, so for export to these countries eco-labeling is important, so that it can be easily accepted.

References:
1. Eco-standards, product labeling and green consumerism, By Mangas Bostrom, Mikael Klintman
2. EcoStandards, Product Labeling and Green Consumerism (Consumption and Public Life)
8. www.greenbook.net
9. An article from The Economic times, 8 June 2011.
10. An article from The Economic times, 11 Nov 2011.