

A stringent eco-labeling scheme to rule out greenwashing from Sri Lanka: suggestions for a legal framework

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As present day consumers are remarkably inclined to make their purchasing decisions based on the product's impact on the environment, labeling goods and services according to ecological criteria has become a popular practice around the world. Hence, among manifold policies formulated in furtherance of sustainable development, eco-labeling or green labeling has seized much attention.

However, an eco-label which merely green-washes a product could mislead consumers who intend to minimize the adverse environmental impacts by purchasing environmentally preferable alternatives, even at a high price. Specially, the absence of a nationally accredited eco-labeling scheme could trigger a tendency of using self-claimed eco-labels as a marketing trick to lure the environmentally conscious consumers to the greenwashed products. Therefore, in order to protect the consumers who are inclined to make their choices more on ecological grounds than on price signals, introducing a well-regulated eco-labeling scheme is of utmost importance.

This qualitative research is basically aimed at understanding the concept of eco-labeling and its positive outcomes. Moreover, it highlights the dearth of a legal framework on eco-labeling in Sri Lanka and the significance of introducing a nationally accredited eco-labeling scheme which operates there under. Further, based on a comparative study on Germany, India, European Union and Singapore which have respectively brought up nationally/regionally accredited eco-labels such as Blue Angel, Eco-mark, and EU-Flower, suggestions for a legal framework are brought up in order to indicate reliable information on the environmental impact of a product to the consumer. Thus, the propensity towards greenwashing can be ruled out of Sri Lanka and foster its sustainable development.