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REVIEW ARTICLE

A BIRD VIEW OF CUSTOMER PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE SOAPS AND DETERGENTS OF BANGALORE KS&DL

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ABSTRACT

India is the world's richest sandalwood resources is from one isolated stretch of forests land in south India that in Karnataka. The origin of sandalwood and its oil in Karnataka, which is used in making of Mysore sandal soap, it is well known as Fragrant Ambassador of India and sandalwood oil is in fact known as "liquid gold". Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Limited (KS&DL) is the only company is having the license to extract sandal oil in India. This is the only company using pure sandal oil for manufacturing toilet soaps and other products. This is the largest Government soap manufacturing company in India. KS&DL collecting raw materials i.e., sandals from south Indian States of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and some parts of Pune, Mysore is largest place in India having sandal trees. World production 85% of sandalwood production is from India, 10% is from Srilanka, and 5% from Australia. KS&DL is the true inheritor of golden legacy of India the product produced and marketed are the 16 varieties of toilet soaps, 04 varieties of detergents, 02 varieties of talcum powder, 13 varieties of agarba this and varieties of Mysore herbal care in the brand name of Mysore sandal. The main objectives of this research paper includes theoretical background on current scenario of Mysore Sandal Soaps and detergents and to highlight the demographic profile of the customers of KS&DL situated in Bangalore city through conducting a survey of 180 sample respondents. The paper further analyses the customers' satisfaction and perception towards soaps and detergents and the extent of influence of the product attributes and brand preferences and brand loyalty in their buying behaviour.

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INTRODUCTION

India is an affluent land of Sandal Wood. The world's richest sandalwood resource is from one isolated stretch of forests land in South India that is Karnataka. Karnataka is the origin of sandalwood and its oil, which is used in making of Mysore Sandal Soaps is well known as fragrant ambassador of India. In India Karnataka is the original name for sandalwood which also been called as "Gandhada Gudi" perfumed sandal. Karnataka is the original home place. Sandalwood oil is regarded as "Liquid Gold". World's total production of sandalwood Karnataka state produces about 70 per cent of the sandalwood oil. It was this affluent sandalwood oil which became a reason to setup a soap factory in Karnataka. Karnataka State & Detergents Ltd. (KS & DL) is a public

sector undertaking (wholly owned by Government of Karnataka) is the only company is having license to extract sandal oil in India. This is the only company using pure sandal oil for manufacturing toilet soaps and other products. KS & DL collecting raw materials i.e., sandals from South India States of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and some parts of Pune. World's sandalwood production is 85 per cent of sandal production is from India, 10 per cent from Srilanka and 5 per cent from Australia.

Present Market Scenario

India's per capita consumption of detergent powders & bars stands at 1.6 kg & soaps at 543 gm. In India soaps are available in five million retail stores, out of which, 3.75 million retail stores are in the rural areas. More than 65 per cent of India's population resides in the rural areas; hence around 48 per cent of the soaps are sold in the rural market.

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## Literature Review

Any selected area of study a literature review is an evaluative report of information found in the literature. The review should describe, summarize, evaluate and clarify the study. Review should give both theoretical base and determine the nature of research. Customers' satisfaction is a judgment made by the customer. It is borne out of the comparison of pre-purchase expectations with past purchase evaluation of the product. Satisfaction occurs when the perceived performance matches the expectations. To have an in depth understanding of consumers purchase decision many factors influencing to conduct studies in relation to environment factors, demographic factors, cultural factors and level of exposures. In this backdrop some important studies conducted in the area consumer behavior and perception in relation to soaps and detergents in India are briefly reviewed.

Stanton (1990) concluded that the consumer behavior would be determined by various psychological attributes rather than explicit factors such as change in quality, design of the commodity, packing etc.

Kumar and Madhavi (2006) in their study evaluated the level of satisfaction and brand preference of FMCG consumers. Multistage random sampling technique was adopted. Ten villages were selected from Cuddalore district and a sampling of ten from each village was selected resulting in two hundred as sample size. He revealed that rural marketing is not fully encased by marketers. FMCG products could significantly increase their market share by extending attention to rural areas. More generic product with different advertisement camping surely attract non users. This untapped source could be easily reached by FMCG manufacturing. Most of the consumers are influenced by quality of the product so the FMCG companies should strictly adhere to the quality standards.

Sukat and Elsey (2009) conducted a study in Thailand to know the behavior of male consumers in buying skin care products. He observed that beliefs, self-image, normative influences and attitudes have impacts on purchase intention and purchase behavior in buying skin care products among Bangkok male consumers. Gihan (2010) conducted a study to explore how the marketing mix and demographic factors influence the brand preference and purchasing behavior of beauty soap among the female consumers with the latest trend and technology and teaches them ways to improve their standard of living. Muthuvelayutham (2012) analyzed the relationship between demographic variables on the brand loyalty of the consumers and tries to identify the consumer's switching factors in respected selected product category. This study is essentially a correlation study. A randomly selected sample of 600 from Tamil Nadu state, South India, particularly Madurai, Tuticorn, Kanyakumari districts were selected to analyze. He concluded that the variables age, education level and gender have the most significant impact on consumer's brand loyalty.

Mahalingam (2012) conducted a study in Coimbatore city to assess the socio-economic profile, shopping pattern, consumer perception towards FMCG products. He concluded that the

FMCG has received a pivotal position in the market for soap, paste although there are many competitors in the market.

Chandrasekhar (2012) conducted a study to analyze the brand loyalty of various brands in rural markets and identify the presence and importance of local brands. Nagarajan, Sheriff (2013) highlighted the consumer mindset towards FMCG products. The study focuses on emerging challenges and prospects of marketing of FMCG products in India. They opined that the GDP of any country affects the growth of the industry. They also opined that there should be clear understanding about prevailing trends in changing consumer interest so that their needs are tapped. They concluded that the consumer mindset can be changed by making them to think modernly. They finally concluded that the FMCG international is shifting their focus from urban to rural to launch new market segment in India.

## Statement of the Problem

The present study concerns itself with conceptual and functional analysis of working performance and provides details regarding Mysore Sandal Soap factory in India in general and Karnataka in particular. The main purpose of the study is performance evaluation of Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Ltd. the KS & DL is the only licensed company extract sandalwood oil and produces Mysore Sandal Soap in India and Karnataka at Bangalore in particular. Hence, working performance of KS & DL is most important in the present globalised scenario. In this context, the researcher has chosen KS & DL Bangalore as case study. A microscopic study has been conducted on KS & DL, Bangalore to evaluate the working performance of KS & DL in general and customer perception and marketing strategies towards KS & DL in particular. Therefore, the research problem has been stated as "Performance Evaluation of Mysore Sandal Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Ltd. in India.

## Scope of the Study

The study expected to make an analysis of present status and working progress strategies and strength of different departments in Karnataka Soaps and Detergent Ltd. Bangalore. The present study also intends to examine the customer perceptions and marketing strategies towards the soaps and detergents of KS & DL. The study conducted in Bangalore city and data collected from the customers in Bangalore city where sample size collected is 180. It also gives the respondents socio-economic factors, customers satisfaction and perception towards soaps and detergents and the influence of the product attributes and brand preferences and brand loyalty. It also covers customers brand loyalty at different levels of price increase/decrease from the present price, buying motive, pricing and satisfaction level of the customer. Lastly, the study will help the management to take necessary steps to strengthen all the departments in the KS & DL, Bangalore.

## Objectives of the Study

1. To trace the origin and growth of sandalwood in the globe in general Mysore Sandal Soap factory in particular;

2. To identify the customers socio-economic backgrounds of gender, age group, occupation income level and size of the family;
3. To evaluate the buying motives, perception towards pricing and satisfaction level influencing consumers; and
4. To offer summary of findings, suggestions to KS & DL, Bangalore.

### Methodology of the Study

The study is a descriptive, analytical and explorative in nature and the study has been designed and formulated as per the requirements. Research methodology adopted by the researcher is as follows:

#### Primary Sources of Data

Primary data were collected from the consumers of Mysore Sandal Soaps & Detergents Ltd. Bangalore city by using questionnaire and also discussion and telephonic conversation with the officials and employees of KS & DL, Bangalore.

#### Secondary Sources of Data

Secondary data collected from the different internal sources such as books of accounts, audited reports, progress report and other relevant sources of KS & DL have been used. Published external sources such as newspapers, magazines, related books, Center for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) report, working papers, published reports, statement of KS & DL and research studies in reputed journals and research articles were used. Websites are also extensively used for the study.

#### Sample Size

In the survey, a total number of 180 samples have been collected from the Bangalore city. Convenience sampling has been used as the sampling technique for the study.

#### Tools of Analysis

The data collected arranged in to suitable tables. Collected data were analyzed with the help of statistical and mathematical tools like percentage, diagram, chart and pie chart.

#### Area of Study

The study was mainly conducted in Bangalore city.

#### KS & DL: An Overview

Mysore Sandal Soap is a brand soap manufactured by the Karnataka Soap & Detergents Limited manufactured soap and detergents since 1916 when Nalvade Krishna Raja Wodeyar, the King of Mysore set up the government soap factory in Bangalore. The main motivation for setting up the factory was the excessive sandalwood reserves that the Mysore kingdom had which could not exported to Europe because of the First World War. In November 1918 the Mysore Sandal soap was put into the market after sincere effort and experiment were undertaken to evolve a soap perfume blend using sandalwood

oil is the main base to manufacture toilet soap. The factory shifted its operation to Rajajinagar industrial area, Bangalore in July 1957, where the present plant is located. The plant occupies an area of 39 acres (covering soaps, detergents and fatty acid divisions). Factory expanded in two stages. The first stage during 1950 expansion was done to increase the output to 700 tons per year in the old premises. To meet the growing demand for Mysore Sandal Soap, second stage of expansion was taken place in 1954 Government of India sanctioned license to manufacture 1500 tons of soaps and 75 tons glycerin per year. In 1980, KS & DL was incorporated as a company by merging the government soap factory with sandal oil factories at Shimoga and Mysore. Mysore Sandal Soap in the world made from 100% pure sandal wood oil.

KS & DL produces varieties of products in toilet soaps, detergents, agarbathis and talcum powder. Mysore sandal Soap is the No. 1 anywhere in the world.

Trademark of Mysore Sandal Soap (KS & DL)

#### “SHARABHA”



The sharabha is a mythological creation from the “poornas” which has a body of Lion and head of an Elephant, which embodies the combined virtues of wisdom and strength. It is adopted as an official emblem of KS & DL to symbolize a power that removes imperfections and impurities.

#### Analysis and Interpretation

- a) Socio-economic Profile of the Respondents
- b) Buying Motives
- c) Perception towards Pricing
- d) Satisfaction Level

#### a) Socio-economic Profile of the Respondents:

Table 1 depicts that the demographic profile of the respondents of Bangalore city. Out of 180 respondents, majority of the respondents belong to female category representing 52.50 per cent as against male category indicating 47.50 per cent. Majority of the respondents were in the age group of below 30 years with 58.00 per cent, it shows that youngsters prefer Mysore sandal soap more than the others. Majority of the respondents i.e., 65.80 per cent were unmarried as against

34.20 per cent married. Only 15.10 per cent of the professionals are using sandal soap rather than in the other category 37.60 per cent are using the Mysore sandal soap. In

regard to income level, more number of respondents is in the income group of 10,000 to 20,000 representing 48.00 per cent. Out of 180 respondents 129 respondents i.e. 72 per cent constitute small size family and 28 per cent constitute large family. To conclude, the occupation and income factor is influenced by the buying pattern towards Mysore sandal soap.

**Table 1. Socio-economic Profile**

| S.No. | Particulars         | Frequency | Percentage | Cumulative Percentage |
|-------|---------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------------|
| 1.    | Gender:             |           |            |                       |
|       | a) Male             | 85        | 47.50      | 47.50                 |
|       | b) Female           | 95        | 52.50      | 100.00                |
| 2.    | Age Group:          |           |            |                       |
|       | a) Below 30         | 104       | 58.00      | 58.00                 |
|       | b) 30 to 50 years   | 47        | 26.00      | 84.00                 |
|       | c) Above 50 years   | 29        | 16.00      | 100.00                |
| 3.    | Marital Status:     |           |            |                       |
|       | a) Married          | 62        | 34.20      | 34.20                 |
|       | b) Unmarried        | 118       | 65.80      | 100.00                |
| 4.    | Occupation:         |           |            |                       |
|       | a) Employee         | 55        | 29.60      | 29.60                 |
|       | b) Professional     | 27        | 15.10      | 44.70                 |
|       | c) Business         | 31        | 17.70      | 62.40                 |
|       | d) Others           | 67        | 37.60      | 100.00                |
| 5.    | Income Level:       |           |            |                       |
|       | a) < 10,000         | 52        | 29.00      | 29.00                 |
|       | b) 10,000-20,000    | 86        | 48.00      | 77.00                 |
|       | c) Above 20,000     | 42        | 23.00      | 100.00                |
| 5.    | Size of the Family: |           |            |                       |
|       | a) Small            | 129       | 72.00      | 72.00                 |
|       | b) Large            | 51        | 28.00      | 100.00                |

**b) Buying Motives**

Table 2 indicates the buying motives of the respondents. Out of 180 respondents Majority of 74 respondents representing 41.00 per cent opined that buying motive is brand performance. Quality conscious is the second highest opinion of respondents that is 57 representing 32 per cent. This was followed by 19 respondents representing 10.00 per cent motives is brand image. For 16 and 14 respondents buying motives are fragrance and usage period of present brand. To conclude, almost 73 per cent of respondents are using Mysore Sandal soap because of brand performance and quality and least preferences of 27 per cent are brand image, fragrance and usage period of present brand.

**Table 2. Buying Motives**

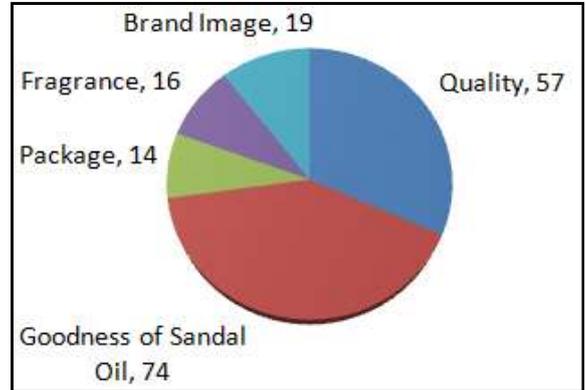
| S.No. | Motives                       | Frequency | %     | Cumulative Percentage |
|-------|-------------------------------|-----------|-------|-----------------------|
| 1)    | Brand performance             | 74        | 41.00 | 41.00                 |
| 2)    | Brand Image                   | 19        | 10.00 | 51.00                 |
| 3)    | Usage period of present brand | 14        | 8.00  | 59.00                 |
| 4)    | Quality                       | 57        | 32.00 | 91.00                 |
| 5)    | Fragrance                     | 16        | 9.00  | 100.00                |

Source: Field Survey.

**c) Perception towards Pricing**

Table 3 highlight the perception of buyers towards price the product. Majority of the respondents numbering 85 and

representing 47.00 per cent opined that the price of the Mysore sandal soap is reasonable. This was followed by 64 respondents representing 36.00 per cent felt that the price of the Mysore sandal soap is high. Nearly 14 respondents representing 8.00 per cent found that the price was low. To conclude, majority of the respondents are in the middle income group category and hence they prefer Mysore Sandal soap due to the reasonable price.

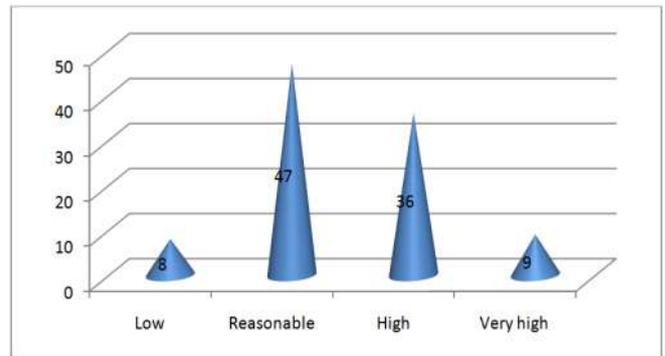


**Chart No. 1 Buying Motives**

**Table 3. Perception towards Pricing**

| S.No. | Perception | Frequency | %     | Cumulative Percentage |
|-------|------------|-----------|-------|-----------------------|
| 1)    | Low        | 14        | 8.00  | 8.00                  |
| 2)    | Reasonable | 85        | 47.00 | 55.00                 |
| 3)    | High       | 64        | 36.00 | 91.00                 |
| 4)    | Very high  | 17        | 9.00  | 100.00                |

Source: Field Survey.



**Chart No. 2 Perception towards pricing**

**Table 4. Satisfaction Level**

| S.No. | Satisfaction | Frequency | %     | Cumulative Percentage |
|-------|--------------|-----------|-------|-----------------------|
| 1)    | Excellent    | 74        | 41.00 | 41.00                 |
| 2)    | Good         | 67        | 37.00 | 78.00                 |
| 3)    | Satisfactory | 38        | 21.00 | 99.00                 |
| 4)    | Poor         | 01        | 01.00 | 100.00                |

Source: Field Survey.

**d) Satisfaction Level**

Table 4 represents the satisfactory level of the respondents towards Mysore Sandal soap. Majority of the respondents representing 41.00 per cent opined that satisfactory level

towards Mysore Sandal soap is excellent. This was followed by 67 and 38 respondents representing 37.00 per cent and 21.00 per cent opined good and satisfactory. Only for one respondent the level of satisfaction was poor. To conclude, the satisfaction level was found to be good for majority of the respondents.

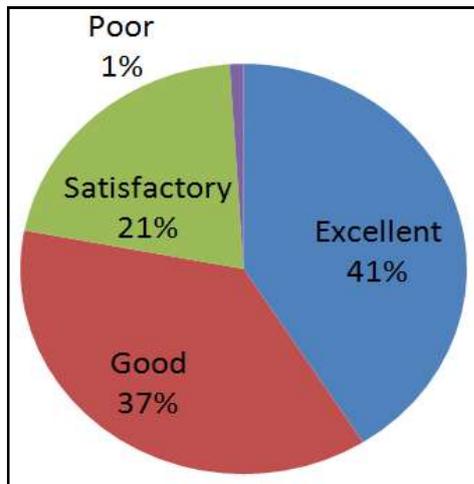


Chart No. 3 Satisfaction Level

### Findings of the Study

The following are the major findings of the study:

1. Majority of the respondents belong to female category representing 52.50 per cent.
2. Majority of the respondents were in the age group of below 30 years with 58.00 per cent, it shows that youngsters prefer Mysore sandal soap more than the others.
3. Majority of 74 respondents representing 41.00 per cent buying motive is brand performance.
4. Majority of the respondents numbering 85 and representing 47.00 per cent opined that the price of the Mysore sandal soap is reasonable.
5. Majority of the respondents are in the middle income group category and hence they prefer Mysore Sandal soap due to the reasonable price.
6. Majority of the respondents representing 41.00 per cent opined that satisfactory level towards Mysore Sandal soap is excellent.

### Suggestions for the Study

The following are the major suggestions of the study

1. The company should create awareness regarding the other products like agarbathis, baby soaps etc.
2. The government should take initiative to advertise the products of KS & DL so that they can acquire a large market.
3. The training should be given for unskilled workers to improve the performance.
4. A Separate grievance cell should be established to remove the conflict arising in some of the department.
5. More focus should be given on marketing and promotional activities so as to earn more profits.
6. The company should concentrate on Research and Development activities to give innovative products.

### Limitations of the Study

The following are the limitations of the study:

1. The researcher considers only Bangalore city, the findings and suggestions of this empirical study may not be representative of the universe.
2. Due to limited period of time sample size taken has 180.
3. Most of the respondents were busy and that data supplied by them may or may not be exact and accurate.
4. Some discrepancies may have occurred due to convenience sampling method used.

### Conclusion

Mysore sandal soap is a brand of soap manufactured by the Karnataka soaps and detergents limited. This soap has been manufactured since 1916 when Nalvadi Krishan Raja Wodeyar, the king of Mysore setup the government soap factory in Bangalore. It can be concluded that Mysore sandal has gained in a prominent position with compare to other brands due to its originality and quality. The objectives of this study were to investigate the performance and group of factors of Mysore sandal products and to study variations in the customer perception with respect to this product and group of factors across gender wise.

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