Production And Marketing Of Panchamiratham In Palani

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Introduction
The temple at Palani is an ancient one. This is one of the important pilgrimage centers in India and the most famous abode of Lord Muruga. Its antiquity is known through the inscription, records, Tamil literature and other historical evidences. Devotees are visiting Palani Arulmigu Dhandayuthapani Swami Temple from different parts of the country. After visiting temples, majority of the Hindus used to get ‘Prasadams’ from the respective temples.
For example, Tirupathi is known for its ‘Laddu’ and Palani is known for its ‘panchamirtham’. Palani Panchamirtham is the oldest form of jam or fruit mix and it be preserved well, even for months. And the saying is that the older it is, it tastes better. "Panch" means five. It denotes the main five ingredients of preparing panchamirtham are Banana, Kandasari sugar, Ghee, Kismis and Cardamom. The quality of panchamirtham depends on the method of preparation and mixing of fruits and other ingredients needed. The main ingredients for panchamirtham are Virupappachi plantains because they have very little water content. This plantain is available only in Palani and it increases the taste of panchamirtham.

Before 110 years the panchamirtham business is started in Palani. However as per the temple inscription 1300 A.D., Jatavarman Sundara Pandian arranged for the special evening pooja to Palani Arulmigu Dhandayuthapani Swami in his name. In the pooja articles panchamirtham was also included. It is ancient evidence regarding the panchamirtham offered to Palani Andavar. In Palani many abisehams are performed to Lord Muruga by using milk, vibuthi, curd, panchamirtham and the like. Among all the abiseham panchamirtham abiseham is considered to be the most important one.

Panchamirtham is marketed in Palani by Devasthanam and also by many private manufacturers. Palani Devastanam is the largest manufacturer of panchamirtham. From 1980 onwards the management of the Palani hill temple also started preparing panchamirtham on a large scale. A study on marketing revolves around four ‘Ps’ namely production mix, price mix, and physical distribution mix and promotion mix. The annointment of Lord Muruga with panchamirtham was introduced by Nagarattars. Panchamirtham is a product in the sense that it satisfies the devotional needs of the devotees. Most of the producers are selling panchamirtham to the consumers directly. Panchamirtham, being a prasadam is to be priced carefully and reasonably. All the sections of the people are buying panchamirtham from Palani. Another notable feature is that the panchamirtham as prasadam is not popular in temples like Tiruchendur and Tirupparam Kundram. In a way, the promotional aspect of marketing needs less importance as far as Palani panchamirtham is concerned.

There are two opinions regarding the panchamirtham abisehams. First, panchamirtham applied to Palani Andavar statue has the healing effect for the decease. The second opinion is that abisheha products like fruits will perish over a night but if they are prepared as panchamirtham, the pooja product may be preserved for a long period. However, panchamirtham abisehams to Palani Andavar is continued from the ancient past.

Statement of the Problem
Panchamirtham which is known as the delicacy of gods provides lively hood to more than 200 families residing at the foothill of Palani. In Palani alone nearly 150 shops are engaged in the marketing of panchamirtham. The production of panchamirtham is unique in itself. Even though a number of studies has been carried out on different products, a very little attempt has been made for studying the production and marketing of panchamirtham. Hence this study aims at analyzing the production and marketing process of the panchamirtham in palani.

Objectives of the study
1. To analyze the manufacturing process of panchamiratham
2. To know the various marketing strategies adapted by manufacturer in the sale of panchamiratham.
3. To analyze the attitude of the consumers towards the purchase the panchamiratham.
4. To offer suggestions for the improvement in production and marketing of panchamiratham

Scope of the study
Since it was contemplated to study the problem in depth, Palani town has been selected. The Palani has a floating population of 3 lakhs per month which includes all the sections of the society general. About 120 permeant, 30 temporary panchamiratham shops are found in palani. This study was undertaken to cover all the panchamiratham shops and the opinion of the consumers regarding the same. It includes 30 business units. The study was primarily undertaken from the stand point of panchamiratham manufacturers and consumers.

Sampling Design
Primary data regarding the cost of production profitability and marketing of panchamiratham have been collected with the help of structured schedules from the producers of the panchamiratham. A sample 30 producers was selected for the study for applying lottery method. A random sample 50 consumers were selected for the study. A separate interview schedule has been prepared for the consumers.

Methodology
With a view to study the panchamiratham marketing the 30 business units of panchamiratham manufacturers in Palani town and a sample survey of panchamiratham consumers in various palaces has been collected with the help two different interview schedules and the data have been carefully collected. The data were collected from field through a survey method.

Framework of Analysis
To under study the cost structure of panchamiratham production cost sheet has been prepared. The break-even analysis has been used to study the profitability of the panchamiratham production. In order to ascertain the brand preference by the consumers and problems by the manufacturers, the weighted arithmetic mean is used. The attitude of the consumer of the panchamiratham has been studied with help hickert’s scale. The relationship between attitude and social economic variables has been studied with the help chi-square test.

Methods and Preparation of Panchamirtham:
For preparing 13 kgs of panchamirtham 100 plantains. 8 kgs of kandasari sugar, 500 grams of dates, 500 grams of sugar candy and 25 grams of cardamom are needed. First the banana is crushed fully and then kandasari sugar is mixed with it. In the third stage seedless dates, sugar candy and kismis are added and in the last stage, items to go into the preparation are
cardamom and ghee.

**Preparation of Panchamirtham in Palani Devasthanam:**
Preparation of panchamirtham is ascertained from the authorities of Palani Devasthanam. In the preparation of panchamirtham only hill bananas are used.

**Raw-materials used and Costs for 481 kgs of panchamirtham**
- Banana-145 kgs,
- Kandari sugar-288 kgs,
- Sugar candy-15 kgs,
- Dates-25 kgs,
- Ghee-6 kgs,
- Honey-2 kgs

The above information shows that the Palani Devasthanam is preparing panchamirtham in the above proportion of one lot or one trip. Devasthanam purchases banana without the peel by the way of tender. First the bananas are crushed fully through the crushing machines then kandasari sugar is mixed with it through the mixture machine. Seedless dates, sugar candy and honey are added in the third stage and in the final stage cardamom and ghee are added. Excluding banana crushing and mixing kandasari sugar, the entire process of making panchamirtham is manual.

**Private Manufacturers**
Panchamirtham is not only a delicious but also a nutritious food. Most of the panchamirtham manufacturers are sole traders and it is their hereditary business. In Palani 70 per cent of the panchamirtham manufacturers are Hindus and 30 per cent are Muslims and there is no Christian manufacturer. Here education is not an obstacle in carrying out this business. Both literate and illiterate are running the business with profit.

All the panchamirtham manufacturers are purchasing raw materials in bulk just before the commencement of the season (Thai Poosam, Vaikasi Visakam, Kiruthikai, Bnd Panguni Uthrafh). Otherwise they are purchasing raw materials for a minimum period of 5 days or maximum period of 10 days. Most of the manufactures of panchamirtham purchase raw materials from local wholesale traders and a few manufacturers purchase directly from manufacturers. This minimum number of manufacturers purchase raw material from Maharashtra through the Lorry transport and the maximum number of manufacturers purchase raw materials through tri-cycle, two wheelers, autos. The manufacturers are doing business with their own and borrowed fund. The suppliers sell the raw material on credit to the panchamirtham manufacturers. A few years ago panchamirtham was sold in mud containers, which keep the taste of panchamirtham fresh and tasty for a long time. Now-a-days plastic bottles have replaced the mud containers. This results in panchamirtham losing its taste within a few days of package. Devasthanam sells panchamirtham in half-kilogram packages only and private manufacturers sell in half kg. and one kg packages.
At the time of festival there is more demand for the panchamirtham. Manufacturers cannot produce that much of panchamirtham every day. So they must store panchamirtham. Maximum of the panchamirtham manufacturers stores panchamirtham less than 10 days. Other period sale is normal. The price of the panchamirtham is fixed on the basis of cost + price.

Advertisement is the most important factor in increasing sales. A small number of manufacturers are advertising through wall writing, wall posters, bit notices, newspapers, radio and television in a spiritual manner. These advertisements are playing a vital role to promoting and increasing the sales. It also believes by the people that the panchamirtham is a spiritually valuable.

**Brand preference by consumers**

Philip Kotler defines brand as, ‘a name, term, sign, symbol or design or combination of them, which identify the goods, or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors’. Here brand means the name with which the panchamirtham is sold. It is well known that brand preference of every individual depends upon various factors like income tastes, quality and the like. These are subject to changes under different circumstances.

In order to ascertain the brands purchased by the consumers they were asked to rank the different brands. It is evident that the sample consumers have accorded that among the brands in Palani the first preference for Devasthanam brand, followed by Chittanathan, Kanda Vilas, Suganda Vilas and Krishna Store.

The sample consumers opined that seventy-six percent of the Panchamirtham consumers have strict brand loyalty. They consume the same brand right from the beginning only and 24 per cent consumers changed their brand from the previous one to the present brand. Eighty per cent of the consumers have patronage for their brand, 16 per cent recommended other brands and four per cent remain neutral.

**Findings of the study**

This study makes an attempt to understand the relationship between the factors and level of satisfaction of consumers towards the marketing of panchamiratham. For the purpose of measuring the attitude, 15 components have been identified and responses were collected under 6 point scale. The analysis shows that out of 50, 24 consumers have high level of satisfaction and 26 consumers have low level of satisfaction towards the marketing of panchamiratham. The analysis made in this study includes the testing of hypothesis. It is shown that the factors namely age, education, income and size of the family have relationship with the levels of satisfaction. In order to ascertain the brand preference by the consumers, the weighted arithmetic mean is used. According to that the devasthanam panchamiratham ranks first in preference, second rank is held by Ciththanathan and third one goes to kandhavilas.

**Problems faced by the manufacturers**
The main problems faced by the manufacturers of panchamirtham in Palani are stiff competition followed by inadequate finance, inadequate storage facilities and lack of transportation. The panchamirtham, collected after abiseham, is not only a delicious and nourishing food but also has astonishing properties to store for a long period.

**Conclusion**
The sale of Panchamirtham by the Devasthanam has been one of the main source earned income. Moreover, it is observed that every year at the time of festival around 5 lakhs devotees were visited the place of Palani and they usually purchased minimum of one kilogram of Panchamirtham. The Panchamirtham is basically known as a spiritual product.

Even after the (globalization) arrival of many more Jams, people from different religions and age groups like Panchamirtham. When compared to other jams, panchamirtham is very economical and tasty. So the impact of globalization of this type of product is not going to affect elsewhere.

Panchamirtham is prepared naturally and has vitamin-A, C and Iron. Many peoples are along with breakfast, lunch and dinner and they send Panchamirtham to their friends in foreign countries. It is ascertained from the manufacturers that the manufacturers do not export Panchamirtham. The researcher suggests that if the Panchamirtham is exported, manufactures will get more profit. Suppose to export the folk product of Panchamirtham surely it will lead to compete in a global market.

**References**