

## THE INCENSE LEGACY OF SOUTH INDIA

“The land of Gold  
The land of Sandalwood  
The land of many diversified music and Cultures  
AND THE LAND OF INCENSE.”

The Incense industry originated in the Southern States of India and was patronized by the rulers of Tanjavore, Travancore and the state of Mysore.

Due to the rich flora and fauna of this land, and abundantly available herbs, stems, petals, and sandalwood, the incense industry flourished. These ingredients were the basis of Dasangam, Havan samaghri and dhoop as per the old texts of Agama shastra.

With the patronage of the Kings and use of these above Agama Shastra ingredients in the palace puja and the rituals, the incense industry took its roots in Mysore. This must be around 1885.

As industry saw growth, many new entrepreneurs, some of them who were also perfumers/chemists, ventured into this trade.

Some of the known persons were, Mr.T.L.Upadaye and Alter Kasim Saheb of Tanjavore. Sri Upadaye had come to Mysore to study Sanskrit. He studied old Sanskrit books having information on Dasangam, Dhoop, etc., and was the first to start a shop in Mysore. In 1924 he was the first represent/exhibit in Wembley, England his hand crafted incense and had won an award.

This legacy was carried forward by Mr.M.R.Jattapa and Sri G.R.Naidu who created world class agarbathies, incorporating traditional knowledge with the then modern available aroma ingredients.

Agarbathies were sold loose in the Sunday bazars (weekly bazars). Sri M.L.Jatappa, modernized the local trade with attractive packing and this was a trend setting idea which established a brand. In the fifties and sixties, new generation, who was passionate about Incense entered the trade.

Our ancestors also related our incense sticks to the philosophy of life.

“Agarbhati when lit, spreads a wonderful aroma, enhancing moods of any person in the surrounding, and this is how our purpose of life is to be. “Agarbhati burns (self-sacrifices) itself to spread aroma to the world, to enlighten the world, and make a better place to live in.

- KASHINATH PATAWARDHAN