

Passion for *perfume*

By Nawara Fattahova

Wherever you go in Kuwait, whether it is a mall, hotel, restaurant or even a health club, you can smell the heady scent of perfume. Wearing strong perfume is part of Kuwaiti culture particularly and of the Gulf region in general. As perfumes are usually expensive, financial situation and wealth of the user are somehow related to this issue. Usage of perfume differs among nations, as some use it for occasions only, while others use it daily. Kuwaitis use it throughout the day no matter the occasion.

especially when going to the mosque for prayers.

The passion for perfumes has even been expressed in poems. Poets have mentioned perfume as reminding them of places or persons. For instance, one of the most popular romantic poets Qais bin Al Mulawah mentioned musk and carnation used by his beloved one.

Arabian perfumes have more varieties than Western fragrances. In addition to liquid perfumes, there is the heavy thick oil called 'Dihn al-oud' that is used for the skin, and only a few drops are enough. There is also 'bukhoor', wood mixed with essence that is burned and used for clothes, hair and the home as well. It can also be used on top of the perfume.

This high consumption of perfumes in the Gulf has made it a profitable business for both local and international companies. This has made the annual perfumes exhibition held at the Mishref fairground the most visited expo in the region, if not the world. And due to high demand, the exhibition is held twice a year, and is growing bigger every year.

The word perfume comes from the French language, expressing the good smell of burning wood essence (bukhoor). Bukhoor was first discovered about 4,000 years ago in Mesopotamia, where the perfume was used in religious rituals and also on the body by soaking the wood in oil and water and using the liquid on the body.

The Arabs were the first to use the floral crown to get the liquid out of it around 1,300 years ago. The oldest perfume was rose perfume, which was popular among many Arab tribes. Arabs also used jasmine, violet and lemon blossom as the main sources of perfume. In addition, they used other sources such as wood (especially sandalwood), leaves (mint, geranium and lavender) and roots (ginger and iris). Also, musk and amber are the main ingredients of perfumes. Arabs were the first to use distillation in producing perfumes.

According to www.marketwatch.com, the global perfume and fragrance market has witnessed a con-

tinued demand during the last few years and is projected to reach \$64.6 billion at a compound annual growth rate of 6 percent by 2023 in terms of value. The perfume and fragrance market has witnessed substantial innovation in terms of new product launches along with research and development and collaboration by the industrial players. The overall increasing disposable income of the consumers and their evolving buying pattern over the past few years has also led to a surge in the sales of perfumes and fragrances during the forecast period.

Globalization and urbanization have significantly affected the composition of the consumption basket of consumers and have influenced their buying behavior. The urban life also encourages consumers to segregate priority and non-priority goods for themselves. In developing economies, especially India and China, major factors such as growing number of affluent and middle class, rising household disposable income, and higher luxury spending have also contributed to the increasing sales of perfumes in these economies. The emergence of consumer-oriented societies along with the spread of consumerism and evolving consumerist attitudes in the GCC region has further reinforced the potential growth of the perfume industry.

The leading market players in the global perfume and fragrance market primarily are Elizabeth Arden, Inc (US), L'Oreal (France), Shiseido (Japan), IFF (US), Chanel (France), Estee Lauder (US), Avon (US), Vivenza (Kuwait), Royal Beauty Group Co(Kuwait), AlQuraishi Fragrances (Kuwait), Reehat Al Atoor (Bahrain), Asghar Ali Co WLL(Bahrain), Rasasi Perfumes Industry LLC (UAE), Arabian Oud (Saudi Arabia), Swiss Arabian Perfume Group (UAE), Atyab Al Marshoud (Kuwait), Al Shaya (Kuwait), Ajmal Perfume (UAE) and Abdulsamad Al Qurashi (Saudi Arabia).



This habit has roots from ancient times. Islam encourages Muslims to always be clean and smell good. It also warns Muslims against annoying others by smelling bad. And different hadiths of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) mention that he used perfumes,