



Lipsticks

More to them than the colour and the cream

'Not only does it draw attention to your lips, but women wearing lipstick captivate the gaze (of men) for longer than their un-glossed counterparts!' Well, no, we at *Consumer Voice* are not making a statement here, but only reproducing lines from the study on lipsticks by University of Manchester to introduce you to one of the most sold colour cosmetics products in India. The estimated Rs 1,600 crore colour cosmetics market in India has been growing at a CAGR of 8 per cent over the last 2 years and the lipstick segment is the largest contributor to these sales – accounting for about 42 per cent of the total. It was high time that *Consumer Voice* put on the testing cap to find out if all the top-selling lipstick brands were abiding by the set rules and quality standards as well as being true to their claims.

A Consumer Voice Report

Lipstick is a price-sensitive cosmetics product, with the prices ranging from Rs 125 to Rs 350 (some local brands may come for as low as Rs 50 and as high as Rs 900). Basically, the base materials – beeswax and pigments – as permitted are not very expensive. The colours and shades largely determine the choices of users. The fragrance part is not much significant since most lipsticks have a very mild fragrance. An important attribute is how effective the lipstick is on the lips after application.

At *Consumer Voice*, we got hold of the most popular lipstick brands across India, bought them from

organized retail outlets and sent them to an NABL-accredited laboratory for tests. We chalked out the various parameters – based on IS 9875:2005 – for lab tests and also listed other characteristics that needed to be tested to know the lipsticks inside-out.



Comparative Test

CV Recommendation | Top Performers

Lakme

Followed by

Elle 18 | 7 Heaven's

Tops in Sensory Tests

Elle 18

Followed by

Colorbar and Lotus Herbals

KEY FINDINGS

- In overall performance, Lakme (86.4%) is ranked on top and is followed by Elle 18 (84%) and 7 Heaven's (82).
- Elle 18 has secured the second position in spite of being the cheapest (Rs 125) among the tested brands. It is therefore the 'value for money' brand as well.
- In sensory tests, Elle 18 is the top performer followed by Colorbar and Lotus Herbals.
- In payoff test, Colorbar was found with lowest consumption; the highest was in Blue Heaven.
- All the brands were found safe to use as they were free of microbes and low on heavy metals.
- Net weight of Blue Heaven, Mac and Cameleon were found to be less than the declared value.
- Lipps, Mac and Meilin have not marked MRP and batch number; Lotus Herbals has not marked MRP.

Good Value for Money

Elle 18

Stick, Gloss, Liner, Stain...

Lipstick

It is a cosmetic product containing pigments, oils, waxes and emollients that apply colour, texture and protection to the lips.

Lip gloss

It is used primarily to give lips a glossy lustre and sometimes a subtle colour. It is distributed as a liquid or a soft solid (not to be confused with lip balm, which generally has medicinal or soothing purposes). It can be completely clear, translucent, or have various shades of opacity, including frosted, glittered, glossy and metallic finishes.

Lip liner

Also known as lip pencil, it is intended to fill uneven areas on the outer edges of the lips, after application of lipstick. It is also used to outline the lips, to prevent bleeding of lipstick all over.

Lip stain

It is a cosmetic product used to colour the lips, usually in the form of a liquid or gel. It generally stays on longer than lipstick by leaving a stain of colour on the lips. However, it can dry the lips and is not recommended for winter.



Brand→	Weightage %	Lakme	Elle 18	Colorbar	Mac	7 Heaven's	
Cost (Rs)/Weight (gm)		250/4.1	125/4	300/4.2	350/3.8	175/4	

BRANDS TESTED

The present study pertains to comparative testing of 12 brands of lipsticks, in close proximity to each other in terms of shade.

Rank	Total Score out of 100 (Rounded off)	Brand Name	Manufactured/Marketed By	Shade Code/No.
1	86	Lakme	Hindustan Unilever	352 (Red & Maroons)
2	84	Elle 18	Hindustan Unilever	32 (Red Rough)
3	82	7 Heaven's	Not mentioned	Red
3	82	Mac	Make-up Art Cosmetics	10 (Red)
4	81	Colorbar	Colorbar Cosmetics	85v (Magenta)
4	81	Maybelline	L'Oreal India	F31 (Iced Orchid)
5	79	Toya Paris	Not mentioned	Red
5	79	Lipps	Chemphar Cosmetics	R-306 (Red)
5	79	Meilin	Meilin Cosmetics	G879 (Gold rich Red)
5	79	Lotus Herbals	Lotus Herbals	610 (Crimson Red)
6	78	Cameleon	Cameleon Cosmetics	508 (Red)
7	77	Blue Heaven	Cosmetica Corporation	R0001 (Sensual Red)

Score Rating: >90: very good*****, 71-90: good****, 51-70: fair***, 31-50: average**, up to 30: poor*



TEST RESULTS
PHYSICOCHEMICAL TESTS

◆ **Payoff Test**

This test gives the idea of mass release from the

lipstick salve while applying. As per the requirement, the lipstick should pass this test if pay-off is more than 0.0001gm/cm².

All the brands were found well above the minimum requirement. However, it should be noted that a higher payoff results in more consumption of lipstick. Hence, we have considered balanced payoff results as better.

- *Colorbar showed the lowest payoff result (but it was well above the minimum required) and hence scored higher. The highest consumption was in Blue Heaven.*

◆ **Softening Point**

The softening point is the temperature at which a material softens beyond some arbitrary softness. This test is conducted to check the stability of lipstick at high temperature. As per the national standard requirement, the minimum softening point of lipstick should be 55 °C.

	Maybelline	Meilin	Lipps	Lotus Herbals	Cameleon	Toya Paris	Blue Heaven
	250/4	190/3	125/4	345/4.2	240/3.8	165/4	150/4

Comparative Test

PHYSICOCHEMICAL

Brand → Parameter ↓	Weightage %,	Lakme	Elle 18	Colorbar	Mac	7 Heaven's
Softening point	10	9.5	9.5	8.0	9.5	8.5
Breaking load	10	8.86	7.67	5.94	6.47	9.73
Payoff test	12	10.53	9.27	11.68	11.05	11.47
Rancidity	6	6.0	5.70	6.0	6.0	4.89
Freedom from grittiness	5	5	5	5	5	5

- All the brands complied with the minimum requirement of softening point.

◆ Rancidity (Peroxide Value)

As per the standard requirement, the rancidity should not be more than 10 (peroxide number).

- Lakme, Mac, Colorbar and Cameleon were found to have no rancidity and given full score.
- Other brands had rancidity under permissible limits and are safe to be used.

◆ Breaking Load

This test gives the value of the maximum load a lipstick can withstand before it breaks. As per the requirement, the lipstick should withstand a breaking load of minimum 200.

- All the brands met this requirement.

◆ Freedom From Grittiness

This test is done to check the presence of solid unwanted particles in the lipstick. The test is important as regular usage of lipstick with gritty matter can scratch the lips in the long run.

- All the brands of lipstick passed this test.

◆ Heavy Metals

The average user applies lipstick 2.3 times daily and ingests around 24 milligrams each day, so the lipstick should be free of heavy toxic metals, or within the limits. Lipstick generally contains lead,

chromium, cadmium, arsenic and many more toxic metals, which are carcinogenic in nature and may cause serious illness. As per the national standard requirement, lead and arsenic should not be more than 20 ppm and 2 ppm, respectively.

- All the brands were within the limits as prescribed in IS.
- Lakme and Mac had the lowest quantities of heavy metals and hence scored higher.

MICROBIOLOGICAL TESTS

For conforming to the standard requirement, two microbiological tests – one to check total viable count (TVC) and the other for gram-negative pathogens – were carried out.

- All the brands were found well below the maximum permissible limit for microbiological activity as per Indian Standard. They are all safe to use.



SENSORY

Brand →	Elle 18	Colorbar	Lotus Herbals	Meilin	Blue Heaven
Score out of 30	20.85	20.53	20.44	20.03	19.98

*Self-assessment questionnaires were filled by subjects giving their judgement on a rating scale of 5 (1: dislike very much and 5: like very much).

TEST SCORES

	Maybelline	Meilin	Lipps	Lotus Herbals	Cameleon	Toya Paris	Blue Heaven
	8.5	9.0	8.5	7.0	9.0	9.0	8.5
	6.67	6.75	5.98	7.74	6.27	6.22	6.14
	10.84	9.06	11.26	9.16	9.48	11.37	8.64
	5.53	5.77	5.77	5.45	6.0	5.73	5.1
	5	5	5	5	5	5	5



SENSORY TESTS

The sensory tests were conducted at a clinical research organization (CRO) with over 150 volunteers to determine the effects, perception and overall acceptability of the various lipsticks after regular use at home. The subjects wore the given sample of lipstick once a day for seven days.

The following attributes were judged by the volunteers:

1. Improvement in appearance of lips after application. (radiance, lustre)
2. Does your lipstick spread beyond lip edges after application?
3. Moisturizing effects of lipstick after application
4. Improvement in texture (cracking or chapping) of lips after application
5. Improvement in softness and smoothness of lips after application

6. Application of lipstick and wearable period, approx. >4 hours
7. Fragrance of lipstick after application
8. Rate as per convenience and easy use of packing of lipstick
9. Overall quality of lipstick

GENERAL PARAMETERS

◆ **Packaging; Marking/Labeling; Net Weight**

The packaging of lipstick was rated on whether it was tamper-proof, whether it had dust-proof packaging, the design and the outer packaging/carton.

- All the brands take good care while packaging the product. However, only four brands (Lakme, Elle 18, Colorbar, Maybelline) had the required information on their packs.
- Lipps and Meilin have not marked net weight.

The lipstick should be legibly marked with the following information

- a) Indication of the source of manufacture
- b) Shade no. or shade name
- c) Batch no. in code or otherwise
- d) Year of manufacture
- e) MRP (Rs)

- Net weight of Blue Heaven, Mac and Cameleon were found to be less than the declared value. Most of the other brands were found below the declared weight but stayed within the tolerance limits.

TEST SCORES*

	Lakme	Mac	Cameleon	Lipps	Maybelline	7 Heaven's	Toya Paris
	19.66	19.62	19.61	19.46	17.55	17.23	17.20

- All the brands of lipstick performed satisfactorily on all the sensory attributes as judged by the volunteers/subjects. Brands Elle 18, Colorbar and Lotus herbal are the top performers.

Comparative Test



DID YOU KNOW THIS ABOUT LIPSTICK?

- Ancient Mesopotamian women were possibly the first women to invent and wear lipstick. They crushed gemstones and used them to decorate their lips.
- Cleopatra, Egypt's most famous pharaoh, used crushed carmine beetles to stain her lips a vibrant shade of red.
- Women in the ancient Indus Valley Civilization applied lipstick to their lips for face decoration.
- The lipstick gained popularity in the 16th century, thanks to the English Queen Elizabeth I and the ladies of her court, who coloured their lips with a blend of beeswax and red mercuric sulphide.
- During the Islamic Golden Age, the Arab Andalusian physician and chemist Abu al-Qasim al-Zahrawi (Abulcasis) invented solid lipstick, which consisted of perfume and other ingredients pressed in moulds. He described the process in his encyclopaedia of medicine and surgery, the Kitab al-Tasrif.
- In 1770, the British Parliament passed a law that said a woman wearing lipstick could be tried for witchcraft.
- Dark red was one of the most popular shades throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Flappers wore lipstick to symbolize their independence. At that time, it was acceptable to apply lipstick in public and during lunch, but never at dinner.
- In 1930, *Vogue* declared lipstick a defining item of the 20th century, and encouraged women to take lipstick application seriously, advising: 'paint your lips as an artist would.' Lipstick's popularity grew during the Second World War thanks to the movie industry and with application of make-up becoming commonplace for women.
- In 1950, American chemist Hazel Bishop developed the world's first non-smear, long-lasting lipstick.
- Nowadays, an everyday lipstick-using woman consumes about 4 to 6 pounds of lipstick during a lifetime by licking her lips.

Culled from various reliable sources on the Internet