



Fairness Products Market in India: 'Fair'ing Well

Fair skin has always been the desire of people since ages and has been associated with beauty. Earlier, most of the people used homemade (turmeric, milk, honey) products and lotions to make their skin lighter in shade. With the assumption of fair skin as a sign of beauty, there has been bias for the skin colour in most of the countries. The obsession of white skin continued, giving an opportunity for the cosmetics and FMCG companies to bank on it.

The opportunity for the fairness products companies is provided by the favourable demographics such as young population, increasing working class population, increasing female working population, etc. With a positive change in the economic conditions, the household income of the people increased and people are willing to spend more on their personal grooming and wellness. Besides, the youth's shift towards Western style of living propelled their spending on luxury and imported products. To bank on this growing need of the consumers, most of the Indian domestic companies like Dabur, Himalaya, etc., and MNCs like L'Oreal, Amway, et al., have entered the skin care products markets with different products.

In the skin care products segment, skin fairness products is one of the profitable branches and is expected to grow with the increasing penetration of the products. Though skin fairness products are used worldwide, their excessive consumption will be mostly from the Asian and African countries. Today, the consumers find a wide range of fairness products in the retail stores catering different needs and prices. Some of the popular ones are Fair & Lovely, Fairever, FairOne, L'Oreal's Garnier Lite, Olay, White Perfect, etc., available in almost all retail stores in the country.

In India, Fair & Lovely has become the synonym for the skin fairness products. With its efficient promotion and distribution throughout the country it became a pioneer of skin fairness products in India. Even the people in the rural communities know about the Fair & Lovely. Looking at the growing opportunity most of the FMCG and MNCs entered the fairness products segment with their respective products. This has increased the competition among the companies and increasing the wide range of product availability in the market.

Upon the increase of the skin fairness products in the Indian market, one concern that arises is about genuineness of fairness products. Will these products really provide fairer skin or are these companies just raking profits on people's desire to look fair. Some companies are providing the technology they are using to make the products to justify

themselves that they are not using any harmful chemicals. Even companies are claiming of using natural processes and use materials like milk, saffron, turmeric, lemon extracts etc., in their products. Again the companies are turning into old age sciences of *ayurveda* and herbal methods for giving their products the mix of technology and *ayurveda*.

Overtime, will this situation of using fairness creams still continue or realise that just having fair skin is not considered as beauty but it compliments it. Though there is a growing opportunity in the skin care market, if the market is filled with too many players who will lead the band and on what basis.

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