

Organic Beauty Industry: A Comparative Study of Synergy of Market and Nature In Developed and Developing Countries

Pankaj Kumar Sharma

Research Scholar, Dept. of Sociology, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur

Abstract

In every society people have liked some people among themselves while not some others for how they looked. And people/societies attach immense and increasing social significance to physical beauty in general and face in particular. This can be seen in economic terms (market) in the form of demand for beauty products and services which together form the beauty industry. Beauty industry is only a small segment of the market. The industry has seen huge expansion and growth in the past two decades. A constant effort is being made by the industry to link its marketing strategy with some science/reason/convincing stories so as not to sound fake. It has carved out a niche for itself. While conventionally the industry has kept its base rooted in chemicals but due to realization of the harms of chemical ingredients and emerging consciousness among people about sustainability, environment and health, it is now moving towards becoming natural and clean also. It is a new emerging market of natural or Organic beauty products and services. These are sourced from naturally occurring/organically grown & processed resources like Neem, Aloe vera, Turmeric, Milk etc and packed in an environment friendly manner. This is the Organic/natural/clean beauty industry and it premises on Organic farming. The latter has a very good feature of sustainability as it avoids pollution due to chemicals, adopts practices that nature allows. And the industry is canvassing people to get their support in developing the market for its products. The manner in which this canvassing and development are going varies in developing and developed countries. The paper has tried to understand this new market, some methods (the prominent variable) of production that indicate sustainability, and the manner of development of this industry.

Keywords- Organic, Chemical, Industry, Sustainable, Beauty, SHG.

1. INTRODUCTION

Emergence of human civilization is quintessentially rooted in the emergence of agriculture and the social practices that developed with it directly or indirectly in urban or rural spaces. In the beginning days we traced, mimicked or adopted these practices from nature but they have sustained, moulded or changed with time owing to innovation-emergence of new ideas, techniques, technologies and availability of resources. And one such practice has been the effort to look good. A number of civilizations and societies have left their mark that indicates the presence of such practice. Be it the representation of physique (Ancient Greco-Roman and Indus Valley Civilization), wearing of ornaments or application of products like turmeric¹ and lipstick^{2 3}. This indicates that in every society people have liked some people among themselves while not some others for how they looked. This has been there for long. And thus notions regarding looks (beauty) get framed and they become part of culture. But as it's ever evident culture

¹ In Sanskrit, turmeric has at least 53 different names and gauri (to make fair) is one among them. It has been used in ancient south Asia to remedy skin conditions (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK92752/>)

² Ancient Sumerian men and women were the first to invent lipstick, making it out of crushed gemstones and white lead and painting their lips and eyes with the concoction. (<https://www.bustle.com/articles/190243-the-history-of-red-lipstick-from-ancient-egypt-to-taylor-swift-everything-in-between>)

³ Wikipedia

changes its colour over time and so do its ingredients. Some little and some very much. Same has been the case with beauty notions and practices.

The immense and increasing social significance of beauty in general and face in particular can be seen in economic terms. Beauty industry is only a small segment of the market. The industry has seen huge expansion and growth in the past two decades. A constant effort is being made by the industry to link its market strategy with some science/reason/convincing stories so as not to sound fake. It has carved out a niche for itself. While conventionally the industry has kept its base rooted in chemicals but it is now moving to being natural also. Fifty years ago, or as recently as 10 or even five, one skin-care product could last you a few weeks or sometimes months. Now, beauty companies feed our single-use behavior — the super-convenient way of using something only once before discarding it — with a flood of non-biodegradable, non-recyclable disposable products.⁴

The information society is getting educated about the chemicals and the after effects of them. Rising consciousness has led to increased demand for natural and eco-friendly products. Unlike chemical-laden beauty products, "organic beauty products address deeper issues offering antioxidants, pigmentation inhibition and antimicrobial activity".⁵ This is leading to the emergence of a new market- the organic beauty. This market is premising itself on organically grown or naturally occurring raw material or practices that are in line with the Nature. Thus is going on the development of the organic beauty industry/natural/clean beauty. This development does have the threadline of globalization even with varied space.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is based on secondary data. Further, the study is purely qualitative in nature and an exploratory research design has been used. It's a case study and different organic firms have been taken as cases for this study. To gain deeper insights it needs to be covered through more empirical holistic studies.

3. ANALYSIS

Synergy of Nature and Market

It is a new emerging market of natural or Organic beauty products and services. These are sourced from naturally occurring/organically grown resources like Neem, Aloe vera, Turmeric, Milk etc. For example, "Turmeric paste is used by women in some parts of India to remove superfluous hair. Turmeric paste is applied to the skin of the bride and groom before marriage in some parts of India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, where it is believed to make the skin glow and keep harmful bacteria away from the body. Turmeric is currently used in the formulation of several sunscreens. Several multinational companies are involved in making face creams based on turmeric"¹.

The market has adopted and adjusted the usage of these naturally occurring or organically grown stuff to create products that can be presented as an option to get the alleged desired results to avoid the dangers of chemical laden conventional beauty products. This may sound like going back to the basics/roots to 'look good'. Though we have known these remedies for ages but probably succumbed to the immense power of market and the quick and desired results that we may get from the chemical based beauty products. Though the use of these natural products like VICO creams and Shahnaz Hussain beauty products has been going on for long but they have gained popularity with the range of such products launched by Patanjali Ayurveda Herbal. Promoted by Baba Ramdev soaps, shampoos, creams infused with traditional ingredients are outshining the conventional personal care products. A Nielsen India report says that "the market for natural personal care is growing 1.7 times faster than the overall

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/15/style/skin-care-sustainability-this-is-the-cost-of-your-beauty-routine.amp.html#referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com&tf=From%20%251%24s>

⁵ <https://yourstory.com/2019/07/organic-chemical-startups-beauty>

sector, and is currently worth Rs18,500 crore (\$3 billion), accounting for 41% of India's total personal care market"⁶

The report also says Indian consumers, are now ditching chemical-laden products in favour of natural beauty products infused with neem and turmeric like stuff. Seeing Patanjali success other small and big brands like Hindustan Unilever, Dabur, Coalgate, Himalaya Drug Company etc have forayed into Herbal/natural/Organic personal care products.

This is Organic beauty industry. Majority of the ingredients used in these Herbal/natural/Organic products are now being grown organically (with or without certification). Organic farming has great feature of sustainability as it avoids pollution due to chemicals, uses indigenous seeds and less water, and adopts practices that nature allows. A more specific sustainability feature about the organic movement is that of small-scale and localized production of these Organic beauty products by a number of NGOs, firms, Self Help Groups. They are selling their products not only at local level but are providing finished product to big names like Khadi India, FabIndia etc. This boosts local economy, saves a lot of carbon emissions and water. NuTech Farms, Arena Organica, Himfresh are among these groups to name. Arena Organica collaborates with a never of smaller groups to support and fetch market for them. Thus the model of production is sustainable from growing, processing and packaging. Organic Farming has also started catching the eye of the Government. Schemes like Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana, thrust on Zero Budget Natural Farming and targets set by Andhra Pradesh Govt to become fully Organic indicate focus on sustainability. Organic Farming can resolve a number of agri, health and climate issues.

“Studies reveal that people in European countries have proper awareness about the organic beauty products. They are clear with its availability and understand the positive impacts of organic beauty products at their health and skin as well. The people in developed countries have well reputed market of organic beauty products. It has been found that more than male population the female population has immense knowledge about the availability of organic beauty products. Here the role of exposure is very high as the people in these countries are aware about the product due to high exposure. The reasons for the same are ad campaigns and word of mouth.,Now a days in India also educated people,especially urban women have become so aware that now they use green products to their skin.Clearly the beauty space is turning green.Organic beauty industries are making inroads in India.,'Patanjali ayurved' brand has brought a new era in the green industry.It has brought ayurveda, herbal and organic back in fashion.Its annual turnover is to be estimated approx. 10,216 crore rs.The attitude or the mindset of people plays a very crucial role.It is very important to understand the psychology of consumers how they feel,how they think,what they want, how they decide,choose and select between organic cosmetics and general cosmetics. ”⁸.

Traditional beauty companies have been key in the development and maintenance of a strong message that beauty is critical and most important for economic and social success. But now in this post modern era, society has begun to dis engage from this mind-set and prefer products that include more than superficial beauty fixes. “According to RedSeer, the Indian organic skincare products market is valued at \$125 million, growing at 25 percent percent annum. “While the herbal category as a whole is expected to grow at 8-10 percent, the mid-premium segment is expected to grow at a higher rate of 14-16 percent,”. “The personal care space has mostly been defined by three terms — ayurveda, wellness and organic. From a marketing standpoint, ayurveda is more of a mass play. On the other hand, organic has emerged as an alternative to ayurveda with a more premium positioning,” However, in the absence of labelling laws, it is difficult to ascertain if products are purely organic. It then becomes more of a positioning platform to market natural skincare products”¹

However, ancient beauty industry was completely based on nature. In the course of the development of civilization, increasing population kept increasing the control of nature for its needs. Human being has exploited nature too much

⁶ (<https://qz.com/india/1005559/indians-are-spending-billions-of-dollars-on-beauty-products-made-with-common-kitchen-ingredients/>)

⁷ A report published by Market Research Future (MRF) revealed that the global natural and organic cosmetics market is predicted to touch \$25,100 million by 2023. (<https://yourstory.com/2019/07/organic-chemical-startups-beauty>)

⁸ <http://www.dissertationhomework.com/essays/beauty-therapy/organic-beauty-product/>

for its short term pleasures and ignored the the long term consequences of inorganic farming. Today its harmful results are in front of us. There is a long list of its harmful consequences and one solution for this is organic farming or green industry.

Skin care maintains the top billing in the global organic beauty market, and is expected to emerge the most attractive segment, closely followed by haircare. This means that natural and organic skincare, combined with organic haircare, will form half of the total global organic beauty market. Environment California issued ‘Growing up toxic: chemical exposures and increases in developmental diseases’, which details chemicals found in consumer products and their potential health impacts American women use an average of 12 products a day – nearly 200 chemicals – according to a 2004 study by the Environmental Working Group (EWG), a non-profit environment and health advocacy group. Another survey, conducted by a beauty retailer in 2016, found women averaged 16 products a day on their face alone. “Cancer is on the rise, infertility is on the rise, allergies in children are on the rise, and people can’t figure out why,” said Nneka Leiba, the director of healthy living science at EWG, which has been monitoring chemicals in cosmetics for over a decade. “The increases are not just due to genetics and new diagnostic techniques.”⁹

The additional problem that comes with the conventional beauty Industry, though a challenging hurdle also, as Many believe, is packaging. And luxury brands may be called the greatest offender. Brands create ‘luxury’ through layers of heavy packaging, which is often non-biodegradable, non-recyclable and gets discarded. Every additional lotion, serum or mask comes with problematic side effects without our even realizing it. Due to this ignorance, we’re driving up the environmental impact to bad only.

There are products that use plastic, like glitter or microbeads, contribute to river and ocean waste; some chemicals in sunscreens can harm marine life; and if ingredients are not sourced responsibly, it can do environmental destruction, like deforestation. There are 25 trillion pieces of plastic debris in the ocean. And, as it stands, 75 percent of waste in the USA is recyclable, but only 30 percent of it is actually being recycled, according to Rubicon, so it's either ending up in landfill or in the oceans.¹⁰

As said above, due to realization of the harms of chemical ingredients and emerging consciousness about the environmental health people are going for natural and clean beauty. “Clean beauty ties into the wellness movement and the wellness movement ties into the environment, because it’s about what’s good for you and the planet.” Clean beauty is expected to generate nearly \$25 billion by 2025, according to a report from Grand View Research. That may be only a fraction of the beauty industry (an \$863 billion business by 2024, according to Zion Market Research), but the demand for products that are marketed as “clean” or “natural” continues to be strong.¹¹

Some companies are making an effort to effect change, may be due to market equations or due to something else. Like Unilever recently pledged that all Dove bottles would be made of recycled plastic, that the Dove Beauty Bar would be plastic free later in 2020 and that refillable stainless steel deodorant sticks were in the works in an effort to reduce its use of virgin plastic by more than 20,500 tons per year. Some others like by Humankind, a personal care brand dedicated to reducing single-use plastic by introducing plastic-free shampoo and conditioner bars and refillable deodorant containers. LOLI, a zero-waste clean beauty brand, bottles its formulas in food-grade glass yogurt jars, which can be reused in the kitchen.¹²

4. CONCLUSION

Making sustainability synonymous with luxury (high end heavily packed beauty products) is an opportunity. If we look at beauty’s impact as a whole, the impact can be overwhelming. Everything — how ingredients are sourced,

⁹ <https://www.ecovaint.com/asia3/>.

¹⁰ <https://www.byrdie.com/sustainable-beauty-guide-4684606>

¹¹ https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/15/style/skin-care-sustainability-this-is-the-cost-of-your-beauty-routine.amp.html#referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com&_tf=From%20%251%24s

¹² https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/15/style/skin-care-sustainability-this-is-the-cost-of-your-beauty-routine.amp.html#referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com&_tf=From%20%251%24s

carbon emissions in production, packaging, transportation — must be considered lest it lead to harmful social and environmental impacts.

Natural and clean beauty movement is steadily taking over the globe and celebrities endorsing organic brands, the beauty conscious-world is shifting towards organic(certified), natural (Organic but not certified) and home- grown products. Small and big brands like Hindustan Unilever, Dabur, Coalgate-Palmolive, Himalaya Drug Company etc have forayed into Herbal/natural/Organic personal care products.

Over the last few years, India has seen an emerging market for home-grown beauty brands. Indian consumers, are now ditching chemical-laden products in favour of natural beauty products infused with neem and turmeric like stuff. This may be said to augur well from sustainability perspective. Though this shift is coming with increase in personal incomes but it supports the organic movement.

Organic Farming and small-scale localized production model are specific features of sustainable development in long run with all the necessary precautions and compliances.

The whole Nature is in crisis. Environment due to pollution. Soils due to soil pollution that is chemicals. Soils are a complete ecosystem. Destroying soils with Chemicals means destroying the Planet Earth. And eventually destroying Children's future due to Chemicals based food. We say we love our children but we feed them with Chemicals. We say we care for Nature but are destroying it. Sustainability is our way out. Be it Soils or be it environment. Organic is at least one way towards sustainability.

5. REFERENCES

- https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/15/style/skin-care-sustainability-this-is-the-cost-of-your-beauty-routine.amp.html#referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com&_tf=From%20%251%24s
- <https://www.byrdie.com/sustainable-beauty-guide-4684606>
- <https://www.ecoviain.com/asia3/>
- <http://www.dissertationhomework.com/essays/beauty-therapy/organic-beauty-product/>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK92752/>
- <https://www.bustle.com/articles/190243-the-history-of-red-lipstick-from-ancient-egypt-to-taylor-swift-everything-in-between>
- <https://yourstory.com/2019/07/organic-chemical-startups-beauty>
- <https://qz.com/india/1005559/indians-are-spending-billions-of-dollars-on-beauty-products-made-with-common-kitchen-ingredients/>
- <https://yourstory.com/2019/07/organic-chemical-startups-beauty>)
- <http://www.dissertationhomework.com/essays/beauty-therapy/organic-beauty-product>
- <https://www.ecoviain.com/as>
- Wikipedia