



## Knowledge, Attitude and Perception towards Organic Based Cosmetic Formulation in the Multicultural, Civilized Society - A survey

<sup>1</sup>. Kalyani, <sup>2</sup>. Dr. Vishnupriya, <sup>3</sup>. Gayathri. R

<sup>1</sup>V, P, BDS II, <sup>2</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Biochemistry, <sup>3</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Biochemistry, Saveetha Dental College and Hospitals, Saveetha University, Chennai, India.

\*Corresponding author's E-mail:

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to survey the awareness among people on the usage of natural cosmetic products. Beauty has become a part and parcel of every person's life. The products used for maintaining one's beauty, be it natural or synthetic, has an impact on a person's health too. The study examines the knowledge and usage of natural cosmetics. Beauty is the essence of life and cosmetics are products which add to a person's beauty. The term cosmetic includes all those products which are concerned with skin care, hair care, and dental care. Though natural products were in use for beautifying a person, in this modern era, cosmetic products indicates only the production and sale of synthetic cosmetics. However, in the recent times the influx of natural cosmetic products into markets has gained momentum. The purpose of this study is to determine the level of awareness among people regarding the use of synthetic cosmetics and also to compare their views on synthetic and natural cosmetic products. Based upon the study results, further awareness on natural cosmetic usage can be initiated if required.

**Keywords:** Cosmetic products, natural cosmetics, Multi-cultural.

### INTRODUCTION

Beauty is a part of aesthetics and cultural aspects of any social set up. With evolving times, the weightage given to one's beauty has increased manifolds and so are the cosmetic products used in maintaining a person's beauty. Though beauty and cosmetics were primarily attributed to a woman, the modern era witnesses the introduction of cosmetic products for men too. People have started taking the use of cosmetic products seriously. The use of cosmetics doesn't just stop with face care. It also extends to dental care, hair care and skin care. People actually perceive cosmetics as a synthetic product used in the process of beautifying a person. In spite of reports indicating the allergies and side effects caused by synthetic products, its market stays high. Common profitable beauty and cosmetic products frequently hold noxious and chemically-potent substances<sup>[1]</sup>. This is because many are unaware of the natural cosmetic products. The natural herbs and their products when used for their aromatic value in cosmetic preparation are termed as herbal cosmetics. The products used for maintaining one's beauty, be it natural or synthetic, has an impact on a person's health too. Natural cosmetic products cannot only be explained with the ingredients but also the production method has a great importance<sup>[3]</sup>.

This necessitates to probe about the constituent ingredients and the method of production before buying natural cosmetics too. This survey analyses an individual's

knowledge and perception towards natural based cosmetic products. Based on the results of the study further awareness can be created among the general population about the usage and effects of natural cosmetics.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The sample size of this study is 200. The study group consists of 129 female and 70 male participants of all age groups. The study was conducted in the city of Chennai (Tamil Nadu, India). This was a questionnaire based study. The survey questionnaire was prepared and administered through survey planet to all the participants.

Participants volunteered for the survey and completed the questionnaire link.

Results were statistically analyzed.

The questions basically analysed the different aspects of natural cosmetics like:

- Frequency of usage
- Economical aspect
- Quality
- Market
- Shelf life
- Organic content
- Safety
- Side effects
- Animal testing
- Awareness



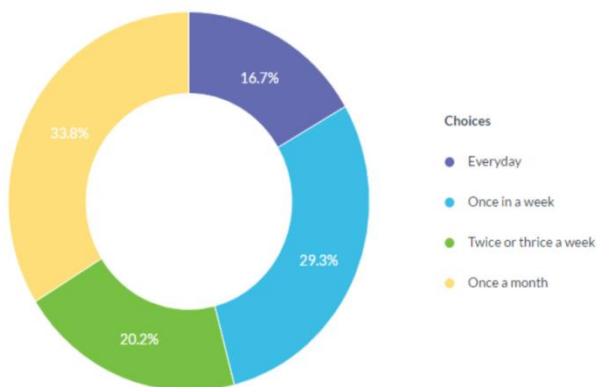
All these questions were framed after a detailed analysis and discussion over the mind set of any consumer.

**Statistical Analysis**

The pie charts attached below reveal the various proportions of consumer choices for various aspects of natural cosmetic usage.

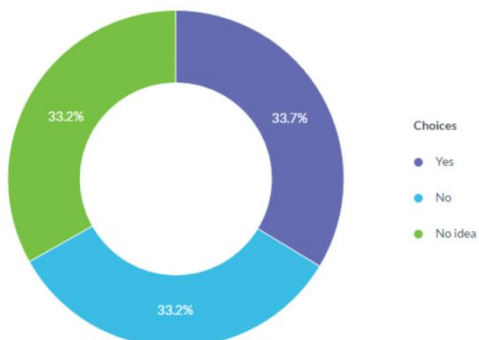
**Chart 1**

Frequency of usage of natural cosmetics



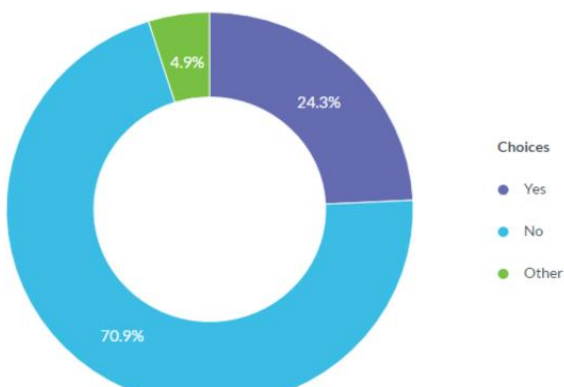
**Chart 2**

Are natural cosmetics purely organic?



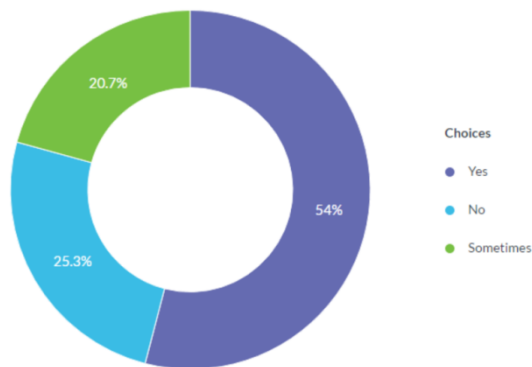
**Chart 3**

Have you come across any side effects from natural cosmetics?



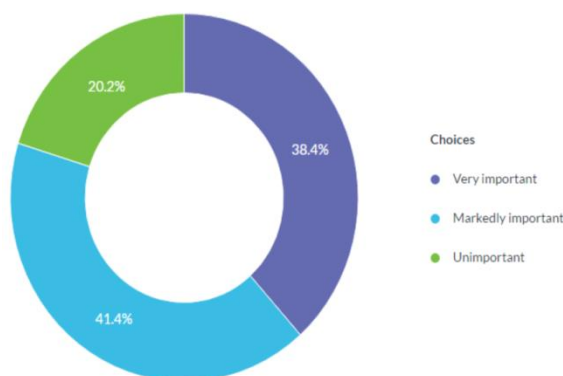
**Chart 4**

Verification of contents



**Chart 5**

Importance that the product is not tested on animals



**RESULTS**

A detailed statistical analysis indicates that the everyday usage of natural cosmetics hasn't gained momentum yet when compared to synthetic cosmetics. People try on natural cosmetics mostly for skin care rather than hair care or dental care.

It's moderately important that the product is not tested on animals. Mass media and friends play an equal role creating awareness about natural cosmetics usage.

**DISCUSSION**

Beauty is the essence of life. Choosing the right beauty products not only improves ones beauty but also prevents side effects on health state. With ruthless influx of synthetic cosmetics there is also increasing incidence of cancer and other health problems caused by these cosmetics. An introduction of natural cosmetics will prove helpful in protecting the consumers from carcinogens, etc.

Of the participants, about 64.6% are interested in cosmetics and in taking care of one's beauty and about 12.3% participants are not interested in such activities. This can be attributed to the fear of allergy caused by cosmetics or due to previous allergies experienced due to cosmetics. This could've brought down their interest in cosmetic usage.

The everyday usage of natural cosmetics is just 16.7%. Majority of participants use natural products either once



a month (33.8%) or once in a week (29.3%). About 20.2% people use it twice or thrice a week. During the remaining period they confess of using synthetic products or no cosmetics at all, however the former reason remains predominant.

Skin care remains the most used form of natural cosmetic (46%), followed by hair care (39.5%). Dental care is the least used form with just 14.5% of participants. This is because when compared to hair and skin, the awareness about dental care is little less in the population being studied. Moreover, the dental products prescribed in dental offices are also synthetic and are seldom natural products.

In spite of the above statements, consumers do accept that natural cosmetics are economical (71.2%) and are better in quality than synthetic ones (86.9%).

About 59.8% people feel that natural constituents have a prolonged shelf life than synthetic cosmetics. This response is quite surprising and converse of that of our predictions.

Confusion prevails about the organic content of natural cosmetics. The three options – yes, no and no idea had an almost equal percentage of representation. While 33.2% each opted for the options no and no idea, about 33.7% believe that natural cosmetics are purely organic. According to Ursula, allergenic fragrance substances are natural constituents of many natural substances employed, leading to an aggregate exposure, but they are not disclosed by name in the ingredient lists<sup>(7)</sup>. Natural cosmetics are to an extent easy to apply and stay throughout the day. But this was accepted by only 36%. This indicates that some sort of difficulty exists in the application of natural cosmetics and they don't stay for a long time as synthetic ones do. So these aspects should be given importance in future for further marketing of natural cosmetics.

About 24.3% have come across side effects from natural cosmetics. This could be because, as mentioned earlier there are certain allergens in some cosmetic products. These side effects could be due to possible ignorance of buying natural cosmetics without verifying its ingredients. Only about 54% verify about the ingredients of the cosmetic product before buying. The remaining 46% are quite prone to allergies and side effects. Of these 46%, about 20.7% verifies the contents sometimes. For about 80% of the respondents, it is important that the product is not tested on animals. Some cosmetics are initially tested on animals to ensure that they are safe and effective to use for human. However, natural cosmetics need not be tested on animals. These natural formulations are tested by experts in laboratories using state of the art equipment with no animals involved<sup>(5)</sup>.

For 51.5% of respondents, it is very important to have a trial of the cosmetics. According to me having a trial is better, as it helps one to identify if the product matches his or her skin or hair nature, particularly when one

doesn't have much knowledge about the ingredients. Moreover, mass media (53%) and friends (47%) play a predominant role in creating an awareness about cosmetic products.

Much research hasn't been initiated in the field of consumer awareness about natural cosmetics. So the above mentioned results of the current study will definitely reflect the attitude of consumers towards natural cosmetic products.

Cosmetics are generally perceived as products for beautifying a person. But the use of cosmetics has a psychological aspect too, reveals a recent research. According to Kapoor, skilful use of cosmetics can yield mental satisfaction to the users as they minimise the facial and skin defects and improve the mental level of sufferers towards life<sup>(2)</sup>. When cosmetic usage has such an impact, it's wise to move towards something which is ecofriendly. This paved way for the advent of natural cosmetics. Ilkay states that natural cosmetic product should be produced with natural ingredients processed from living organisms as plants, vegetables, fruits or animals. Natural cosmetic products cannot only be explained with the ingredients but also the production method has a great importance<sup>(4)</sup>. The ingredients commonly used in natural cosmetics are Amla (*Embilica officinalis*), Shikaka (*Acasia Cancina*), Neem (*Azadirachata Indica*), Aloe *barbadensis*, *Olea europaea* (olive) fruit oil, and *Glycine soja* (soybean) oil, etc.,<sup>(7,9)</sup>.

Moreover, cosmetics become popular due to the best natural components of plants and flowers they consist of and the multiple benefits they offer for the skin. The main advantage of organic or natural cosmetics is that they reduce dramatically the risk of skin irritation in comparison with the chemicals which are found in conventional cosmetics<sup>(10)</sup>. This proves that a combination of factors including the ingredients, method of production, shelf life, long lasting effect, colour and even the fragrance determine the market value of a natural cosmetic product.

## CONCLUSION

Majority of the population who use cosmetics are unaware of the fact that make-up can harbour a variety of infections. This survey presents a viewpoint that organic cosmetics are inevitable in the current scenario. This survey was aimed to determine the awareness of organic ingredients in cosmetics. In general, the result enlightens the society to move forward towards synthetic free, natural cosmetics.

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