

Market Intelligence Digest

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The Big Shift for Whitening Skincare in India

India's obsession with fair skin is moving towards healthy, well-protected skin. Here's how the fairness craze will gradually progress.

Mintel Recommends:

- ✓ **Redefine skin lightening to be preventive**

India's obsession with fair skin is well-known and deep-rooted. Fairness is becoming broader than straightforward shade reduction to involve depigmentation and detoxing the skin as ways to make it appear healthier.

- ✓ **Incorporate benefits to prevent skin darkening**

Brands will wake up to the new reality to see propositions reworked around 'clearer skin' and 'glow', rather than simply fairness. Encourage consumers to protect their skin from the damaging effects of pollution.

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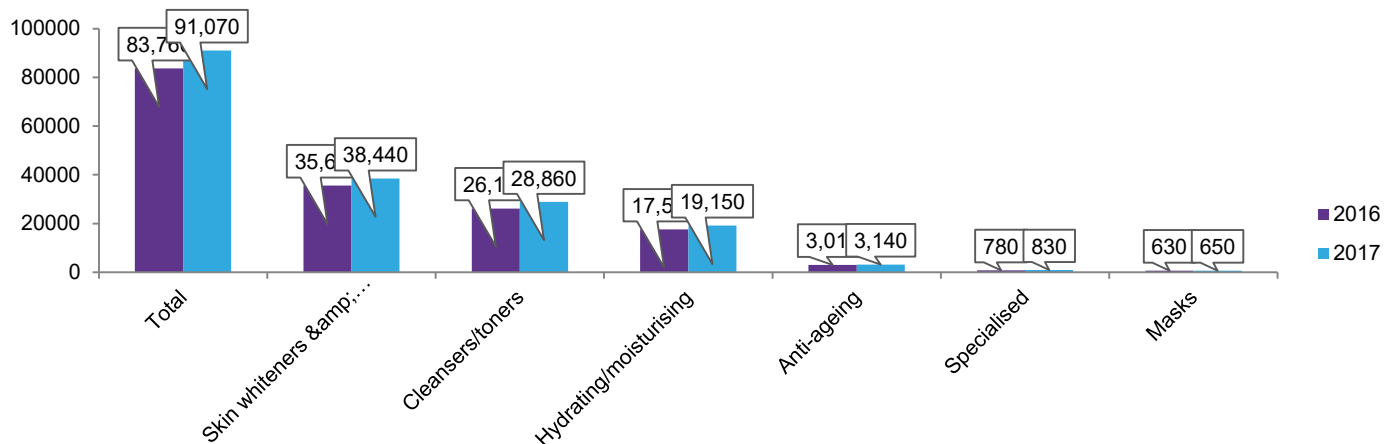
✓ Offer lightening with pollution protection

Pollution skincare is a business that capitalizes on fear – a fear of something that is beyond our control. Consumers cannot control their exposure to pollution; however, **brands can help them protect or repair their skin.**

Skin lightening is the largest segment in Indian skincare

Nearly a third of facial care products fall into the whitening/lightening segment.

India: facial skincare retail market segmentation, by value (m INR), Jan 2016-Dec 2017



Source: Mintel Market Sizes

Yet only 20% of Indians say they have used a facial lightening cream

Fairness is still a claim that consumers actively look for, but they need brands to address skin lightening with a holistic approach that promotes a glow, reduces dark spots and provides healthy-looking skin.

Fairness creams that claimed to lighten the skin's colour shade were common in India; however, now the **benefits that consumers look for revolve around reducing spots, offering a more even skin tone and, more importantly, giving skin a glow.**

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Whitening skincare in India will move from curative to preventive

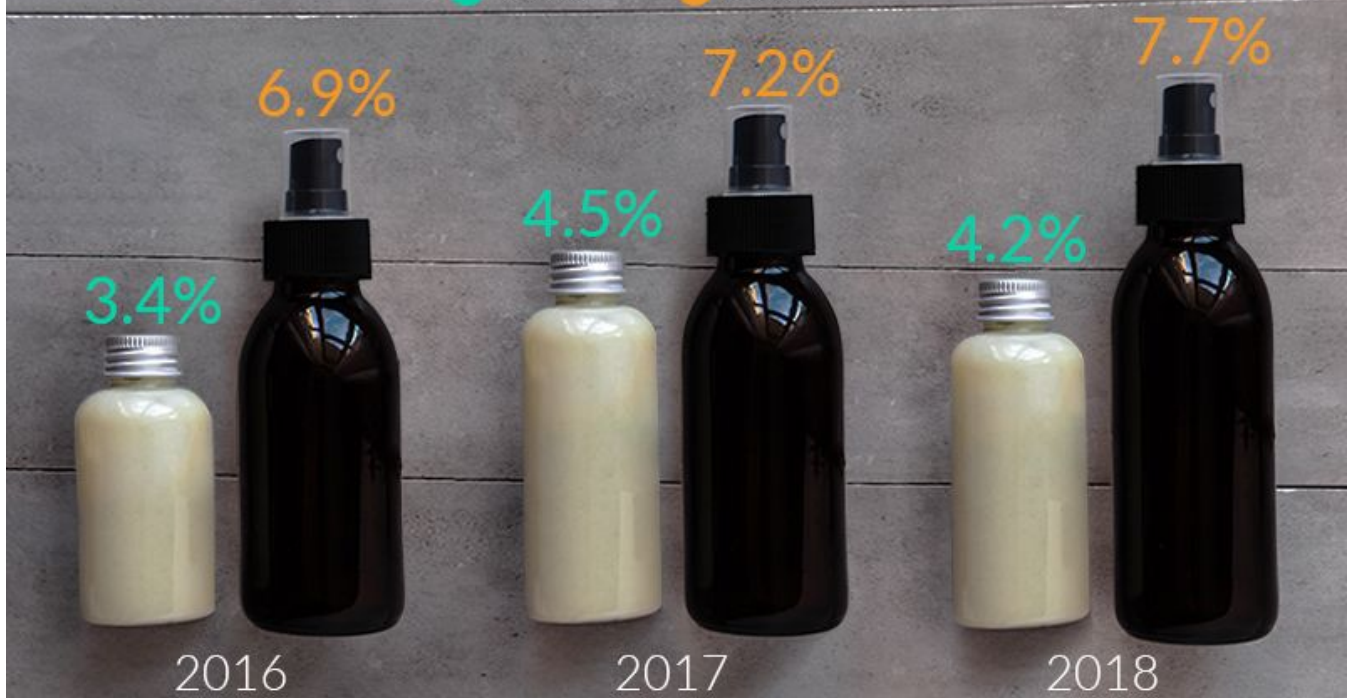
Fairness creams in India have long focused on helping to lighten skin or reduce a shade; however, skin fairness is a much bigger concept than that. More recently, brands have upgraded and moved on to talk about targeting specific problem areas that can cause skin to look darker – like pigmentation, dark circles and uneven skin tone.

But now, this category needs to evolve and move to offer a preventive tone. Consumers have realized the importance of healthy skin, not just for their appearance but also for their self-esteem. This has led the fairness craze to subtly start to focus on protection.

Upgrading fairness cream users is a natural progression

India and global: facial launches with protection* benefits, Jan 2016-Dec 2018

● India ● Global



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In India, fairness products were once the craze, but the changing environment has forced consumers to think differently: **they now seek to prevent or repair the negative effects of pollution.**

In fact, [research](#) has shown that pollution can cause age spots and other hyper-pigmentation in skin, so this shift is complementary to skin lightening and is a natural progression for it.

Ensure the survival of the whitening sector by incorporating protection

UV protection

Excessive use of fairness creams is said to lead to skin becoming thin and 'makes it more prone to damage'. Added skincare benefits also influence consumers' selection process. The desire for sunscreen that does more than shield skin from the sun's UV rays plays to consumer demand for multitasking products. This could also represent **a desire to minimize the number of products they use and embrace multi-functional formats as 'better value'.**

Anti-pollution protection

The Indian skincare market will see products and campaigns that focus on detoxification become more commonplace as pollution levels rise. Brands that help consumers protect themselves from air pollution or detoxify from it will receive appreciation and can play an important role in consumer's lives, particularly when it comes to urban city dwellers. **It is time for brands to invest in skincare with pollution protection.**