



A Comparative Study Of Consumer Perception Towards Herbal Cosmetic Brands In India

¹Pushpa Davande, ²Dr. Vinay Kumar Rana

¹Research Scholar, ²Professor

¹Department of Commerce, Barkatullah Vishwavidyalaya, Bhopal,

²Govt. Hamidiya Arts and Commerce College, Bhopal

Abstract: The herbal cosmetic industry in India has experienced substantial growth over the past decade, driven by increased consumer awareness, environmental concerns, and preference for natural products. This study conducts a comparative analysis of consumer perception towards prominent herbal cosmetic brands in India, including Patanjali, Forest Essentials, Himalaya, Biotique, and Kama Ayurveda. Drawing insights from existing literature, market reports, and consumer behavior theories, the paper explores how factors like product quality, brand trust, pricing, safety, and cultural association shape consumer choices. It was found that while premium brands attract urban and wellness-conscious consumers through luxury and authenticity, mass-market brands gain loyalty through affordability and accessibility. The study also highlights the role of marketing, packaging, and ethical positioning in enhancing brand value. As demand for herbal alternatives grows in both rural and urban markets, companies must align product development with evolving consumer expectations. This review offers a holistic understanding of market dynamics and consumer attitudes in the Indian herbal cosmetic sector.

Index Terms - Herbal Cosmetics, Consumer Perception, Ayurvedic Brands, Natural Products, Indian Market.

I. INTRODUCTION

The idea of cosmetics and personal grooming has been around since the dawn of human civilisation. Natural cosmetics and herbal cosmetics are two common names for the same thing. Herbal cosmetics are made by combining diverse cosmetic elements with one or more herbal compounds that are known to treat a variety of skin conditions. The creation of novel medicinal products with cosmeceutical and pharmacological uses relies heavily on plant extracts. Cosmetics that include herbs, either in their raw or extracted forms, are known as herbal cosmetics.

A "Herbal Cosmetic" is a product that has one or more herbal elements added to it for the express purpose of providing cosmetic advantages; these products are made using a variety of acceptable cosmetic ingredients as a basis. There is no quick fix with herbs. They provide a means via which one may harmonise with nature. Indian herbs have lately become the basis for a plethora of cosmetic and toiletry formulas. Some recent studies have also investigated the potential of Indian herbs in personal care products, in addition to their more conventional uses. Because they are gentle on the skin and do not cause any negative side effects, herbal treatments are quickly becoming more popular. The greatest part about herbal cosmetics is that they are completely free of side effects since they are manufactured entirely from herbs and shrubs. Herbal supplements are safe since they include only beneficial ingredients that the human body needs, such as vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients.

1.1 Herbal Cosmetic

Herbal cosmetics are becoming more popular as a natural and holistic substitute for traditional beauty treatments in today's fast-paced society, where the importance of self-care and wellness is growing. Modern cosmetics companies still make use of herbal cosmetics, which have a long history of usage across many cultures for their many health and beauty advantages, including improved skin, hair, and general well-being. (Sreenivas, 2023)

- i. **Understanding Herbal Cosmetic Products:** The curative qualities of the plant-based substances used to make herbal cosmetics are carefully considered. For those concerned about safety and the environment, these goods are a better alternative to synthetic chemicals since they focus on organic and natural ingredients (Badiyani & Kotadia, 2024). Herbal cosmetics claim to address a variety of skin issues by capitalising on the natural healing properties of plants, including herbs, fruits, flowers, and botanical extracts.
- ii. **Nurturing Skin Health:** The skin is best cared for and revitalised by cosmetics made of herbs. They are effective against a wide range of skin conditions, including dryness, eczema, and acne, because to the anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and antibacterial qualities of their natural components (Numanovich & Abbosxonovich, 2020) (Bhadauriya et al., 2021). A beautiful complexion, less inflammation, and a balanced pH are the goals of herbal cleansers, toners, and moisturisers. These have become the standard for many companies making personal care and cosmetics products.
- iii. **Embracing Hair Care Naturally:** Herbal cosmetics also work wonders in the hair care industry. Damage and loss of natural oils are long-term effects of the harsh chemicals used in many store-bought hair care products. In contrast, hair care products that are herbal in nature use extracts from plants like aloe vera, hibiscus, and neem to fortify the hair follicles, encouraging healthy development and protecting against common problems like dandruff and hair loss. The mildness of these treatments makes them ideal for use on the scalp, where they promote healthy hair growth by reducing inflammation.
- iv. **Sustainable and Environmentally Friendly:** The fact that they are gentler on the environment is one major perk of using herbal cosmetics. Many people are looking for alternatives with less of an effect on the environment because they are becoming more conscious of the significance of sustainability (Ayswarya & Sharmika, 2024). Ethical sourcing methods are supported by the herbal cosmetics and personal care producers in India, who often use biodegradable components and packaging produced from recycled materials. When you take care of your personal hygiene and cosmetic requirements with herbal products, you are also helping to preserve our world. (Netaji, 2015)
- v. **Customization and Versatility:** The extensive variety of herbal cosmetics available today allows them to meet the demands of customers with a broad variety of hair and skin types. No matter the skin type—oily, dry, sensitive, or mixed—herbal cosmetics have you covered. Also, essential oils are a common ingredient in these products, so they have aromatherapy advantages and a variety of scents to choose from (PATKAR, 2024).

Overlapping Benefits of Herbal Cosmetic Products

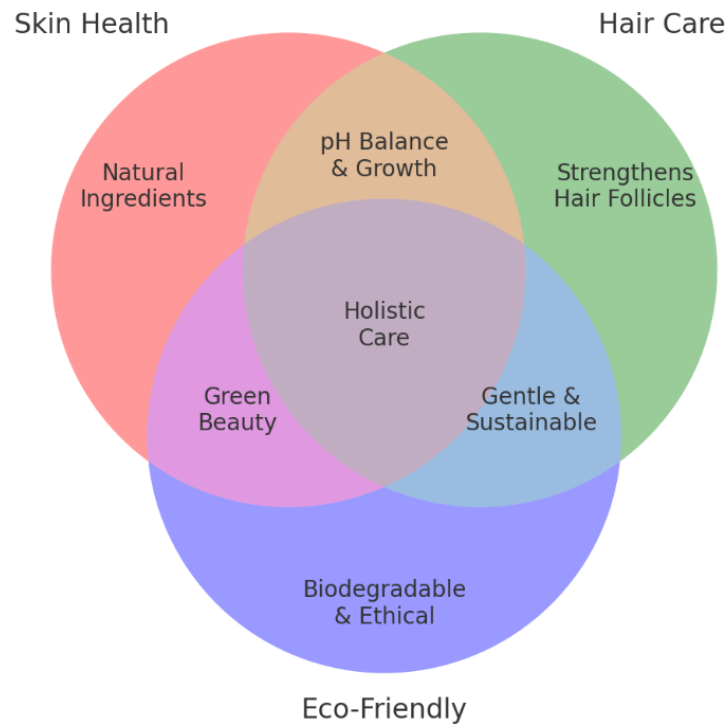


Figure 1: Descriptive Statics

1.2 Importance of Consumer Perception in the Herbal Cosmetic Industry

The success of herbal cosmetic products in India now hinges on how consumers perceive them in the wellness-driven marketplace of today. Companies must comprehend and conform to customer beliefs and expectations in light of the changing public awareness, which includes rising worries about chemical sensitivity, environmental sustainability, and health.

Trust, cultural resonance, brand experience, product performance, and packaging or advertising are just a few of the many factors that contribute to consumer perception. Perception is crucial in determining loyalty and long-term involvement in the herbal cosmetics industry, as goods in this space often promise natural advantages without immediate effects. (Balasubramaniam, 2018)

Products containing neem, aloe vera, or turmeric, for instance, tend to have consumers' perceptions of their "pure" or "safe" nature. Not only does this mindset impact the initial purchase, but it also impacts referrals and recurrent purchases. On the other hand, a product's effectiveness will not guarantee its success if its lack of transparency or inconsistent branding leads to a negative impression. (Anute & Deshmukh, 2015)

Table 1: Role of Consumer Perception in Herbal Cosmetic Brands

Aspect	Influence on Consumer Behavior	Example
Trust in Natural Ingredients	Builds initial confidence and encourages trial purchases	Belief in aloe vera's healing properties encourages buying
Cultural Relevance	Connects with traditional beliefs, making the product more relatable	Use of Ayurvedic terms appeals to Indian consumers
Safety and Health Awareness	Enhances brand value among health-conscious buyers	Preference for sulfate-free, paraben-free formulations
Packaging and Aesthetics	Shapes first impressions and influences shelf appeal	Eco-friendly or earthy packaging attracts eco-aware buyers
Social Proof & Word of Mouth	Boosts credibility through shared experiences	YouTube reviews or family suggestions increase purchases
Consistency and Authenticity	Retains loyal customers and builds long-term relationships	Brands that consistently deliver on claims earn trust

1.3 Market of herbal cosmetic in India

There is a vast variety of items in the herbal cosmetics industry in India, which includes skincare, hair care, personal hygiene, and wellness. Herbal cosmetics are seen as more eco-friendly, safer, and holistic than its synthetic counterparts. The demand from consumers in urban and semi-urban regions has been steadily rising due to this notion.

Natural cosmetics companies including Patanjali Ayurved, Himalaya Herbals, Biotique, Forest Essentials, and Khadi Natural have emerged as major players in the market. These businesses provide customers with a blend of reliability and ease by combining old-fashioned recipes with new-school branding. (Chandel & Gain, 2024)

By 2030, analysts predict that the herbal beauty products industry in India would have a turnover of 6,951.8 million US dollars. From 2025 to 2030, the herbal beauty products market in India is projected to develop at a CAGR of 14.3%. (Sabeetha et al., 2020)

Table 2: Herbal beauty products market data book summary

Market revenue in 2024	USD 3,205.5 million
Market revenue in 2030	USD 6,951.8 million
Growth rate	14.3% (CAGR from 2025 to 2030)
Largest segment	Skin care
Fastest growing segment	Fragrance
Historical data	2018 - 2023
Base year	2024
Forecast period	2025 - 2030
Quantitative units	Revenue in USD million
Market segmentation	Skin care, Hair care, Fragrance
Key market players worldwide	“Vasamed Inc, Himalaya Technologies Inc, Weleda, Arbonne International, The Himalaya Drug Company, Shahnaz Husain, Lotus Herbals, Marc Anthony Cosmetics”

Growth Factors in the Herbal Cosmetic Market



The above image visually presents the four major growth factors propelling the herbal cosmetic market in India. Each colored block highlights a key driver: Digital Marketing, Celebrity Endorsements, Government Push, and Ingredient Sourcing. Together, these elements reflect how strategic promotion, policy support, and consumer demand for authenticity and natural ingredients are shaping the industry's expansion. This visual offers a clear and organized overview suitable for academic and presentation use.

II. LITERATURE REVIEWS

(Dhanya & Jayakrishna, 2021) A significant chunk of the global market is devoted to the cosmetics industry. Since the liberalisation of the cosmetics business in the 1990s, the Indian cosmetics market has skyrocketed, including a wide range of items such as soaps, tooth paste, and other forms of makeup. The debut of Patanjali goods has stoked expectations of a 20% annual growth rate, driven mostly by the rising demand for herbal and organic remedies. Established businesses are vying for larger market shares, while upstarts carve out niches for themselves in this sector.

(Bharat Rai et al., 2022) According to the results, the quality of the product has a major bearing on the cosmetics goods that people purchase. Customers in Kathmandu Valley know what they are getting when they shop here, it says. When it comes to cosmetics, price is also a major factor for customers. Price matters to quality-conscious consumers because they are prepared to pay a premium for products. In addition, consumers have realised that they are prepared to pay a premium for their preferred items and dislike making product changes because of the risks associated with trying something new. The research claims that the ayurvedic cosmetics industry is growing rapidly. Many new companies have joined the market with branded skin care, hair care, soap, and essential oil products. Concerns over potentially harmful substances in cosmetics have piqued consumers' interest in all-natural alternatives.

(Emmanuel et al., 2023) A company's capacity to understand how customers make purchase decisions and the elements that influence those decisions is crucial to the success of the company's services. Marketers have a difficult problem when trying to attract and retain customers. The demands of customers are met by several rivals' goods, which provide inventive and appealing characteristics. Therefore, the business should centre its efforts on the correct product value proposition in order to establish a unique position in the eyes of its target customers. In this case, the ever-changing tastes of the target market should inform the selection of the optimal value offer. Moving around might be necessary. The results of up-to-date market research should keep marketers apprised of the value offer that customers choose.

(Oberoi & Oberoi, 2018) According to the study's results, more and more people are getting into the cosmetics industry because of the many advantages it offers. These include, but are not limited to, healthy skin, an appearance that is both fashionable and self-assured, lack of visible marks or anti-marks, and a radiant and revitalised appearance. When it comes to influencing consumer behaviour towards acquiring cosmetic items, the knowledge, influences, and prior experiences have been identified as the key motivating and influential variables (in terms of average) throughout the whole study. All sorts of cosmetic products are selling well because of these reasons.

(Mishra et al., 2024) Compared to their synthetic alternatives, the authors emphasised the benefits of herbal cosmetics, the plants used in them, and their significance. The desire for natural cosmetics and the use of herbal cosmetics on the skin have both been on the rise in recent years. Our research led us to believe that, in comparison to commercially available cosmetics, herbal alternatives pose no health risks and are completely harmless. We can stay away from skin issues in the future if we follow the authors' advice and utilise herbal cosmetics. For the purpose of making cosmetics that are both safe for use on the skin and effective in treating a variety of skin conditions, herbal cosmetics are made by combining suitable cosmetic components with one or more herbs. Wax, oil, natural colour, natural scent, and plant components (leaves, etc.) are all chemically formulated into these cosmetic goods. Cosmeceuticals are agents that straddle the line between being treated like drugs (antibiotics, corticosteroids) and being treated like cosmetics (lipstick, rouge, etc.). The greatest way to lessen the appearance of skin issues including hyperpigmentation, wrinkles, ageing, rough texture, etc. is to use cosmetic items. Herbal cosmetics are becoming more popular. Many people choose herbal cosmetics since they are safer, more affordable, easier on the environment, and do not have any negative side effects.

(D, 2024) The all-natural ingredients and supposed health advantages of herbal cosmetics have contributed to their meteoric rise in popularity. Herbal cosmetics have life-changing impacts on many body parts, including the hair, nails, skin, and mouth, as this in-depth study reveals. All skin types may use natural cosmetics without worry since they are hypoallergenic, inexpensive, not tested on animals, and have no harmful side effects. Additionally, we cover cosmeceuticals, which are a hybrid of cosmetics and medicines, and we go over some of the active chemicals and how they work. Presented below are examples of herbal substances used in skin care, hair care, and oral care products, as well as a categorisation of herbal cosmetics according to dose type and body area to be administered. Soapnut, liquorice, henna, hibiscus, tea, aloe, and amla are some of the plants investigated for their potential medicinal uses in cosmetics. The possibilities of herbal cosmetics to improve health and attractiveness are explored in this insightful study.

(Varsha & Lal, 2023) A comparison of commercially available herbal and synthetic cosmetics was conducted by the authors. What we call "cosmetics" are substances used topically to improve one's look. It boosts confidence and self-esteem because to its attractive appearance and pleasant aroma. Blends of herbs and other cosmetic ingredients are called "herbal cosmetics," and they are used to treat a wide range of skin issues. Ideally, herbal cosmetics would be completely natural and devoid of any synthetic ingredients that might be harmful to the skin. Compared to other cosmetics, natural ones are far safer to use. A chemical process is used to produce a synthetic material known as a compound in synthetic cosmetics. The plants used to make herbal cosmetics are important because of the advantages they provide over synthetic equivalents.

(Tiwari et al., 2020) In today's market, herbal items are in high demand. Consumers are increasingly gravitating towards natural items due to their concerns about the health risks and negative effects of chemical products. Nonetheless, a poll via questionnaire revealed that Himalaya topped the popularity list, suggesting that this is the case for customers' favourite brands. Users of Himalaya products exhibit a great degree of heterogeneity. Products from the Himalaya brand were the most popular. Only in the event of non-availability did they move to a different brand. Many see marketing as the lifeblood of a company. In light of this, the Himalaya enterprise has performed well.

(Agarwal et al., 2019) Chemical compounds are the primary determinant of the impacts on consumer health of personal care and beauty products, regardless of whether their primary components are natural or manufactured. Over time, our bodies accumulate toxins from the chemical components of these cosmetics, leading to negative side effects and even serious systemic sickness. To assess the possible toxicity of these

items, we have devised suitable toxicological research. Using short-term microbiological bioassays, the current research compares and contrasts cosmetic items made with synthetic chemicals and those made with herbal extracts. A growth inhibition test using *Pseudomonas fluorescens* and a respiration inhibition assay using *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* were used in the investigation. Both bioassays demonstrated that synthetic cosmetics were more hazardous than natural alternatives. The purpose of this research was to shed attention on the serious health risks associated with cosmetics and personal care product overconsumption for both consumers and the scientific community. Additionally, the research sheds insight on product selection. The samples that are determined to be harmful using the baseline data from these tests may then be subjected to more targeted and sophisticated evaluation methods.

(Vasuhi & Rani, 2016) The majority of respondents are familiar with herbal cosmetics, according to the survey. People no longer see cosmetics as a luxury item; many have begun to transition to cosmetics derived from herbs due to concerns about the high chemical content in conventional brands. The cosmetics manufacturer began offering cosmetics derived from herbs after seeing a demand in the market. Many people who took the survey think that herbal cosmetics include too many chemical combinations and that the manufacturers should cut down on these ingredients to make the products more appealing to consumers. Manufacturers may learn about consumer needs and preferences via this survey, which helps them enhance their goods.

(Kalyani & Khatri, 2020) Consumers are increasingly drawn to herbal-based personal care products as they become awareness of the impacts of synthetic chemicals utilised. Experts believe that the current herbal and Ayurveda sector is about 4,500 crore rupees. Since last year, competition in India's Ayurveda and herbal industry has been heating up. In order to take advantage of the herbal era, some companies are rethinking their business models, investing in new goods, or acquiring other companies.

Table 3: Key Findings from Literature Review on Herbal Cosmetics

S.No.	Author(s)	Year	Key Focus	Significant Findings
1	Dhanya & Jayakrishna	2021	Market expansion post-liberalization	Herbal cosmetics industry in India growing ~20% annually; Patanjali's entry boosted organic demand.
2	Bharat Rai et al.	2022	Consumer behavior in Kathmandu Valley	Product quality and price strongly influence purchase; Ayurvedic cosmetics market expanding rapidly.
3	Emmanuel et al.	2023	Purchase decision-making	Companies must align products with evolving consumer preferences and value propositions.
4	Oberoi & Oberoi	2018	Factors influencing cosmetic use	Skin benefits, appearance enhancement, and prior experiences drive consumer cosmetic choices.
5	Mishra et al.	2024	Benefits of herbal cosmetics	Herbal products are safer, environmentally friendly, and effective for skin issues like pigmentation.
6	D	2024	Cosmeceutical use and classification	Herbal cosmetics are hypoallergenic, multipurpose, and made using ingredients like henna, aloe, amla.
7	Varsha & Lal	2023	Comparison of herbal vs synthetic cosmetics	Herbal cosmetics are safer, more natural, and better for skin than synthetic counterparts.
8	Tiwari et al.	2020	Consumer brand preferences	Himalaya is a preferred brand; herbal product usage driven by concerns about chemical-based alternatives.
9	Agarwal et al.	2019	Toxicological testing of cosmetics	Bioassays confirm synthetic cosmetics are more harmful than herbal alternatives.
10	Vasuhi & Rani	2016	Consumer awareness and manufacturer feedback	High consumer awareness; demand for reduced chemical use in herbal products for better acceptance.

11	Kalyani & Khatri	2020	Herbal market competition and business models	Herbal market worth ₹4,500 crore; rising competition; firms rebranding and launching herbal lines.
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III. COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LEADING HERBAL COSMETIC BRANDS IN INDIA

The Indian herbal cosmetics market has witnessed dynamic growth over the last decade, fueled by rising consumer awareness, cultural preference for Ayurveda, and increasing demand for chemical-free alternatives. As per recent industry estimates, the herbal beauty product market in India was valued at approximately USD 3.2 billion (INR ~26,000 crores) in 2024 and is projected to reach USD 6.95 billion by 2030, with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 14.4% (PMarket Research, 2024; Grand View Research, 2024).

A comparative analysis of the major herbal cosmetic brands highlights strategic differences in positioning, target audience, market share, and growth potential. The following table summarizes the key parameters:

Table 4: Comparative Analysis of Major Herbal Cosmetic Brands in India (2024)

Brand Name	Market Share (%)	Target Segment	Product Strengths	Growth Trend (YoY)	Notable Features
Forest Essentials	~30% (premium)	Luxury skincare segment	Soundarya Radiance Cream, facial oils	~40%	Premium Ayurvedic ingredients, global expansion
Kama Ayurveda	~25% (premium)	Urban affluent consumers	Kumkumadi scrub, Bringadi oil	~35%	Heritage branding, Ayurvedic formulations
Biotique	~15% (mass-market)	Middle-class consumers	Bio Morning Nectar, anti-aging creams	~28%	Ayurveda at affordable prices
Patanjali Ayurved	~10% (mass-market)	Price-sensitive segment	Aloe Vera Gel, Multani Mitti face pack	~20%	Extensive rural reach, swadeshi positioning
Himalaya Wellness	~8% (mixed segment)	Health-conscious users	Neem Face Wash, Clarina anti-acne range	~25%	OTC + cosmetic blend, wide pharmacy distribution
Others (Lotus, Khadi, Dabur, Just Herbs, etc.)	~12%	Niche & regional markets	Herbal sunscreens, shampoos, essential oils	~15–20%	Regional trust, ethical manufacturing

Source: PMR Report 2024, Grand View Research 2024, GlobeNewswire 2025, OMR Global 2024, Astute Analytica 2025

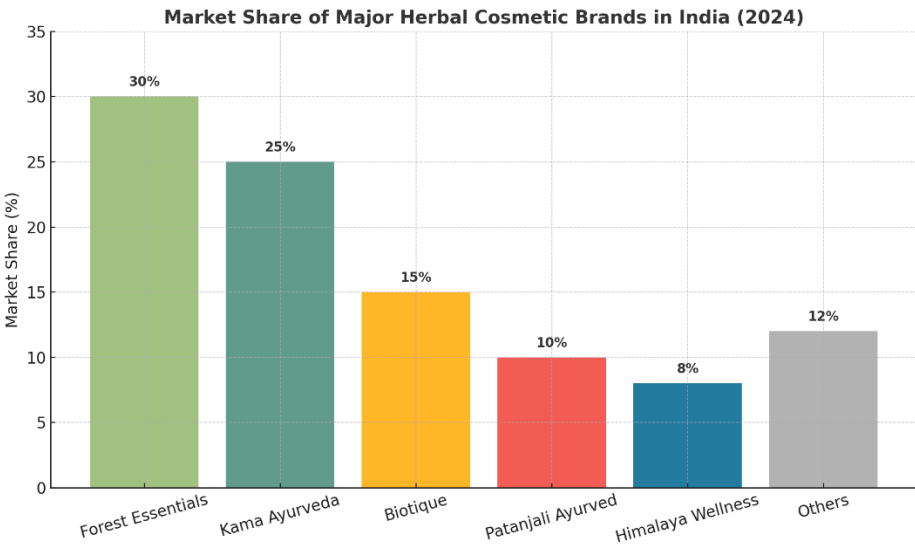


Figure 2: Market Share of Major Herbal Cosmetic Brands in India (2024)

- i. **Premium Ayurveda Segment:** Forest Essentials and Kama Ayurveda dominate this category with high-end pricing and luxury appeal. These brands combine ancient Ayurvedic knowledge with modern branding and packaging, appealing to both Indian and global consumers.
- ii. **Affordable Herbal Alternatives:** Biotique and Patanjali cater to the value-conscious segment, offering a wide variety of herbal skincare products with national distribution at competitive prices.
- iii. **Hybrid Positioning:** Himalaya Wellness bridges wellness and personal care by integrating medicinal and cosmetic use, with strong pharmacy-based distribution networks.
- iv. **Emerging Players:** Brands like Lotus Herbals, Khadi Natural, Dabur, and Just Herbs are rapidly growing by targeting urban middle-class and conscious consumers who value sustainability, organic ingredients, and cruelty-free manufacturing.

IV. CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to explore consumer perception toward herbal cosmetic brands in India by examining market trends, consumer behavior, product preferences, and brand positioning. As the Indian cosmetic industry undergoes a significant transformation, the shift from synthetic to herbal-based products highlights a deeper societal and cultural alignment with nature, wellness, and traditional practices. Consumers today are not only more informed but are also actively seeking products that are safe, eco-friendly, and free from harsh chemicals. Through the review of existing literature and comparative analysis of key brands such as Forest Essentials, Patanjali, Biotique, Kama Ayurveda, and Himalaya, it becomes evident that product quality, brand trust, pricing, and ethical branding significantly influence consumer choices. While premium brands have captured niche markets with authenticity and exclusivity, mass-market players continue to thrive by offering affordability and accessibility. The demand is further fueled by government initiatives promoting Ayurveda, a growing preference for sustainable lifestyles, and rising digital engagement. This study also reveals that consumer loyalty is heavily tied to perceptions of purity, efficacy, and safety. Marketing strategies that emphasize traditional ingredients, scientific validation, and customer education have a positive impact on brand image and purchase decisions. In conclusion, the herbal cosmetics sector in India reflects a harmonious blend of ancient wisdom and modern expectations. Brands that successfully balance both aspects while addressing consumer needs and values are likely to lead the next wave of growth in this vibrant and evolving market.

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