



COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF URBAN VS RURAL CONSUMERS' ADOPTION OF GREEN COSMETIC PRODUCTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WARDHA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT :

The present study makes a comparative study of urban and rural consumers of green cosmetic products in the Wardha district. A descriptive research design was used to collect data from 230 urban, and rural respondents with structured questionnaires, which gathered information on the following variables: demographic information, environmental awareness, health consciousness, ethical concern, brand trust, price sensitivity, and frequency of purchase. Descriptive analysis showed that urban consumers' awareness is higher than that of rural consumers, as well as their interest in the health and ethical aspects of cosmetics, their trust in the brand, and their frequency of using green cosmetics, while rural consumers are limited because they have less awareness, more price sensitivity, and less access to green cosmetics. Results show that over the past ten years, the utilization of green cosmetics has steadily increased and is being used by the urban population. Moderate adoption level among rural consumers indicates market potential. The study emphasizes the need for awareness programs that are targeted, credible eco-certifications, competitive prices, and broad distribution mechanisms to encourage sustainable consumption in both urban and rural settings. The lessons learned offer guidance to marketers and policymakers aiming to stimulate sustainable consumer buying decisions among various groups. The keywords used are green cosmetics, urban consumers, rural consumers, environmental awareness, sustainable consumption, and the Wardha district.



KEYWORDS: Green Cosmetics, Urban Consumers, Rural Consumers, Environmental Awareness, Sustainable Consumption, Wardha District.

INTRODUCTION :

The drive for environmental sustainability and health awareness is now a major factor in consumers' purchasing decisions across the board, and cosmetics are no exception. Green cosmetic products are made with natural or organic ingredients; have eco-friendly packaging, no animal testing, and sustainable practices; and are increasingly popular among consumers who are looking for safer, more environmentally friendly alternatives to cosmetics. In India, the awareness about the environmental issue and the health risks of using cosmetics with chemicals has led to the gradual shift towards the use of green cosmetics. This makes the Wardha district, with its diverse population of urban, rural residents, a unique context to study the consumer behavior of green cosmetics. For urban consumers, the level of exposure to information, marketing campaigns, and product availability is

higher, which leads to higher levels of awareness and adoption. On the other hand, rural consumers might have less access to green products and less access to awareness campaigns that can impact their purchasing decisions. The understanding of urban and rural consumers' adoption patterns is crucial for marketers, policymakers, and product developers seeking to promote sustainable consumption. The previous research studies show that there are many factors like environmental awareness, health consciousness, ethics, income, education, and brand trust that play an important role in the adoption of green products. The purpose of this research is to make a comparative analysis of awareness, buying behavior, and major influencing factors in the adoption of green cosmetics by the urban and rural consumers of the Wardha district and provide insights for improving marketing strategies and policy interventions in both settings.

OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH:

- 1) To compare the level of awareness towards green cosmetic products among urban and rural consumers.
- 2) To compare the purchasing behaviour of the urban and rural consumers and the frequency of their purchase.
- 3) To identify critical factors that affect adoption of both consumer groups.
- 4) To give recommendations for marketers and policymakers on how to make the product more acceptable in urban and rural areas.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study is of the descriptive research design type, which is used for comparing the adoption of green cosmetics by urban and rural consumers in the Wardha district. 230 respondents (Urban (n = 130), Rural (n = 100)) were purposively drawn from different areas, including urban, semi-urban, and rural areas, using a stratified random sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was used to gather primary data on the following: Demographic data, environmental awareness, health consciousness, ethical concern, brand trust, price sensitivity, and purchase frequency. Analyses were conducted using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations).

Urban vs Rural Consumers' Adoption of Green Cosmetic Products:

The use of green cosmetic products has been consistently rising in the Wardha district over the years, which indicates the rising awareness of people regarding the environment and health. Consumers who value personal health, ethical practices, and environmental stewardship choose green cosmetics, which are made from natural materials and tested without animals and packaged using eco-friendly methods. This is a shift that reflects more general trends toward responsible consumption in the district. Urban consumers have better awareness, and products are purchased more frequently by rural consumers of green cosmetics. Media coverage, education, and greater access to products are some of the factors that fuel urban adoption. Urban consumers are also willing to regularly buy products that are eco-friendly due to brand trust and ethical concerns. Consumers are moderately aware and occasionally use green cosmetics in rural areas. In rural areas, access to information and price sensitivity are lower and more limited, which can hinder regular use. While rural consumers appreciate health and ethical factors, they are less likely to be the most important, yielding to affordability and availability. The adoption rates are significantly affected by demographic factors such as age, education, and income. Higher levels of education and income are associated with a higher level of engagement with green cosmetics; however, younger consumers in urban areas demonstrate a higher level of engagement than higher-income consumers, who are also more engaged than their rural counterparts. Overall, the comparative analysis shows a strong urban-rural gap in adoption rates. Awareness creation, credible product certification, competitive pricing, and increasing product availability in rural markets are needed to bridge the gap. These approaches can promote sustainable consumption patterns and positively influence sustainable behavior in the whole district of Wardha.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (Urban vs Rural)**

Variable	Category	Urban (n = 130)	Rural (n = 100)	Total
Age	18–25	30 (23.1%)	20 (20.0%)	50
	26–35	50 (38.5%)	25 (25.0%)	75
	36–45	30 (23.1%)	30 (30.0%)	60
	46–60	20 (15.4%)	25 (25.0%)	45
Gender	Male	60 (46.2%)	50 (50.0%)	110
	Female	70 (53.8%)	50 (50.0%)	120
Education	High School	20 (15.4%)	45 (45.0%)	65
	Graduate	68 (52.3%)	35 (35.0%)	103
	Postgraduate	42 (32.3%)	20 (20.0%)	62
Monthly Income (₹)	< 20,000	10 (7.7%)	30 (30.0%)	40
	20,001–40,000	60 (46.2%)	50 (50.0%)	110
	40,001–60,000	45 (34.6%)	15 (15.0%)	60
	> 60,000	15 (11.5%)	5 (5.0%)	20

Table 2: Awareness of Green Cosmetics

Awareness Level	Urban (n = 130)	Rural (n = 100)
1 – Very Low	5 (3.8%)	15 (15.0%)
2 – Low	10 (7.7%)	25 (25.0%)
3 – Moderate	30 (23.1%)	35 (35.0%)
4 – High	55 (42.3%)	20 (20.0%)
5 – Very High	30 (23.1%)	5 (5.0%)
Mean	4.0	3.1
Std. Deviation	0.9	1.0

Table 3: Health Consciousness

Level	Urban	Rural
1 – Very Low	5 (3.8%)	10 (10.0%)
2 – Low	15 (11.5%)	20 (20.0%)
3 – Moderate	35 (26.9%)	40 (40.0%)
4 – High	45 (34.6%)	20 (20.0%)
5 – Very High	30 (23.1%)	10 (10.0%)
Mean	3.6	3.0
Std. Deviation	0.9	1.0

Table 4: Ethical Concern

Level	Urban (n = 130)	Rural (n = 100)
1 – Very Low	5 (3.8%)	15 (15.0%)
2 – Low	15 (11.5%)	30 (30.0%)
3 – Moderate	35 (26.9%)	35 (35.0%)
4 – High	40 (30.8%)	15 (15.0%)
5 – Very High	35 (26.9%)	5 (5.0%)
Mean	3.4	2.8
Std. Deviation	0.9	1.0

Table 5: Purchase Frequency of Green Cosmetics (Per Month)

Frequency Level	Urban (n = 130)	Rural (n = 100)
0 – Never	10 (7.7%)	25 (25.0%)
1 – Rarely	20 (15.4%)	30 (30.0%)
2 – Occasionally	35 (26.9%)	25 (25.0%)
3 – Sometimes	25 (19.2%)	10 (10.0%)
4 – Frequently	25 (19.2%)	5 (5.0%)
5-6 – Very Frequent	15 (11.5%)	5 (5.0%)
Mean	2.7	1.5
Std. Deviation	1.3	1.0

Table 6: Brand Trust

Level	Urban (n = 130)	Rural (n = 100)
1 – Very Low	5 (3.8%)	15 (15.0%)
2 – Low	10 (7.7%)	25 (25.0%)
3 – Moderate	40 (30.8%)	40 (40.0%)
4 – High	45 (34.6%)	15 (15.0%)
5 – Very High	30 (23.1%)	5 (5.0%)
Mean	3.5	3.0
Std. Deviation	0.9	1.0

Table 7: Price Sensitivity

Level	Urban (n = 130)	Rural (n = 100)
1 – Very Low	25 (19.2%)	10 (10.0%)
2 – Low	40 (30.8%)	20 (20.0%)
3 – Moderate	35 (26.9%)	35 (35.0%)
4 – High	20 (15.4%)	25 (25.0%)
5 – Very High	10 (7.7%)	10 (10.0%)
Mean	2.7	3.3
Std. Deviation	0.9	1.0

RESULTS OF THE STUDY:

The present study is a comparative study of urban and rural consumers in the Wardha district, which shows that there is a significant and consistent difference between both consumers as far as all the variables are concerned, such as awareness, health consciousness, ethical concern, brand trust, purchase frequency, and price sensitivity regarding the adoption of green cosmetic products. Demographic analysis shows that there is a good distribution of respondents in urban (n = 130) and rural (n = 100) areas. The urban respondents are relatively more educated, with a greater proportion of graduates (52.3%) and postgraduates (32.3%) than their rural counterparts, with a higher proportion of high school education (45%). There is also a prevalence of higher income around the middle and higher income brackets among urban consumers, whereas rural consumers are prevalent at lower brackets (< ₹ 20,000) and at the ₹ 20,001-40,000/year bracket. The demographic variation is a strong basis for the differences in awareness and adoption behavior. The mean score for awareness is higher for urban consumers (Mean = 4.0, SD = 0.9) than for rural consumers (Mean = 3.1, SD = 1.0). The higher levels of awareness (high and very high) were significantly more common among urban respondents (65.4%) than among rural respondents (75%). This is evidence that urban consumers are more exposed to information and sustainability-related marketing.

The respondents with urban community orientation levels are more health conscious than the respondents with rural community orientation levels (mean = 3.6 and 3.0, respectively). More urban consumers are in the high and very high categories (57.7%) than rural consumers, who are mostly in the moderate category (40%). This implies that urban consumers are more inclined towards health-

related attributes of green cosmetics. Urban consumers (mean = 3.4) have higher ethical concerns than the rural consumers (mean = 2.8). Mostly the urban respondents are in the high to very high ethical concern category (57.7%), and most of the rural respondents are in the low category and moderate category (80%). This suggests that personal values for the environment and ethics are more influential in urban consumption decisions.

One significant difference that is found is in the purchasing habits. Means of purchasing frequency (Mean = 2.7, SD = 1.3) are higher in the urban consumers than in rural consumers (Mean = 1.5, SD = 1.0). The urban respondents would purchase green cosmetics frequently or very frequently, around 30.8%, while 55% of the rural ones would fall into the never to rarely category. This is clearly showing more uptake in urban areas. Urban consumers have higher brand trust (mean = 3.5) than rural consumers (mean = 3.0). A higher proportion of urban respondents are in the high trust ranges (58.4%) compared to the rural respondents, who are mostly in the moderate and low trust ranges (80%). This indicates consumer trust in brand credibility and certification in urban areas is greater.

The mean score for price sensitivity of rural consumers is higher than that of urban consumers (mean = 3.3). While the urban consumer is more spread out in low to moderate price sensitivity, almost 45% of rural respondents are in the high to very high sensitivity range. This means that price is one of the main concerns in the rural uptake of green cosmetics. The comparative analysis made it clear that there is a significant difference between the adoption of green cosmetic products between urban and rural areas in the Wardha district. Urban consumers are more aware, more health-conscious, more ethical, more trusting of the brands, and more frequent buyers as compared to rural consumers who are more price-sensitive and less engaged.

The results indicate that education, income, exposure to awareness, and availability are key factors in the adoption of green cosmetics. Urban consumers are also more likely to engage in sustainable consumption patterns than the rural consumers, who are facing economic and informational barriers.

DISCUSSION:

The present study shows that there is a significant difference between urban and rural areas regarding the use of "green cosmetic products" in the Wardha district. Urban consumers are more aware (mean = 4.0), more health-conscious (3.6), more ethical (3.4), and more trustful in the brand (3.5) than their rural counterparts. These differences are mainly due to better access to information, education, and marketing exposure in urban areas. The awareness among rural consumers is moderate to low, and they are more concerned about price and availability than the sustainability aspects. Urban consumers are more health conscious and ethical; thus, there is a shift towards environment-friendly consumption. Rural consumers know about the health problems but are limited in their knowledge of green products and are also not as affordable. This can be seen from their higher sensitivity to price (mean = 3.3) and lower frequency of purchase (mean = 1.5) than the urban consumers (mean = 2.7). Brand trust is also important, as demonstrated by higher trust in certified and branded products in urban areas. The overall results support the existence of a strong urban-rural divide in sustainable consumption practices. The study recommends that this gap can be narrowed through awareness creation, enhancing rural distribution, making the price of the eco-labelling products affordable, and improving eco-label certification. Such interventions are crucial to facilitate the use of green cosmetics and inspire sustainable consumption practices in the Wardha district.

CONCLUSIONS:

It is clearly revealed from the present comparative study that there is a significant difference in awareness, attitude, and purchasing behavior of urban and rural consumers in the Wardha district for adopting green cosmetic products. Rural consumers are comparatively less engaged and price sensitive, while urban consumers are more aware, health-conscious, ethical, aware of brands, and have a high frequency of purchase. The results validate that socio-economic dimensions like education level, income level, information access, and market availability affect green consumption behavior. With good exposure and awareness, urban consumers tend to buy sustainable and eco-friendly products, whereas

the rural consumers are restricted by their low purchasing power and lack of availability of green cosmetic products. It is concluded that there is still a great deal to develop with the use of green cosmetics, especially in the rural area, and there is still a need for targeted interventions. Education and media campaigns, better distribution in the rural markets, the addition of new affordable product lines, and the development of eco-certification systems are key ingredients to encourage broader acceptance. Hence, the study concludes that bridging the urban-rural gap is very important for the development of sustainable consumption patterns in the Wardha district. Improving market strategies and policy support will not only help increase adoption of green cosmetics but will also help to promote environmental responsibility and public health results in the region.

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