GREEN CARE

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Taking their formulations to the next level by incorporating nature, luxury skincare and cosmetics brands are making environmental and business sense. No one's complaining…

'Sustainable luxury' for many has been just an oxymoron term, but now we see leading luxury fashion brands and even skincare brands focusing on this aspect of doing business. Adding to the definition of luxury, brands have realized that true luxury is something that is good for the buyer, is natural and environmentally sustainable.

Incorporating sustainability has business benefits too. In January 2013, mineral makeup brand Mirabella Beauty, was invited to participate in New York Fashion Week. In its second year at the event; this gluten-free, talc-free, and paraben-free makeup brand was a hit with the models. The models loved the clean healthy formulas plus the flawless airbrush quality.

Mirabella is the only brand of mineral makeup chosen to participate in New York Fashion Week. As per the company, usually mineral makeup brands have too much shimmer for fashion photography. Mirabella looks great for brides, proms queens, and photo shoots. Mirabella looks beautiful under the bright lights and photographs perfectly. Most importantly, Mirabella Beauty is based on high-quality, mineral-based prestige ingredients.

As Indians, we all have grown up with natural and sustainable luxury skincare concepts and home remedies. *Shikakai*, coconut oil, *henna* and *besan* home-made face-packs were common. Then came Shahnaz Husain and Biotique with the goodness of nature. More recently there are brands like Kama Ayurveda and Forest Essentials that have made high end Ayurveda fashionable and luxurious.

Well, it's not just India, but the whole world that it moving towards sustainable skincare. People are moving to not just sustainable products but also accessories along with them. Advanced beauty tools like cruelty-free brushes made with no animal hair are gaining popularity along with eco-friendly packaging. "Live Beautifully - Stay Kind to Yourself and the Earth" is the mantra followed by actress Alicia Silverstone when creating her products. Her train case for cosmetics is made with natural hemp and recycled PET (a byproduct of recycled plastic bottles). Even the hand tag is printed on tree-free stone paper and the design on the bag is non-toxic.

Women love to make an impact when they walk into a room, but they don't want to make an impact on the planet. Many are conscious of their buying decisions when it comes to skincare and brands are aware of that. Thus, many skincare brands are into CSR activities.

In honour of Earth Day in April 2013, Kiehl's Since 1851, New York-based purveyor of fine quality skin and hair care brand, donated $50,000 to Recycle Across America (RAA), a charity supported by Kiehl's since its inception. The brand has consistently been involved with activities related to conservation and protection of Earth. Josie Maran, luxury with a conscience, is involved with multiple charities like City of Hope and Ian Somerhalder Foundation.

In addition to these individual efforts by companies, the cosmetics and skincare industry itself is looking at sustainability on a larger level. Sustainable Cosmetics Summit, organized by Organic Monitor, will take place in New York City on May 16-18, 2013. The summit will once again bring together some of the leading organizations involved in sustainability in the cosmetics industry. Green ingredients in cosmetic formulations will be the focus. The move towards green formulations is gaining momentum because of high consumer demand for natural and organic cosmetics. A number of speakers will discuss the growing use of plant and marine raw materials.

Discussions will also cover the social dimension of cosmetic products. Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps will state how its fair trade sourcing projects have improved the lives of marginalized producers in Palestine and Sri Lanka. A large cosmetics company will demonstrate how social value can be created by CSR initiatives, human resources procedures, and customer-supplier relationships. In another presentation, Johnson & Johnson will highlight the challenges when juggling a diverse range of environmental and social issues in sustainability programs.

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As the skin care and beauty market develops, directions are being found to give that extra care to the planet and to the skins of consumers. Paraben-free and silicon-free are becoming the new buzz words. As beauty brands incorporate sustainability in their formulas, the patrons are the happiest in this deal…

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