

Is there a need to gender beauty and hygiene products?

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Skincare is one of the most hyped trends in recent times. However, what caught my attention is the unnecessary division of these products, based on gender.

From packaging to the ingredients, it seems like the whole idea of designing and manufacturing beauty products was focused on keeping up with the idea of making these products usable for a specific gender rather than the effectiveness.

Let's talk about packaging first. We mostly see two segments of skincare products on the market – for men and for women. The main visual difference between its packaging is the colour. Most men's products have dark-coloured packaging, because darker colours are apparently "manly". Oppositely, women's products usually have lighter coloured packaging, like pinks and pastels, with striking designs to attract the female consumers.

The advertising for these products is different from one another, too. In the case for men's product ads, a common plot is men doing hard work or stunts and exposing themselves to external pollution and dirt. On the other hand, ads for women's prod-



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ucts usually have a common scenario of girls sitting at home and being concerned about their skin conditions. Both these scenarios clearly normalise the issue of gender inequality and stereotypes about gender roles.

Moving on to the ingredients, usually the affordable men's products in the market contain ingredients and flavourings that are considered or labelled "manly". Charcoal and menthol are very common,

and the fragrance of these products are also quite similar, in most cases minty and musky. There are not many options for men, to be honest.

As there is an age-old stereotype that beauty and skincare are for females only, there is way more variation among women's cosmetics and skincare products. There are, in fact, numerous products for women which are made for different skin types. The products smell generally floral and fruity, as

these are considered "girly".

Now, are these differences and divisions useful for the consumers? As far as I have heard and observed, the answer is no.

Men have slightly thicker skin than women and their skin is more resistant to the damage. But the necessary process of taking care of their skin is actually the same as women. A large number of men choose women's products because of the actual benefits, results, and the various options. Although charcoal and menthol are labelled as "manly" ingredients, these are specifically for oily skin. So, men who have dry or combination skin can get negative results if they use these products.

Another important thing to observe is that most high-end and medicated beauty products are gender-neutral, which means the products that actually contain good ingredients for skin are suitable for everyone. So, choosing skincare and beauty products should be based on what skin type one has, not on the gender.

Nadeemah always wraps her head around the thought of what she's going to eat next and thinks that the glass at her bedside table is half-full. Say hi at nadeemahafrose13@gmail.com

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