

THE NOTEBOOK AUDIT #01

CATEGORY

Facial Care

GEOGRAPHY

India

TIME PERIOD

2015 - 2025

AUDIT DATE

June 2026

INDIAN | FACIAL CARE | 2015 - 2025

The Evolution of Colour Codes in Indian Facial Care

What a decade of packaging colours reveals about changing consumers, culture and brand positioning.

KEY OBSERVATION

Over the last decade, colour in Indian facial care packaging has evolved from communicating benefits to communicating meaning

Earlier, colour served as a category shortcut.

White and blue signaled efficacy. Green suggested naturality. Pink signalled beauty and care. Colours helped consumers quickly understand what a product did.

Today, colour increasingly communicates something different. It helps brands express personality, positioning and worldview. Ingredient-inspired palettes, softer tones, restrained colour systems and more distinctive visual territories are becoming common across the category.

What appears to be a packaging shift is, in many ways, a reflection of a broader consumer shift. Consumers are no longer choosing facial care products solely on the basis of functional benefits. They are also choosing brands that align with how they see themselves and the values they wish to express.

This audit examines how these colour codes in Indian facial care have evolved over the last decade, what these changes reveal about consumers and where the category may be headed next.

SIGNAL

Colour is no longer a category cue. **It is increasingly a positioning cue.**

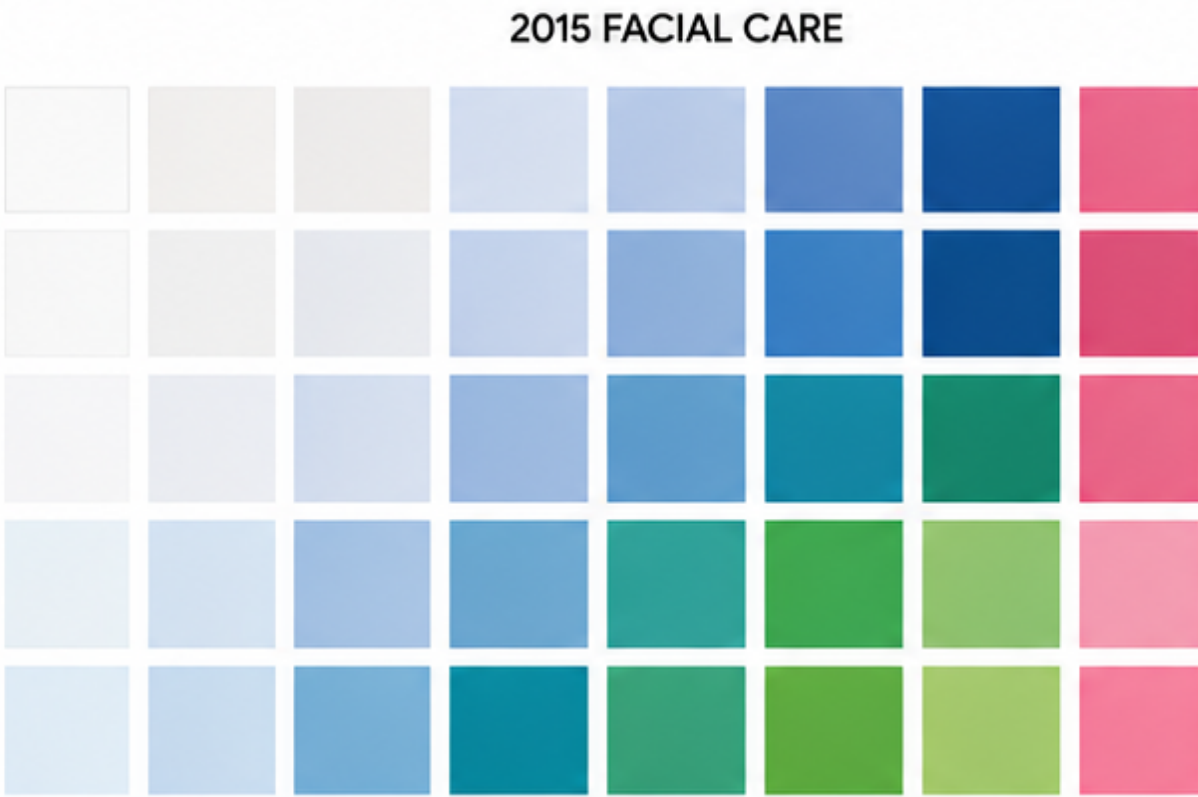
2015 Facial Care	2025 Facial Care
Functional	Expressive
Category-led	Brand-led
Benefit-focused	Meaning-led
Loud and direct	Curated and nuanced
Clinical reassurance	Emotional reassurance

Across the category, colour is increasingly being used to communicate personality, values and positioning, not just product benefits. What was once a functional identifier is becoming a strategic expression of brand meaning.

SHIFT

The visual language of Indian facial care has expanded significantly over the last decade.

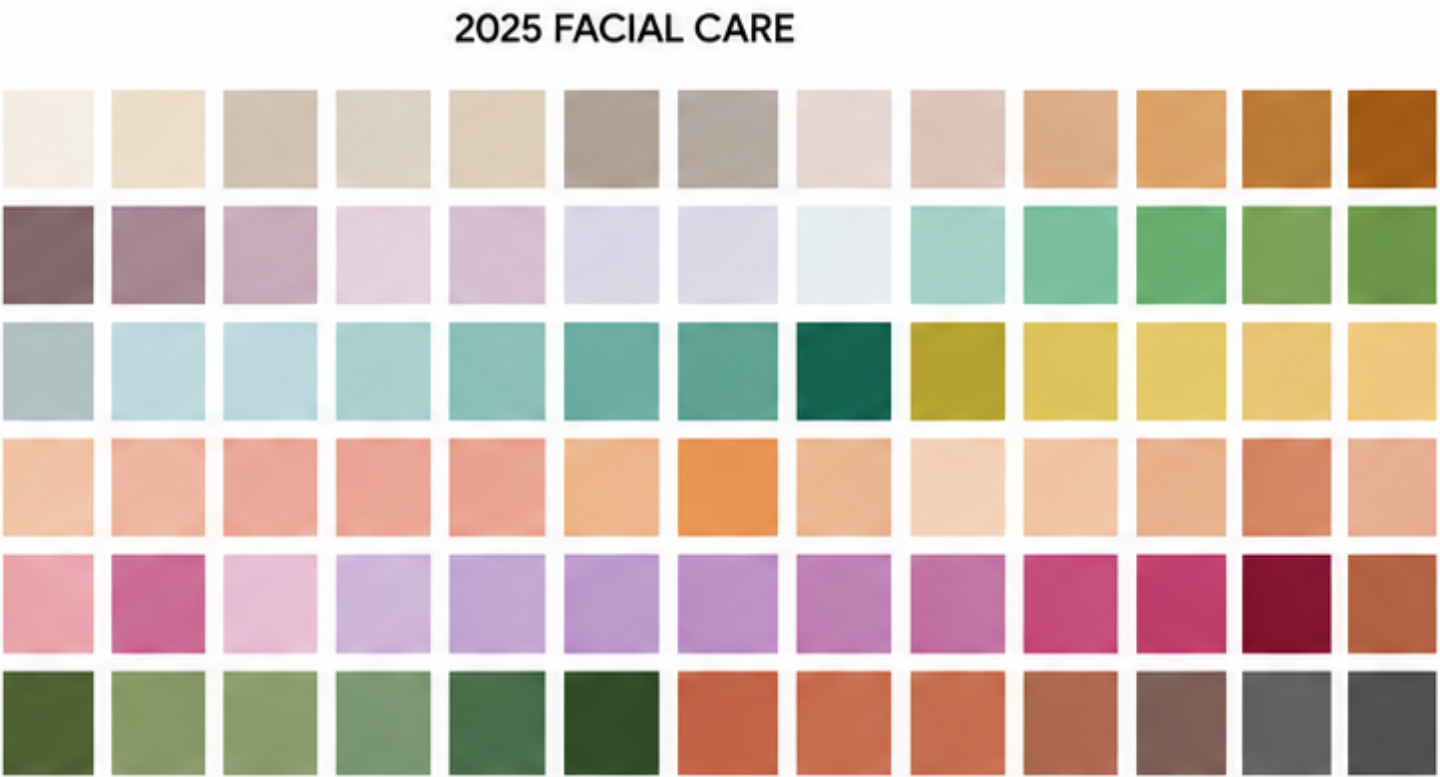
While a handful of dominant colour codes shaped much of the category in 2015, the landscape in 2025 reflects a broader and more varied palette. New ingredients, positioning strategies and consumer aspirations have expanded how colour is used within facial care.



Dominant Colours: White • Blue • Green • Pink

Illustrative Brands:

Pond's | Fair & Lovely | Garnier | Nivea | Himalaya



Dominant Colours: Botanical Greens • Clinical Greys • Pastels
Earth Tones • Sorbets • Ingredient-led Hues

Illustrative Brands:

Minimalist | Dot & Key | Foxtale | Hyphen | Deconstruct | Plum

This audit focuses on category colour codes rather than individual brand evaluations. Brand references are included solely to illustrate broader visual patterns observed across the facial care category.

MEANING

The expansion of colour reflects an expansion of consumer expectations.

Consumers are no longer seeking only efficacy. They are increasingly seeking products that align with their identities, aspirations and values.

IDENTITY	PREMIUMISATION	INGREDIENT CULTURE
Consumers increasingly use products to express who they are, not just what they need. Colour helps brands signal personality and worldview.	Premium cues have evolved from overt signals towards more restrained, curated and design-led expressions.	Growing awareness of ingredients has created new visual languages inspired by botanicals, actives, transparency and efficacy.

Colour has evolved from a shortcut for product understanding to a tool for identity, aspiration and brand meaning.

DECODE

As colour palettes have expanded, brands have begun using colour more strategically and selectively.

Colour is no longer simply identifying a category. It is increasingly helping communicate ingredients, efficacy, format, audience and brand personality



Colour choices increasingly reflect multiple influences rather than a single category code.

WHAT COLOUR IS SIGNALLING

INGREDIENT

Ingredient cues and sensory associations e.g., Vitamin C, Aloe Vera, Berries

FORMAT

Different formats increasingly carry different visual codes e.g., Serums, Gels, Creams, Masks, Sunscreens

EFFICACY

Science, Performance and Trust e.g., Whites, Greys, Amber tones

AUDIENCE

Approachable, Youthful and Self-Care led e.g., pastels and brighter palettes

BRAND WORLD

Distinctiveness, Personality and Recognition

Why it matters?

The same brand may use different colour systems across ingredients, formats and benefits. This flexibility reflects colour’s evolution from category shortcut to strategic communication tool.

PATTERNS

While colour palettes have expanded, most brands are increasingly drawing from 3 broad visual behaviours. Each reflects a different way of building trust, relevance and differentiation within the category.

1. INGREDIENT LED PALETTES	2. RESTRAINED PREMIUM PALETTES	3. EXPRESSIVE SELF CARE PALETTES
Colours increasingly borrow from ingredients themselves, creating stronger sensory associations and making benefits easier to understand at a glance.	Premium increasingly expresses itself through restraint rather than excess. Colour becomes quieter, more controlled, more deliberate.	Colour is used to make skincare feel more approachable, enjoyable and emotionally engaging, reflecting the growing role of self care.
Signals: Naturality. Transparency. Efficacy.	Signals: Expertise. Sophistication. Confidence.	Signals: Optimism. Accessibility. Self Expression
Common Colours: Botanical Greens. Sage. Eucalyptus. Turmeric. Clay. Oat. Berry inspired.	Common Colours: White. Off white. Beige, Grey. Black. Amber.	Common Colours: Pastels. Sorbets. Lavender. Peach. Mint. Sky Blue.
Illustrative Brands: Mamaearth. Plum. Foxtale. Hyphen.	Illustrative Brands: Minimalist. The Derma Co. Deconstruct.	Illustrative Brands: Dot and Key. Foxtale. Hyphen.

While these behaviours are distinct, they are not mutually exclusive. Many brands increasingly combine multiple colour systems to communicate ingredients, efficacy, audience and brand personality simultaneously.

IMPLICATIONS

Colour is becoming a more strategic brand asset.

As colour palettes expand, the role of colour within facial care continues to evolve.

01. Distinctiveness becomes more important

As more brands move beyond traditional category colours, creating a recognisable visual identity becomes increasingly important.

02. Colour systems matter more than individual colours

The strongest colours are building coherent visual languages rather than relying on a single signature colour.

03. Meaning is becoming more layered

Colour can simultaneously communicate ingredients, efficacy, audience, personality and positioning.

04. Category codes continue to evolve

What feels contemporary today may become the next generation's convention, creating space for new visual expressions to emerge.

The future of colour in facial care may not be about finding new colours but about finding new meanings for existing ones.

Colours rarely change in isolation.

They evolve alongside consumers, culture, aspirations and the meanings people seek from the brands they choose.

What changes on pack often reveals what is changing in people.

About this Audit

METHODOLOGY

This audit reviews colour usage across Indian facial care packaging between 2015 and 2025. The objective is to identify broader visual patterns and emerging colour behaviours rather than evaluate individual brands.

SOURCES

Publicly available packaging imagery, brand websites, e-commerce platforms and category observations collected during June 2026.

DISCLAIMER

Brand references are included solely to illustrate broader visual patterns and category shifts. This audit reflects an interpretive analysis and is intended to stimulate discussion rather than provide definitive assessments of brand strategy or performance.

USAGE & ATTRIBUTION

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