

Beyond Beauty: Emerging Skincare Trends Redefining Innovation

January 2026

Beauty is no longer a niche pursuit. It is becoming a broader cultural priority. According to the latest Ipsos Predictions 2026 survey, **82% of consumers plan to spend more time on their appearance in 2026 than they did in 2025**. What's striking is not just the scale of intent, but its spread: **men are just as likely as women to say this**, and **a significant 76% of consumers aged 50+ echo the same sentiment**.

This tells us something important. Beauty is no longer confined to traditional 'core' audiences. It is attracting newer fringes: men, older consumers, and increasingly, Gen Alpha. Latter, who are growing up in a world where skincare, self-care, and self-expression are normalized early through family influence, social media, and digital-first role models. For them, beauty is not aspirational in the future. It is habitual in the present.

Against this backdrop, the beauty category is evolving from a space of enhancement to one of engagement, care, and identity.

In a world where beauty is increasingly both personal and performative, skincare is no longer just about 'looking good'. It is about feeling

repaired, protected, and expressive. The Indian beauty and skincare category has seen massive transformation in the last few years, from clean beauty and naturals to dermo-cosmetics and now, "skinification" of every part of the body.

As beauty consumers become more discerning and experimental, the next wave of innovation will not come from yet another flavour or shade - but from rituals of recovery, health, and expressive individuality. Lips, nails, and eyes, often treated as 'colour zones', are now becoming the next frontier of skincare. The consumer is asking for care with colour, health with glamour, and longevity with experimentation.

1. The Future of Lips: Beyond Hydration and Hue

From tints to tattoos, lip oils to Botox, the world of lips has exploded with choice. Yet, with rising experimentation comes a parallel need for *repair and rejuvenation*. The average urban consumer now wears multiple lip products – matte, gloss, liner, stain – often combined with long-lasting formulations that can dry or damage lips over time.

This opens up a fascinating opportunity: **lip care as a new skincare vertical**. We are already seeing early signals. The rise of **lip products**: serums, sleeping masks, and exfoliating scrubs. Brands like *Laneige* and *Dot & Key* have built cult followings with their lip sleeping masks, while *Nykaa's Lip Crush range* has introduced Indian consumers to 'daily care' for lips beyond hydration.

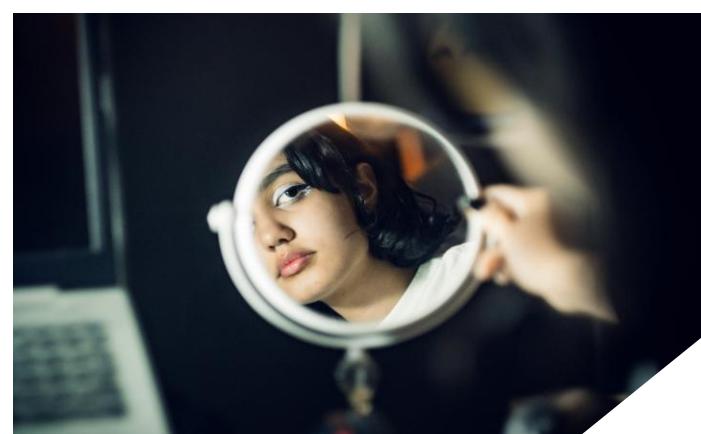
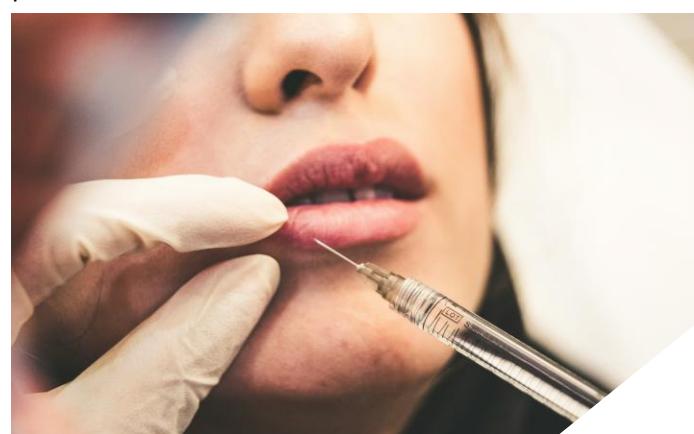
But the next phase will go further. Expect a move towards 'lip wellness' – i.e. formulations that revive the natural texture, tone, and plumpness of lips exposed to chemical, climatic, and cosmetic stress. This could mean antioxidant serums for lips, restorative packs after tattooing, or collagen-infused glosses that serve as therapy.

Parallelly, on the beautification side, we are seeing growing interest in lip art and expressiveness, including neon shades, metallics, gradient tints, and temporary tattoos. With Korean and global beauty influencers popularising 'lip trends of the month', Indian brands will be challenged to deliver *long-lasting, safe-to-play* solutions that merge performance with protection.



Marketing Implication:

Beauty brands must reframe the lip category as a *ritual of both expression and repair*. Bundled offerings, such as 'Colour + Care Kits' or 'Post-Party Recovery Rituals' – can create new consumption occasions. Think of it as selling *an experience, not a shade*.





2. The Nail Narrative: When Art Meets Anatomy

Nails have become the canvas of self-expression - with gels, chrome finishes, 3D art, and hyper-detailed manicures flooding social feeds. However, beneath the shine lies a growing anxiety of the fatigued nails: damaged nail beds, brittleness, and discoloration due to excessive use of hard chemicals.

Consumers, especially the young urban female audience, are becoming aware that *beautiful nails can also be healthy nails*. This opens the door to a whole new world of **nail skincare**.

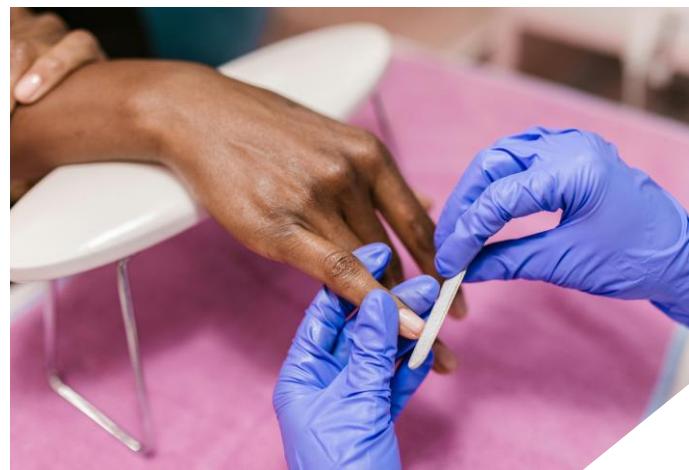
We're beginning to see base and top coats with **nourishing** properties, cuticle oils, and growth serums making inroads. *Colorbar's Nail Care range* and *Plum's Vegan Nail Care* lines are good examples of Indian brands responding to this awareness. But what's next?

Imagine '**pre-paint rituals**' - protective serums and keratin masks that prepare nails before polish. Or post-paint recovery solutions that

detoxify nails after weeks of gel wear. Much like the 'skinification of hair', nails too are ready for their wellness moment.

Marketing Implication:

Nailcare is ripe for a *therapy-based positioning*. Brands can own the "cycle of nail health" - before, during, and after colour. Salons could partner with beauty brands to create signature recovery rituals, while D2C players can launch at-home nail care kits marketed as the 'gym for your nails.'



3. The Eye Era: Expression Meets Efficiency

If eyes are windows to the soul, then eyelids, lashes, and brows are becoming the new *frames of identity*. The past few years have seen an explosion in eye beautification - extensions, lash lifts, semi-permanent liners, and stick-on designs. Yet, much of this is still sourced via unorganized channels, grey markets, or cosmetologists.

Mainstream Indian brands have an untapped opportunity here: to bring **safe, accessible, and efficient eye beautification** products to the consumer. Quick-apply lid enhancers, reusable lashes, under-eye care that doubles as a primer, and serum-infused mascaras are some areas waiting to be owned.

For consumers, the desire is clear: "*Make it easy to look expressive without effort.*" This means solutions that are intuitive, time-saving, and skin-friendly - products that help recreate professional effects at home.

Marketing Implication:

There's potential for cross-category innovation, combining skincare science with cosmetic performance. For instance, a lash serum with biotin and peptides marketed as both *beauty and repair* could be a game-changer. Packaging and positioning that speak to "expressive efficiency" will appeal to both Gen Z and millennials.



4. From Beauty to Ritual: The New Consumer Aspiration

What ties all these trends together is a deeper cultural shift: beauty is no longer an isolated act. It's a *ritual of self-expression and self-repair*.

Today's consumer doesn't want separate shelves for skincare and makeup. She wants synergy. She wants her gloss to heal, her nail paint to protect, her eye shadow to care. This convergence demands that marketers and innovators design not single products, but *complete ecosystems* - rituals that seamlessly move from beautifying to restoring.

Recovery kits, rejuvenation combos, and "pre-and-post care" rituals will become the new storytelling canvas for beauty brands. The opportunity lies not just in formulations, but in *how they're framed and experienced*.



Marketing Implication:

Brands must move from selling 'hero' products to building ritual ecosystems, i.e. curated regimes that guide consumers from 'preparation' to 'expression' and 'recovery'. Storytelling should focus on usage moments and layering logic, positioning the brand as a daily self-care partner rather than just a beauty solution.





In Conclusion

As India's beauty and skincare market matures, the next growth wave won't come from price wars or celebrity endorsements alone. It will come from **science-led empathy** - understanding the consumer's need to 'play and protect', 'express and heal'.

The signals are clear: beauty is becoming more **democratic, cross-generational, and gender-agnostic**. From Gen Alpha experimenting early under parental guidance, to men embracing grooming as self-care, to 50+ consumers investing in repair and confidence - the category is widening, not fragmenting.

For marketers, this has a clear implication. **Products, brands, and communication must become radically inclusive** - not just in representation, but in relevance. Innovation needs to serve multiple life stages, identities, and comfort levels, without talking down or narrowing the narrative.

The winners will be brands that can transform beauty from an act of adornment into a shared ritual of self-care - making consumers across ages, genders, and life stages feel seen, confident, and cared for.

Get In Touch:

Geetika Singh

Executive Director, Service Line Leader – IUU
Ipsos India
Geetika.singh@ipsos.com