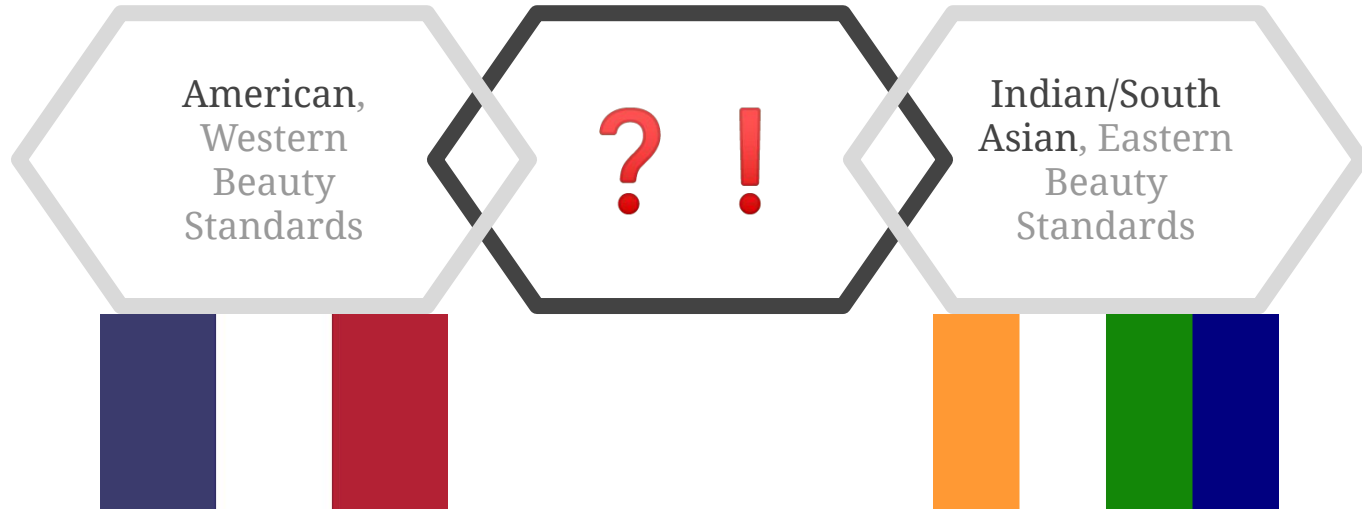




# **The Colorism Continuum: An Interception of Culture in the New Generation of South Asian American Women**

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## The Intersection of Identity and Bicultural Beauty





The advertisement features a woman's face on the left, split vertically to show a transition from her natural skin tone to a lighter, more even complexion. To the right of the face, the brand name "Fair & Lovely" is written in a stylized pink font, followed by the text "EXPERT FAIRNESS SOLUTION" in a clean, sans-serif font. Below the text, five product tubes are displayed in a row. From left to right, they are: a tube with a pink cap and label, a tube with an orange cap and label, a tube with a silver cap and label, a tube with a pink cap and label, and a tube with a white cap and label. Each tube features the brand name and a small image of the woman's face. The background is a light pink gradient with a subtle circular pattern behind the woman's face.

*Fair & Lovely* | EXPERT  
**FAIRNESS**  
SOLUTION

*Fair & Lovely* *Fair & Lovely* *Fair & Lovely* *Fair & Lovely* *Fair & Lovely*

SPF 15+  
HYDRATING  
FAIRNESS  
SOLUTION

AYURVEDIC  
GLOW  
HYDRATING  
FAIRNESS  
SOLUTION

ANTI MARKS  
TREATMENT  
EXPERT FAIRNESS CREAM  
SPOT CORRECTOR

ADVANCED  
MULTI-VITAMIN  
EXPERT FAIRNESS  
SOLUTION

BB  
MOISTURIZING  
FAIRNESS  
SOLUTION

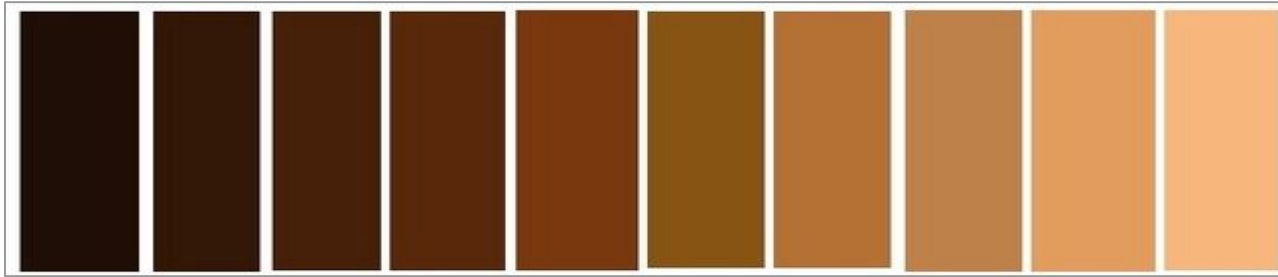


### WHAT

According to Merriam Webster dictionary, ***colorism*** is the ***prejudice or discrimination especially within a racial or ethnic group favoring people with lighter skin over those with darker skin.***

### WHERE

Colorism, like any other form of discrimination, exists everywhere where there are people. It is not the same as racism, since it can occur intraracially (within its own race or ethnic group) and involves the appearance of skin tone as socioeconomic currency.





# \$31.2 billion

2017 study projected 2024 global expenditure

## COLORISM IN INDIA 101



- Dark skin → Bad life
- Caste, class, religion, and region are influencers
- Fairer skin is associated with better job, marital, safety and health outcomes
- Fairness = Cultural Capital
- Advertisements perpetuate the narrative that one can live a happier and more successful life if they use their product

- Most products and products in history have been marketed towards women, especially at the marriageable age range (18-35)
- Females face more pressure to be lighter because of their place in society
- A higher importance on appearance exists in girls, not just in India
- Families of women with darker skin are expected to pay higher dowries in marriages
- Products have been marketed to female specific body parts, from the armpit area to genitalia

*All studies concerning the usage of skin lightening products have found that women use them significantly more than men*



## Indian Movie Stars Shining “Bright”



## Foriegn Models in Multinational Brands



Findings from a **2017** public health study done in Mumbai, **an urban city in India**, that surveyed 1,992 men and women (ages 16-60) on influencers of usage

	Female	Male	Total
Media/TV/Ads	48.4%	47.2%	44.6%
Family	18.1%	17.6%	16.4%
Friends	23.5%	19.2%	20.6%
Other/Self	8.8%	14.5%	9.5%

Shroff, H., Diedrichs, P. C., & Craddock, N. (2018). Skin color, cultural capital, and beauty products: An investigation of the use of skin fairness products in Mumbai, India. *Front Public Health*, 5:365. doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2017.00365



In India and China, skin lightening products are not well regulated since they are considered cosmetic, not pharmaceutical

### Toxic ingredients include:

- ☐ Hydroquinone
- ☐ Mercury
- ☐ Hydrogen Peroxide
- ☐ Steroids



## Indian Models being Whitewashed in American/Western Culture





## Western Brands in Foreign Countries





**\$8.6 billion USD**

spent worldwide on bleaching creams in 2020

**\$2.3 billion**

spent in the United States alone

*Over 90% of females in India cite skin-lightening as a high-need area.*

## High Risk, High Need

- Beauty standards, negative body image, and negative self esteem and mental health are correlated with one another
- Women tend to have higher reported body dissatisfaction than men
- The South Asian community is considered a high risk population for mental health issues
- South Asian women are more likely to develop mental illnesses
- Darker skin people from other ethnic minority groups in America have poorer physical and mental health outcomes than their lighter skinned peers

**The only study done on South Asian Americans found that darker skin tone negatively predicted self esteem and self rated physical health**



A \*Statistically\* Significant  
Population

*Asian Americans are projected to be the nation's largest immigrant group by the middle of the century*

*Nearly 60% of Asian Americans are members of Generation Z, or roughly between the ages of 8 and 25 in 2021*

*Indian Americans are the second largest ethnic group in Asian American community (making up 20% of the total Asian population), coming after Chinese Americans.*

*In 2017, Asians in U.S. between the 18-24 age range had a 65% college enrollment rate*

