

# THE ECONOMIC TIMES

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## Pond's White Beauty Goes for Colour Correction

HUL's entire skincare portfolio is being reworked to 'reflect the new vision of positive beauty'

**Ratna Bhushan & Sagar Malviya**

**New Delhi | Mumbai:** Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) is rebranding its second biggest skin fairness brand Pond's White Beauty to reflect more contemporary aspirations and to shed an association with a stereotype that is no longer considered cool.

The development comes about a month after India's largest packaged consumer goods firm dropped the word 'fair' from its biggest skin fairness brand Fair & Lovely and renamed it Glow & Lovely.

An HUL spokesperson confirmed that the company's entire skincare portfolio is being reworked.

"In addition to the changes to Fair & Lovely, the rest of our skincare portfolio will also reflect the new

vision of positive beauty," the spokesperson said, without divulging details of the exercise:

The company had kicked off the rebranding of its skin fairness brands in the wake of the killing of an African-American person, George Floyd, by a white policeman in the United States in May, which sparked a global outrage and marked a watershed of sorts in

the debate over skin and colour.

The Pond's White Beauty franchise, priced at a premium over the newly renamed Glow & Lovely, sells creams, face washes and gels. HUL is by far the market leader in the ₹10,000 crore face care segment, with a 43% share. This is followed by Himalaya, which has about 8% market share, according to executives quoting Nielsen data.

Glow & Lovely has more than 30% share while Pond's is the second largest brand with a share of more than 9%, higher than that of Nivea and L'Oreal combined, according to the data.

For decades, face care products have been sold mainly on fairness propositions.

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**FACE CARE SEGMENT**  
**₹10,000 crore**

**HUL is market leader with 43% share**

**HUL's top brands:** Fair & Lovely (renamed Glow & Lovely), Pond's White Beauty

**L'Oreal** removing 'whitening, lightening, fairness' from all skin-care products  
**J&J** exiting Clean & Clear fairness range

**Emami** renames Fair & Handsome as Glow & Handsome

**Trigger:** #BlackLivesMatter movement after African-American George Floyd was killed by a white policeman in May



Illustration: ANIRBAN BORA

# Crackdown on Fairness Ads

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Almost every leading cosmetics company from Procter & Gamble and Emami to Nivea and Johnson & Johnson focused on whiteness or fairness variants.

But now, companies don't have a choice but to change course, said industry executives. "The skin whitening segment faces uncertainty in the near future, with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare cracking down on ads that promote fairness creams through an amendment to the Drugs and Magic Remedies (objectionable advertisements) Bill, 2020," Pradeep Srinivasan, consultant with analytics firm Euromonitor International, said in a statement.

"Living room conversations have centred around certain perceptions about beauty and

fairness for decades. However, responsible marketers will have to not just mirror those perceptions, but shape and evolve those same perceptions in sync with what's happening globally. Re-branding fairness creams without 'fair' or 'white' is one such move," said Vani Gupta Dandia, co-founder of consulting firm CherryPeachPlum Growth Partners, who has earlier worked for Reckitt Benckiser and Unilever.

Euromonitor International's Srinivasan said while demand for skin whitening creams made India a lucrative market for years, globally there's been more awareness on inclusive beauty which has trickled down to India. "Further, social media has removed boundaries and shifted the power into the hands of consumers," he said.