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Review Article

A Review Study on Cosmetic Analysis

Nandeibam Ledia Devi*, Yakkanti. Pushpalatha, Krishnendu Adhikary, Ikramul Hussain, Diya Koijam, Chandu Chandu, Balukrishna Muthyala, Dr. B. Thangabalam

SIMS College of Pharmacy, Mangaldas Nagar, Guntur, Andhra pradesh, India

Cosmetics are widely being consumed daily by a huge part of the world's population to improve appearance, beautification, cleanliness, hygiene and personal care. The global cosmetic market was approximately USD 335.95 billion in 2024 and is predicted to be USD 556.21 billion By 2032, growing at a compound annual growth rate of 6.64%.India represents one of the fastest growing cosmetic markets and is expected to reach USD 34 billion by 2028. Increasing consumption of skincare, hair care, makeup, and related products has made cosmetic evaluation essential for ensuring product safety, quality, and efficacy. Cosmetic analysis involves the identification of ingredients, physicochemical characteristics, and toxicological parameters through a variety of analytical methods such chromatography, spectroscopy, and microscopy. Thus, cosmetic analysis aids in the detection of dangerous substances and assures compliance safety standards, ensuring consumer health and gaining trust in the cosmetic world.

Keywords: Cosmetic analysis, Quality control, Safety evaluation, Heavy metals, Regulatory standards.

INTRODUCTION

Cosmetics are beauty and personal care products applied to the body, face, hair, or nail to improve appearance, maintain hygiene, and promote skin and hair health. Common cosmetic products include creams, lotions, lipsticks, shampoos, perfumes, powders, and deodorants. Cosmetics have become an essential part of daily life, both for men and women, over the years. The growth in the cosmetics industry has been exponential due to increased beauty consciousness, changes in lifestyles, social media influence, and the accessibility of a wide range of innovative products. The beauty and personal care sector are one of the high-growth industries of India, driven by fast urbanization, rising disposable incomes, and a shift toward natural and herbal formulations. Cosmetic analysis is the scientific examination of these products to define their composition, quality, and safety. Both qualitative and quantitative assessments are there to identify active ingredients and detect harmful contaminants like heavy metals (lead, mercury, and arsenic), artificial dyes, and toxic preservatives such as parabens and formaldehyde. Various analytical techniques, including chromatography (HPLC, GC), spectroscopy (UV, IR, AAS), and microbiological testing, are widely being applied with a view to ensuring regulatory and safety requirements for a product. Since cosmetics are applied to the most sensitive areas of the human body, like the skin, eyes, and lips, even a trace of contamination and/or wrong formulation can result in adverse reactions: allergies, irritation, dermatitis, etc., and may even produce long-term effects on health. Cosmetic analysis thus becomes of prime importance in safeguarding consumer health, verifying product claims, and assuring the fulfilment of national and international standards laid down through BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards), FDA (Food and Drug Administration), and ISO (International Organization for Standardization). In addition, with the rise in demand for natural and ecological cosmetics, testing helps confirm the authenticity of herbal and organic products, identifies adulteration, and assesses product stability during storage. Thus, cosmetic analysis not

only supports quality assurance but also strengthens consumer trust and promotes responsible manufacturing practices in the cosmetic industry.

4. Classification of Cosmetic Analysis:

Sr.No.	Category	Sub-category	Example	Parameter/Test
1	Based on product type	Skin care	Cream, lotion, sunscreen	pH, viscosity, stability
2		Hair care	Shampoo, hair dyes	Foam, test, heavy metal analysis
3		Oral products	Toothpaste, mouthwash	Fluoride content, microbial tests
4		Cosmetic/ makeup	Lipstick, foundations	Pigment analysis, safety tests
5		Perfume & deodorant	Perfume, deodorant	Alcohol %, fragrance stability
6	According to purpose	Quality control	All cosmetics	pH, appearance, consistency
7		Safety testing	Skincare, makeup	Irritation tests, microbial contamination
8		Efficacy testing	Sunscreen, anti-aging cream	Whitening effects, anti-aging claims
9		Stability testing	Creams, serums	Stability under storage condition
10	Based on analytical method	Physical tests	Creams, gels	pH, viscosity, spread ability
11		Chemical tests	Makeup, shampoo	Ingredients analysis, titration
12		Microbiological tests	Skin and oral products	Harmful microbes' presence
13		Instrumental analysis	All cosmetics	UV, HPLC, GC, AAS

5. Ingredient Used in Cosmetics:

Cosmetic products contain active and inactive ingredients:

5.1. Active Ingredients:

• Moisturizers: Hyaluronic acid, glycerine.
• Sunscreen agents: Titanium dioxide, zinc oxide.
• Whitening agents: Hydroquinone, kojic acid.
• Anti-aging compounds: Retinoid, peptides.

5.2. Inactive ingredients:

• Emulsifiers: Stearic acid, acetyl alcohol.
• Preservative: Parabens, phenoxy ethanol.
• Fragrances: Essential oils, synthetic aromas.
• Colorants: Iron oxides, natural dyes.
• Humectants and solvents: Propylene glycol, water.
• Their safety should be assessed because certain compounds such as parabens and artificial colourings are potentially carcinogenic or allergenic.

6. Common Harmful Effects:

Though cosmetics enhance appearance, their excessive or unsafe use may cause several side effects linked with toxic ingredients or contamination:

• Skin irritation and allergies can result from preservatives like parabens or formaldehyde.
• Hormonal disruption: due to chemicals such as phthalates and triclosan.
• Carcinogenic effects may be caused by heavy metals such as lead, arsenic, and cadmium in lipsticks or eyeliners.
• Eye and respiratory irritation: from aerosol sprays and fragrances.

Prolonged utilization of low-grade or expired cosmetics is very harmful and leads to chronic diseases (such as cancer, respiratory conditions, neurological disorders, and endocrine disruption) and ecological contamination.

7. Harmful Chemicals Commonly Found in Cosmetic:

Sr. No	Chemical	Common use	Health concern
1	Parabens	Preservative	Endocrine disruption
2	Formaldehyde	Preservative	Carcinogenic
3	Lead	Pigment in lipsticks	Neurotoxic
4	Mercury	Skin whitening creams	Kidney damage
5	Phthalates	Fragrance stabilizer	Reproductive toxicity
6	Triclosan	Antibacterial agent	Hormonal imbalance

8. Regions of Analysis:

8.1. Chemical Analysis:

Identifies components, purity, or contamination from materials such as heavy metals (lead, mercury). Uses methods such as HPLC, GC, or Mass Spectrometry.

8.2. Microbiological Testing:

This is to ensure the product does not have harmful bacteria, yeast, or mold caused by infections coming from it through testing for its presence.

8.3. Physical & Rheological Testing:

Texture, spreadability, viscosity, colour (spectrophotometry), particle size (for nanotechnology-based products), and stability (shelf life under heat/light).

8.4. Dermatological and Clinical Testing:

Assesses interaction and irritancy (Patch Tests) and pH compatibility to determine safety and compatibility with the skin's natural pH of approximately 5.5.

8.5. Performance Test:

This determines effectiveness, for example, SPF value for sunscreen lotion, foam generation in face cleansers, and efficacy of active components.

9. Analytical Methods for Cosmetic Analysis:

For ensuring quality and safety, cosmetics are analysed by employing a variety of new techniques:

9.1. Chromatographic Techniques:

9.1.1High-Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC):

HPLC is used in cosmetic analysis because it provides accurate, sensitive, and reliable separation and quantification of cosmetic ingredients.

Purposes:

• Identification and estimation of active ingredients (vitamins, preservatives, UV filters)
• Detection of impurities and degradation products
• Analysis of complex cosmetic formulations
• Quality control and batch uniformity

9.1.2Gas Chromatography (GC):

GC is used in cosmetic analysis for the analysis of volatile and semi-volatile components present in cosmetic products.

Purposes:

• Identification and quantification of fragrances and essential oils
• Detection of volatile impurities and solvents
• Analysis of preservatives and flavouring agents
• Ensuring quality control and regulatory compliance

9.2. Spectroscopic methods:

UV-Visible Spectroscopy: It is used in cosmetic analysis for the of light-absorbing components present in cosmetic products.

• Tests effectiveness of sunscreens
• Analysis of colouring agents
• Quality control testing

9.3. Physical and Microscopic tests:

9.3.1Physical test:

• Appearance (colour, odour, texture)
• pH determination
• Viscosity
• Spreadability
• Homogeneity
• Melting point / Softening point
• Particle size
• Stability testing

9.3.2 Microscopic tests:

• Particle size and shape analysis
• Identification of foreign matter
• Detection of microbial contamination
• Evaluation of dispersion uniformity
• Examination of crystalline structures

These tests help ensure the quality, safety, and consistency of cosmetic products.

9.4 Toxicological Test:

• Assessment of acute and chronic toxicity
• Evaluation of eye irritation potential
•Testing for allergic reactions
• Determination of safe concentration limits
• Assessment of phototoxicity and photo allergy
• Ensuring consumer safety and regulatory compliance

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Sr. No	Title	Journal	Author	Method	Result
1	Analysis of heavy metals in lipsticks	International journal of cosmetic science	Sharma et al.,2021	Atomic absorption spectroscopy (AAS)	Lead, cadmium, and nickel detected in several brands; some exceeded permissible limits.
2	Determination of parabens in skin-care products	Journal of analytical chemistry	R. Metha & S. Kumar,2020	High - Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC)	Methyl and propyl-parabens were present in 85% of tested products; levels within regulatory limits
3	Evaluation of UV Filters in Sunscreens	Cosmetics & Toiletries Research	Li & Gomez, 2019	LC-MS/MS	Oxybenzone and avobenzone identified in all sunscreen samples; variability in SPF protection observed.
4	Microbial contamination in herbal contamination	Journal of microbiological methods	A. Singh et al,2022	Microbial Load Testing (TPC, fungal tests)	20% of herbal products exceeded microbial limit standards; contamination mainly due to poor preservation.
5	Chemical Analysis of Fragrance Allergens	Journal of Chromatographic Science	Patel & Rodrigues,2018	Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS)	Presence of phthalates and terpene allergens detected; some products not labelled correctly
6	Stability study of moisturizing cream	International journal of pharmaceutics	N. Hussain ,2023	Accelerated stability testing (temperature, pH, viscosity)	pH and viscosity remained stable for 90 days; minor colour changes observed in natural formulations

7	Identification of Synthetic Dyes in Cosmetics	Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology	Chen et al,2020	FTIR & UV-Visible Spectroscopy	Several azo dyes detected; some banned dyes found in low-cost cosmetics
8	Analysis of Skin-Lightening Agents in Fairness Creams	Indian Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences	Verma et al., 2020	HPLC & UV-Visible Spectroscopy	Hydroquinone detected in some samples
9	Determination of Antioxidants in Cosmetic Formulations	Cosmetics Journal	Rao et al., 2018	UV-Visible Spectroscopy	Antioxidant activity confirmed
10	Determination of Preservatives in Cosmetic Products	Journal of Cosmetic Science	Kumar et al., 2021	HPLC	Preservatives within acceptable limits
11	Analysis of pH and Rheological Properties of Shampoos	Asian Journal of Pharmaceutics	Meena et al., 2022	pH & rheological analysis	Products suitable for scalp use
12	Detection of Steroids in Cosmetic Products	Journal of Pharmaceutical Analysis	Kim et al., 2021	LC-MS/MS	Illegal steroids detected in some samples
13	Quantification of Formaldehyde Releasers in Cosmetics	Regulatory Toxicology Journal	Lopez et al., 2019	GC-MS	Formaldehyde releasers identified

CONCLUSION:

Cosmetic analysis assures the safety, quality, stability, and efficacy of cosmetic products used daily by millions of consumers in the world and plays a very important role in public health protection. It is observed that the rapid growth of both global and Indian cosmetic markets increases the chances for people to come into contact with low-quality, adulterated, or unsafe cosmetic products. Therefore, rigorous analytical assessment has become one of the immediate requirements to avoid adverse health effects and guarantee consumer safety. Advanced techniques, including chromatography, spectroscopy, and mass spectrometry along with microbiological tests, have absolutely enhanced the scope and accuracy for the analysis of cosmetics. These are employed in the analysis and testing of toxic substances, heavy metals, banned colorants, preservatives, allergens, and microbial contaminants-all the causes posing a serious threat to human health. Cosmetic analysis is performed to strictly follow the national and international regulatory framework laid down by BIS, FDA, ISO, and other global regulators. Cosmetic analysis enables the creation of transparency and authenticity, especially in the case of herbal and natural cosmetic products, for their safety and efficacy claims assuredly in need of scientific validation. It also forms the basis for research and development work, helping formulation toward safer, effective, and environmentally acceptable cosmetic products. As consumers are increasingly becoming more aware of issues on ingredient safety, ethical manufacturing, and product sustainability, cosmetic testing assumes even greater importance. Therefore, responsible cosmetic analysis is an indispensable part of regulatory compliance and at the very same time very important to continued consumer confidence, innovation, and the driver toward a cosmetic industry that will be safer, more sustainable, and scientifically driven in the future.

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