



Regulations and Standards of the Cosmetic Cottage Industry in Kenya: A Summative Overview

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ABSTRACT

The cosmetic industry, a major player in the global economy, encompasses a diverse range of products manufactured and distributed by large-scale and small-scale producers. The cosmetic cottage industry, characterized by small-scale production at affordable rates, is gaining prominence, particularly in countries like Japan, the US, and Germany. In Kenya, the cosmetic cottage industry is on the rise, with a ready multibillion market worth and poised to contribute significantly to entrepreneurship opportunities in the country. Though there are stringent regulations for mass produced cosmetic products globally, the same cannot be said for the cottage industry. This study presents a summative overview of regulations and standards of the Kenya cosmetic cottage industry. A literature review was conducted on the regulatory framework and standards of cosmetic cottage industry. The standards and regulations set forth by Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) and Pharmacy and Poisons Board (PPB) were examined. It outlines standards for raw materials, manufacturing processes, and finished cosmetic products, covering aspects like good manufacturing practices, ingredient specifications, and adherence to global standards. The study found that ensuring safety and quality of cosmetic cottage products is hampered by the complexity that comes with their categorization. Moreover, the regulatory framework for the cottage industry in Kenya is scanty and relies majorly on regulations set for commercial cosmetic products. The study highlights a gap in the adherence to quality standards and regulations within the cottage industry, compared to commercial counterparts. Further, the study reveals challenges in monitoring and enforcing these regulations. Collaboration between KEBS and PPB is thus paramount to ensure effective oversight and consumer education to safeguard against substandard products. Thus, enhanced surveillance, consumer awareness and regulatory enforcement are essential for ensuring safety of cosmetic products from the cottage industry in Kenya.

Keywords: *Cosmetic Cottage Industry, KEBS, PPB, Standards, Regulations, Cosmetics*



INTRODUCTION

In the current contemporary world, beauty has become almost an essential part of human lifestyle. Coincidentally, with the advent of technology and advancements in health, people have become more cognizant of their looks and the need to look even better has not been as strong as it is now (Editor, 2023). Consequently, beauty products have emerged with newer and even better products being launched frequently to meet the demands of their consumers (CB Insights, 2021). This has seen the cosmetic industry balloon into a multi-billion sector industry globally; and it is expected to keep on rising in the future. Cosmetic products are essentially products that are used to enhance the appearance of a person and can either be individualized or mass-produced. Mass-produced cosmetic products predominantly cater for the majority of the industry and aims to provide products for population's aggregate/shared aspects of appearance enhancement. Such products can either be cheap, mid-priced or expensive to purchase. In contrast, custom made products are tailored to customer's specification and satisfaction and are produced on a need basis.

Due to the ever increasing market size of cosmetic products and the fact that newer agents keep on coming (Petruzzi, 2023); with all these products being applied on body surfaces, the need to regulate the industry and standardize the products and their manufacturing processes is now paramount more than ever. Moreover, the current high cost of living experienced by majority of people globally and the ongoing "back to nature" fad has led majority of people to start embracing alternative beauty products from cosmetic cottage industry (CCI); which are cheaper and locally made. Although there are stringent regulations and standards for mass produced cosmetic products globally, the same cannot be said for the CCI. However, some countries such as Japan, South Korea, United States and Germany have well developed and technologically advanced CCI which has contributed significantly to their economic growth (Global Data, 2021). A gray area exists

when it comes to regulations and standards for the CCI in low and middle income countries. For instance, in Kenya, much of the regulations and standards applicable to mass-produced cosmetic products are also being used to govern the Kenya cosmetic cottage industry, though not explicitly stated. This article provides a summative overview of the regulations and standards applicable to the Kenyan CCI.

Cosmetic Cottage Industry

The cosmetic cottage industry is characterized by small-scale production often carried out in domestic settings or small workshops. Originating from grassroots entrepreneurship and artisanal craft, this industry encompasses a diverse array of cosmetic products manufactured on a smaller scale compared to large-scale manufacturing operations (Boyce, 2023). The industry emerged as a response to the growing demand for niche, artisanal, and handmade cosmetic products. Rooted in traditions of craftsmanship and innovation, entrepreneurs within this industry often draw inspiration from natural ingredients, traditional remedies, and personalized formulations. Examples of products commonly manufactured in this sector include handmade soaps, artisanal perfumes, natural skincare products such as creams, balms, and serums, organic hair care items like shampoos and conditioners, and specialty items like bath bombs and aromatherapy products (Liu, 2022). These products are distinguished by their unique formulations, attention to detail, and often in-some cases, eco-friendly and sustainable practices.

As the global cosmetic market continues to witness significant growth, driven by evolving consumer preferences, increasing awareness of personal care and grooming, and the rise of niche and specialty products, the CCI is also growing and currently constitutes a notable portion of the broader cosmetics market, catering to consumers seeking unique, high-quality, and personalized products (Odero, 2020). In Kenya, the CCI is growing, and with a multibillion market worth, it is poised to be a significant contributor to entrepreneurship opportunities in the country (Regina, 2013). Moreover, the Kenyan market

size for the CCI reflects both domestic demand and potential export and import opportunities. Further, besides economic growth, the CCI incorporates a cultural aspect into it which acts as a selling point for the country (Nation, 2015).

Manufacturing within the CCI typically occurs in small-scale workshops, home-based settings, or dedicated artisanal studios (Boyce, 2023). Unlike large-scale manufacturing facilities, which rely on mechanized processes and mass production techniques, cottage industry manufacturers prioritize hands-on craftsmanship, small-batch production, and often utilize traditional methods alongside modern technologies. These manufacturing sites are distributed across various regions, reflecting the decentralized nature of the industry and its reliance on local resources and expertise. In contrast to large-scale manufacturing, which often operates on economies of scale, the CCI thrives on agility, creativity, and niche appeal. While large-scale manufacturers dominate market share and distribution channels, cottage industry businesses differentiate themselves through product quality, customization, and storytelling (Wang, 2023). These businesses play a crucial role in diversifying the cosmetics market, fostering community engagement, and preserving cultural heritage through traditional formulations and techniques, despite operating on a smaller scale. Businesses within the CCI operate with a focus on craftsmanship, authenticity, and direct engagement with consumers. Many entrepreneurs start as home-based artisans, crafting products in small batches and gradually expanding their operations as demand grows. This grassroots approach allows for greater flexibility, innovation, and personalized customer interactions. While the inherent resilience and creativity of cottage industry entrepreneurs drive continued growth and sustainability within this dynamic sector, challenges such as access to raw materials, regulatory compliance, and market competition exist (Beg, 2020). Moreover, consumers are becoming more conscious and discerning of what products they use, how they are made, their quality and ingredients (Suphasomboon & Vassanadumrongdee, 2022). Therefore,

assurance of product safety, quality and adherence to regulation takes center stage (Kaveni, 2016).

Standards Applicable to Cosmetics Cottage Industry in Kenya

A standard, predominantly in the manufacturing domain refers to a set of established and predefined guidelines and/or specifications that govern manufacturing processes, practices and products. Broadly, these standards can be classified as either standards for cosmetic products (finished product) and standards for manufacturing processes. Further, standards for cosmetic products entail quality, safety, packaging and labeling standards while standards for manufacturing encompass adherence to GMP, documentation standards and compliance with regulatory standards. Evidently, since quality is built into a product during manufacturing, cosmetic product standards cannot be met if manufacturing standards are not followed. All this is done to ensure the final product is of high quality and safe for use. Therefore, much of the standards applicable in commercial cosmetic industries can be scaled down to be applicable within the cosmetic cottage industry.

In Kenya, all standards required for manufacturing of cosmetic products that do not have medicinal/therapeutic claims are detailed within Kenya Bureau of standards (KEBS) standard (KS) 2937:2021. This standard covers adherence to GMPs, sourcing of raw materials, the preparation process and production phase of all branded cosmetic products. For cosmetic products that have medicinal/therapeutic claims, their standards and those for their manufacturing process are provided for by the Pharmacy and Poisons board (PPB) via Cap 244. However, prior to manufacturing any cosmetic product to be legally sold in the Kenyan market, it must be registered and certified by KEBS. If the product contains biologically active substances, it also needs to be registered by the Pharmacy and Poisons Board. This registration entails submitting a detailed document having all necessary information pertaining to the product including its formulation, ingredients, manufacturing processes and labelling as

defined in *KS 2937:2021*. The submission can be by various routes including the Pre-Export Verification of Conformity (PVoC) program. Normally, an officer from the regulating body is sent to the site of manufacturing to conduct an inspection before approval is granted. Once a product has been registered and approved, its manufacturing should be based on the principles and guidelines of GMP as dictated by *KS ISO 22716:2007*. The standards specify the guidelines for production, control, storage and shipment of cosmetic products. Additionally, adherence to the GMP standards allows for locally produced cosmetic products to achieve international recognition and gain access to the

global market.

Depending on the country or geographical location, a regulatory body often specifies the standards that cosmetic ingredients must meet to be used in production. Additionally, it outlines which ingredients are permissible and which ones are prohibited from being used in production of cosmetic products. In Kenya, both KEBS and PPB define such boundaries by availing standards to be met. First and foremost, *KS EAS 334* gives an illustrative list of permitted cosmetic products by category. Correspondingly, Table 1 below presents the standards to be followed for each individual cosmetic product based on their category.

Table 1:

Cosmetic Product Categorization and Their Kenya Bureau of Standards Standard Number

KEBS Standard	Title of standard
<i>KS EAS 335: 2013</i>	Cologne - Specification
<i>KS EAS 336: 2013/ KS 1572/2001 (part 1)</i>	Chemical depilatories -Specification
<i>KS EAS 337: 2013/ KS 1604/2001 (part 1)</i>	Henna powder - Specification
<i>KS EAS 338: 2013</i>	Chemical hair relaxers and hair waving products - Specification
<i>KS EAS 339: 2013</i>	Hair creams, lotions and gels - Specification
<i>KS 1570/2001</i>	Kenya standard specification for skin powders
<i>KS EAS 340: 2013</i>	Nail polish - Specification
<i>KS EAS 341: 2013</i>	Nail polish removers - Specification
<i>KS EAS 342: 2013</i>	Pomades and solid brilliantines - Specification
<i>KS EAS 461-1: 2013</i>	Hair dyes – Part 1: Aryl diamine based formulated powders - Specification
<i>KS 580:2014</i>	Cosmetic creams, lotions and gels for skin care - Specification
<i>KS 581:1998</i>	Kenya Standard - Specification for pure petroleum jelly for human use, Second Edition, Confirmed 2007
<i>KS EAS 126:1999</i>	Pure petroleum jelly for cosmetic industry - Specification
<i>KS 799:1989</i>	Kenya Standard - Specification for castor oil for cosmetic industry, First Edition, Confirmed 2007
<i>KS 03-916:1989</i>	Kenya standard specification for shaving preparations.
<i>KS 917: 2000</i>	Kenya Standard - Specification for aftershave preparations Part 1: Lotions
<i>KS 1473:1998</i>	Kenya Standard -Specification for lipstick, First Edition, Confirmed 2007

KEBS Standard	Title of standard
KS 1669: 2001	Kenya Standard -Specification for cosmetic and air freshener aerosols, First Edition
KS 1569/2001	Kenya standard specification for cosmetic pencils
KS 1766: 2006	Kenya Standard - Specification for body oils
KS 1768:	Kenya Standard -Specification for talc for cosmetic industry

Further, *KS 1474* provides classification of cosmetic raw products and adjuncts while *KS EAS 377* list ingredients permitted or prohibited to be used in production of cosmetics and cosmetic products. *KS EAS 377* is sectioned into five parts each having a distinctive description as highlighted in Table 2 below;

Table 2:

Sectioning of KS EAS 377 KEBS Standard

KS EAS 377	
Part 1	List of substances prohibited in cosmetic products
Part 2	List of substances which cosmetic products must not contain except subject to the restrictions laid down
Part 3	List of colorants allowed in cosmetic products
Part 4	List of preservatives allowed in cosmetic products
Part 5	Use of UV filters in cosmetic products

The KEBS also provides specifications for individual raw material standards as outlined in the *Standards Act Cap 496* of Kenya. Table 3 below shows a snippet of these standards;

Table 3:

Standards for Raw Materials Used in Cosmetic Industry

Kenya Standards Specifications for Raw Materials Used in Manufacturing Cosmetic Products	
KS 915: 1990	Specification for anhydrous lanolin for cosmetic industry, First Edition
KS 1769-1: 2005:	Glycerin part 1: soap lye crude glycerin specification
KS 1769-2: 2005:	Glycerin part 2: saponification (hydrolyzer) crude glycerin: specification
KS 1769-3: 2005:	Glycerin part 3: analytical reagent (AR) glycerin: specification
KS 1769-4: 2005:	Glycerin part 4: chemically pure (CP) glycerin: specification
KS 1769-5: 2005:	Glycerin part 5: industrial white (IW) glycerin specification
KS 1769-6: 2005:	Glycerin part 6: Technical (TECH) glycerin: specification
KS 1769-7: 2005:	Glycerin part 7: dynamite grade (DYN) glycerin: specification
KS ISO 3053: 2004:	Oil of grapefruit (<i>Citrus x paradisi</i> macfad.), obtained by expression (Second Edition).
KS ISO 3064/2001	Oil of petitgrain, Paraguayan type (<i>Citrus aurantium L. ssp. Aurantium</i> , syn. <i>Citrus aurantium L. ssp. Amara var pumilia</i>).
KS ISO 770: 1980:	Oil of <i>Eucalyptus globulus</i> .
KS ISO 3065/1974	Oil of Australian eucalyptus, 80 to 85% cineole content
KS ISO 3515: 2002:	Oil of lavender (<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i> Mill) (Third Edition).
KS ISO 3061/1979	Oil of black pepper

Kenya Standards Specifications for Raw Materials Used in Manufacturing Cosmetic Products

KS ISO 3217: 1974:	Oil of lemongrass (<i>Cymbopogon citratus</i>).
KS ISO 4718: 1981:	Oil of lemongrass (<i>Cymbopogon flexuosus</i>).
KS ISO 3519: 2005:	Oil of lime distilled, Mexican type [<i>Citrus aurantifolia</i> (Christm.) Swingle].
KS ISO 3809: 1987:	Oil of lime, Mexico [<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i> (Christmann) Swingle].
KS ISO 3214: 2000:	Oil of <i>Litsea cubeba</i> (<i>Litsea cubeba</i> Pers.) (Second Edition).
KS ISO 3214: 2000:	Oil of <i>Litsea cubeba</i> (<i>Litsea cubeba</i> Pers.) (Second Edition).
KS ISO 4716: 1987:	Oil of vetiver [<i>Vetiveria zizanioides</i> (Linnaeus) Nash
KS ISO 3528: 1997:	Oil of mandarin. Italian type (<i>Citrus reticulata</i> Blanco).
KS ISO 3517: 1975:	Oil of neroli.
KS ISO 3527: 2000:	Oil of parsley fruit (<i>Petroselinum sativum</i> Hoffm).
KS ISO 3757: 1978:	Oil of patchouli.
KS ISO 3714: 1980:	Oil of pennyroyal.
KS ISO 3526: 1991:	Oil of sage (<i>Salvia lavandulifolia</i>).
KS ISO 3518: 2002:	Oil of sandalwood (<i>Santalum album</i> L.).
KS ISO 4719: 1999:	Oil of spike lavender [<i>Lavandula latifolia</i> (L.f.) Medikus], Spanish type
KS ISO 3140: 2005:	Oil of sweet orange [<i>Citrus sinensis</i> (L.) Obsbeck], obtained by mechanical treatment (Third Edition).
KS ISO 3063: 2004:	Oil of ylang: ylang [<i>Cananga odorata</i> (Lam.) Hook f. et Thomson <i>forma genuina</i>] (Second Edition).
KS 03-796: 1989	Mineral oil for cosmetic industry
KS 03-797: 1989	Sesame (simsim) oil for cosmetic industry.
KS 03-798: 1989	Groundnut (peanut) oil for cosmetic industry.
KS 03-800: 1989	Coconut oil for cosmetic industry.
KS 03-799: 1989	Castor oil for cosmetic industry.
KS ISO 3054/1987	Oil of [<i>Lavandula latifolia</i> (Linnaeus f.) medikus], France
KS ISO 3044/1997	Oil of <i>eucalyptus cirio-dora hook</i>
KS ISO 3043/1975	Oil of pimento berry
KS ISO 1342/2000	Oil of rosemary (<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i> L).
KS ISO 3033/1988	Oil of spearmint (<i>Mentha spicata</i> Linnaeus).
KS ISO 856/1981	Oil of peppermint, France, Italy, United Kingdom and U.S.
KS ISO 590/1981	Oil of <i>Brazilian sassafras</i>

These specifications guide manufacturers in sourcing of raw materials which are legally allowed, of high quality and safe in manufacturing cosmetic products. Moreover, the standards *KS 1770* (part 1-21) and *KS 801* (part 1-22) outline methods of sampling and testing to be conducted on specific raw materials: glycerin and the various oils for the cosmetic industry respectively. Once the right raw

materials have been procured, manufacturing can then begin. As earlier indicated, during the actual production phase, *KS ISO 22716:2007* outlines the specifications to be met for the various processes, required instruments and their handling. It also outlines how cosmetics should be manufactured. To ensure the required quality and set limits have been achieved, sampling is done in accordance with *KS*

ISO 24153 standard which is similar to the procedure followed in manufacturing of drugs. Furthermore, *KS 1668*, *KS 847* and *KS 2937* provide specifications on methods of sampling cosmetics, analytical methods applicable in cosmetics, and the general requirements for safety of cosmetic products respectively. The

ISO 29621 provides categorization of cosmetic products based on microbial risks and ultimately establishes the need to be included or excluded from microbiological analysis. Table 4 below lists some of the normative references for safety specifications.

Table 4:

Standards for Microbial Analysis of Cosmetic Products

Standards for Ensuring Cosmetic Products are Within Safety Specifications

<i>KS EAS 847-16</i>	Determination of lead, mercury and arsenic content
<i>KS ISO 16212</i>	Microbiology - Enumeration of yeast and mould
<i>KS ISO 17516</i>	Microbiology -Microbiological limits
<i>KS ISO 18416</i>	Microbiology -Detection of <i>Candida albicans</i>
<i>KS ISO 21149</i>	Microbiology -Enumeration and detection of aerobic mesophilic bacteria
<i>KS ISO 21150</i>	Microbiology -Detection of <i>Escherichia coli</i>
<i>KS ISO 22717</i>	Microbiology -Detection of <i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i>
<i>KS ISO 22718</i>	Microbiology -Detection of <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>

These safety and quality checks enable for in-process quality control for both manufacturing process and final product. Therefore, the finished product will have quality designed into it. Once a finished cosmetic product is made, it has to be packaged and labelled. The standard *KS EAS 346* provides the general requirements for labelling of cosmetic products. By extension, *DEAS 346: 2021* outlines the labelling requirements for cosmetic products

to be used within the East-African Market. Properly packaged and labelled products are then shipped based on the guidelines outlined in *KS ISO 22716:2007* standard. Recently, KEBS reviewed the standards and adopted new standards to enable Kenyan cosmetic products to have access to regional markets, in particular the East African regional market. These new standards are highlighted in Table 5.

Table 5:

New Cosmetic Standards Applicable for Products to be Sold Within East African Region

<i>KS EAS 956: 2020</i>	Freshener aerosols - Specification, First Edition
<i>KS EAS 957: 2020</i>	Aftershave - specification, first edition
<i>KS EAS 958: 2020</i>	Baby oils - Specification, First Edition
<i>KS EAS 959: 2020</i>	Body oils - Specification, First Edition
<i>KS EAS 960: 2020</i>	Deodorants and antiperspirants - Specification, First Edition
<i>KS EAS 961: 2020</i>	Glycerin for cosmetic industry - Specification, First Edition
<i>KS EAS 962: 2020</i>	Air spray - Specification, First Edition
<i>KS EAS 963: 2020</i>	Lip balm (Lip salve) -Specification, First Edition
<i>KS EAS 964: 2020</i>	Lip shine (gloss) - Specification, First Edition
<i>KS EAS 965: 2020</i>	Lipstick - specification, first edition
<i>KS EAS 967-1: 2020</i>	Butter for cosmetic use - Specification - Part 1: Shea butter, First Edition

Quality control parameters for cosmetic products ensure product safety, efficacy, and regulatory compliance. These parameters span various aspects of production and include assessing ingredient quality, ensuring formulation consistency, conducting tests for microbiological safety, evaluating stability and shelf life, verifying packaging integrity, ensuring labeling compliance, and assessing product performance as prescribed in the standards mentioned above. However, for the cosmetic cottage industry, meeting these quality control parameters and adhering to GMP presents major challenges. Limited resources, access to specialized equipment, and technical expertise may hinder comprehensive quality testing. Further, the quality of ingredients used in the CCI may not be guaranteed, leading to an inconsistent standard of the finished product. Moreover, navigating complex regulations and staying updated with evolving standards is daunting for small-scale producers, who often operate in decentralized and informal settings.

As a result, ensuring consistent product quality and regulatory compliance may necessitate additional investments in training, infrastructure, and quality assurance processes. These financial and logistical barriers pose challenges for cottage industry businesses despite providing unique and artisanal products. Thus, meeting stringent quality control requirements of ingredients and GMP compliance remains a notable challenge for many small-scale manufacturers in the cosmetic cottage industry. It is noteworthy that the CCI is a dynamic sector, with myriad of challenges and many of the products marketed may have no monographs or quality standards. As such, quality assurance during preparation of these products is fundamental in this industry.

Regulation of the Cosmetics Cottage Industry in Kenya

In Kenya, the cosmetic industry is regulated by the Pharmacy and Poisons board (PPB) and the Kenya Bureau of standards (KEBS). Notably, KEBS remains the primary and dominant regulator of the industry. However, in instances where a cosmetic product has

claims of medicinal/pharmaceutical/therapeutic intervention, the PPB becomes the primary regulator for the manufacture, distribution and consumption of such a product. These two bodies are given powers by the government of Kenya through constitutional laws to regulate the cosmetic industry and ensure cosmetic products are of highest quality and safe for consumer use. The PPB through the *Pharmacy and Poisons act (Cap 244)* and KEBS established under the *Standards Act (Cap 496)* define the minimum requirements needed to manufacture and distribute both medicated and non-medicated cosmetic products respectively. Although it is not explicitly indicated that these regulations apply to both mass-produced cosmetics and cottage industry products, the quality and safety regulations required for the final product do apply to both. Therefore, the regulations applicable to mass-produced cosmetics also extend to products from the cosmetic cottage industry.

Starting a cosmetic cottage business in Kenya entails complying with various regulatory requirements to ensure compliance with laws governing the production, labeling, and sale of cosmetic products (Mputhia, 2021). The first step in establishing a cosmetic cottage business is to register the business entity with the relevant government authorities. This typically involves registering the business name with the Kenyan Business Registration Service (BRS) or the relevant county government, depending on the business structure chosen e.g., sole proprietorship, partnership, limited liability company (Business Registration Service, 2024). Next, depending on whether the product has medicinal value or not, it will need to be registered with either the PPB and/or the KEBS (Ronak et al., 2018). Essentially, all cosmetic products with claims of having medicinal/therapeutic value must be registered with the pharmacy and poisons board as stipulated in Cap 244 of the constitution of Kenya. The PPB will provide for regulations stipulating guidelines for all processes needed for manufacturing and distributing of the cosmetic product. This includes but not limited to manufacturing processes, allowed and prohibited raw products,

labelling requirements, storage conditions, post marketing surveillance among others. All other cosmetic products with no medicinal properties are to be registered under Kenya Bureau of standards which will stipulate the rules governing the manufacturing and distribution of such products.

Lastly, while not explicitly mandated for cottage industries, adherence to Good Manufacturing Practices is essential for ensuring product quality and safety. Manufacturers should implement GMP principles, including maintaining clean and hygienic production areas, using calibrated equipment, ensuring proper storage of raw materials and finished products, and implementing quality control measures throughout the production process. Cottage industry manufacturers are expected to comply with health and safety regulations applicable to their business operations. This includes ensuring a safe working environment for employees, proper handling and disposal of chemicals and waste materials, and compliance with any local health and safety ordinances. In addition to product registration, cottage industry businesses may need to obtain relevant business licenses and permits to operate legally. This includes permits from local authorities, such as health permits or trade licenses, depending on the location and nature of the business activities. Notably, of most importance is complying with set standards and regulations for cosmetic products.

Monitoring of Cosmetic Cottage Industry Compliance with Set Standards and Regulations

The rising numbers of cottage industries has prompted the need for product and service regulation, in a bid to ensure consumer protection. As previously mentioned, there are existing regulatory bodies in Kenya, tasked with this role as well as that ensuring continued monitoring. The monitoring roles so far noted are as follows: According to the Standards Act of Kenya (Cap 496), products in the market ought to adhere to the KEBS standards and have its certification mark provided upon meeting the required standards of safety and quality. They include the Standardization mark (section 10 of the Standards Act Cap 496, Laws of Kenya) and the Diamond Quality Mark (D-mark).

Even upon certification, KEBS is still involved in recertification processes of the D-mark and annual surveillance of products. In the face of unscrupulous businesses, consumers can assess validity of the KEBS mark by sending the permit number under the standardization mark to the short code 20023 or scanning designated KEBS codes.

In 2023, PPB and KEBS collaborated to enhance the cosmetic regulation framework in Kenya (PPB, 2023). This collaboration was preceded by a meeting, whereby the existing regulations framework was assessed in comparison to the latest guidelines from the East African Community Standards of Quality of Cosmetics. The collaboration's goal was to ensure cosmetic products meet safety and quality standards in Kenya. However, KEBS still remains the major regulator of cosmetics quality in Kenya. In light of this, the cottage level cosmetic products are expected to have the KEBS standardization certification. This is however, not the case for most cottage-cosmetic start-ups that initially sell products without the standardization mark. This exposes consumers to risks that may be associated with poor quality products.

CONCLUSION

The cosmetic cottage industry is a promising niche for entrepreneurship opportunities in Kenya. The affordability and availability of raw materials, as well as abundance of online learning platforms have propagated its immense growth. The Pharmacy and Poisons Board and Kenya Bureau of Standards provide the requisite regulations and standards. However, quality standards may be indeterminate with little means of being ascertained due to limited resources, access to specialized equipment, and technical expertise to perform quality tests on raw materials and the finished product.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The authors recommend publicization and publication of cottage cosmetic standards and setting up a surveillance system to identify cases of sub-standard ingredients and products associated with the cosmetic cottage industries.

Conflict of Interest

Authors declare no conflict of interest.

Authorship

JN: study development, lead investigator.

FO: study topic and study framework formulation; lead person on section on cosmetic standards.

FK: lead person on writing regulatory framework for the study.

SV: supervision, study topic development, study objective development.

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