AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

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TITLE: AN EXPLORATION OF SKIN TONE RELATED BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES AMONG ASIAN INDIAN WOMEN IN URBAN INDIA

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This study explores the association of skin tone surveillance with: (a) skin tone satisfaction, (b) preference for lighter skin tone, (c) internalization of cultural standards of attractiveness, and (d) use of skin-lightening products among Asian Indian women. This study also explored cross cultural issues in conducting research on skin tone with Asian Indian women, and examining the relationship among the skin tone related variables. Participants were 169 Asian Indian women over the age of 18 from New Delhi, Mumbai, and other major cities in India. The data were collected via an Internet-based survey distributed via women’s community listservs, university mail listservs, and cold emails to professional and personal contacts in India. Measures included the Skin Tone Specific Surveillance Subscale of the Objectification Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS, McKinley & Hyde, 1996); the Skin Color Satisfaction Scale (SCSS, Bond & Cash, 1992); Internalization subscale from the Sociocultural Attitudes towards Appearance Questionnaire -3 (SATAQ-3, Thompson, van den Berg, Gurada, & Heinberg, 2004), and a questionnaire about skin tone preference and use of skin lightening products (Hamed, Tayyem, Nimer, & Alkhatib, 2010). Implications of this study include illuminating the role of skin tone related attitudes and beliefs among Asian Indian women in the persistence of objectification experiences among Asian Indian women to advance feminist scholarship on
objectification.

*Keywords:* skin tone surveillance, skin tone preference, internalization, skin-lightening products.