Godrej Consumer (GCPL IN)

Consumer: On the Road (Vol II)

The increasing popularity of mosquito repellent incense sticks will keep HI business under check

INDIA | CONSUMER & RETAIL UPDATE

GCPL's household insecticides business (c.50% of domestic sales) is likely to face headwinds in the medium term due to: (1) increasing popularity of mosquito repellent incense sticks, (2) higher probability of unfavourable weather conditions, (3) government campaign on improving cleanliness reducing the incidence of mosquito-borne diseases, and (4) consumers shifting to traditional methods/natural products for repelling mosquitoes as they perceive existing products to have ill-effects on their health (although these products are fully compliant with norms and regulations). We highly acknowledge GCPL's R&D capabilities in the HI space, but the efficacy of its recently launched mosquito repellent incense sticks (vs. the unorganized sector's products) remains to be seen.

GCPL remains a high-convinction SELL (target of Rs 645 – 35x FY21 EPS) because apart from seasonality in the HI business, there are too many moving parts in the low-margin international business (c.50% of overall sales) and it has lower ROCEs vs. other FMCG players.

We visited Mumbai's leading mosquito repellent stick manufacturer and came back convinced that this format is here to stay due to high customer convenience, reach, and affordability. The business has been seeing very strong growth in the last couple of years. The manufacturer we met said that his products do not contain any harmful chemicals because the sticks only repel mosquitos and do not kill them. Our check with an erstwhile leading incense stick manufacturer from Bangalore who had shut down manufacturing due to low profitability and increased competition corroborated this statement.

Why have customers shifted to mosquito-repellent incense sticks from coil/cards?

- Product efficacy: These sticks burn for about 25-30 minutes and remain effective for 5-6 hours. Conversely, coils burn for much longer (2-3 hours) and generate a lot of acrid smoke that causes suffocation. Customers are already familiar with the incense-stick format (many Indians use the scented variety for religious functions), which is also driving conversion from coils. GCPL and Jyothy Labs have recently forayed into incense sticks, but we are yet to receive a final verdict from customers on their efficacy. The player that we met claimed that products of organized players were not as effective as his products their products were at risk of catching moisture if they were kept in the open for long, reducing their effectiveness.
- Good availability: Many incense stick manufacturers (Knock out, Relax, Get Out) are openly selling on online platforms (claiming to be natural products), which leads us to believe that they could be compliant with GST/other regulations (otherwise these platforms would not allow the sale of these products). With unorganized manufacturers adopting the wholesale distribution model, these products are now available in every nook and corner of the country.
- Incense sticks are far more effective than fast cards: Fast cards are priced at Rs 1 per card and burn for only 30-60 seconds and their impact lasts for 1-2 hours. The effect of repellent sticks last for 5-6 hours and they are priced at almost similar levels, proving more effective.

What can curtail the solid growth rate of incense sticks?

• Many fake/counterfeit and ineffective repellent sticks have sprung up across the country. First-time consumers of these sticks could switch to other formats, or go back to their original formats forever, if their first experience proves ineffective.



The sample size of our channel checks provides only a small part of the bigger picture and our observations may not hold true at the national level. Nevertheless, we believe such exercises enable us to acquire a better feel of what is happening on the ground

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Some large incense stick manufacturers in India

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• Stringent action by regulatory agencies: We believe growth in mosquitorepellent incense sticks could slow down if regulatory agencies take strict action against non-compliant manufacturers and if big HI companies organise a mega ad campaign highlighting the ill effects of harmful chemicals. It is going to be a challenging task for regulatory agencies to check the activities of non-compliant players (as seen in the case of illegal/contra band cigarettes, which continues to flourish) due to difficult terrain. Media reports indicate that regulatory agencies have taken some action in Orissa and AP, but we are very far away from total compliance.

Is it difficult to manufacture incense sticks?

- Mosquito repellent incense sticks can be manufactured within just 15 minutes and involve a single machine that costs only Rs 75,000. Our contact said that raw sticks are imported from China (available 25% cheaper than in India), and incense manufacturers apply the dough (a mixture of charcoal, gum powder, and other fragrance-related ingredients) onto the raw stick. Once these sticks dry, they are immediately packed.
- The manufacturer claimed that due to the easy manufacturing process and limited capital requirements, margins in this business are pretty low and one has to be pretty nimble in managing RM volatility because it is very difficult to pass input cost inflation to trade partners

Distribution for unorganised players in the mosquito-repellent business

Unorganized players sell directly to large wholesalers based in Masjid Bunder in Mumbai for cash, who in turn sell to smaller wholesalers. Large/small wholesalers are very keen on stocking this product because: (1) They do not have to maintain books of accounts and comply with GST requirements, and (2) apart from being lightweight and occupying less space, these sticks fetch higher margins vs. other products that they sell. Moreover, retailers also like to push products of unorganized players (upwards of 50%+) vs. organized players (maximum 25%) since they get higher margins.

	Unorganized players O	Unorganized players Organized players (GCPL)		
MRP (Rs per pack of incense sticks)	15	15		
Distribution margin	9	3-4*		
Net sales realizations	6	11-12		

Masjid Bunder is a key wholesale market in Mumbai



Macro factors impacting HI demand

Retain negative view on GCPL

We continue to maintain our high conviction SELL on GCPL (target of Rs 645 – 35x FY21 EPS) as HI (50% of domestic business) is likely to see muted growth in the medium term due to: (1) increasing competition from unorganised incense stick players (hurting GCPL in its coils business) (2), the government's campaign on cleanliness is reducing the prevalence of mosquitoes. Moreover, unfavourable weather conditions (intense rainfall/heat and cold) also lead to volatility in sales, affecting operating performance.

GCPL is also losing share in the hair colours market in urban India: Recent Nielsen data indicates that Loreal has become the market leader (25.8% share) overtaking GCPL (24%) in value terms in urban India due to higher salience from its salon channel and its positioning as a aspirational premium brand.

International business (50% of overall sales) has remained erratic due to geopolitical risks and macro-economic instability in key geographies. We do not expect meaningful improvement in the macro situation in the medium term. We believe GCPL shall get a lower valuation multiple vs. the FMCG pack because of these risks: (1) the seasonality in its HI business, geopolitical risks, and macro-economic challenges in its international business, and (2) lower ROCE (at 17-18% vs. mid-cap peers' c.25 %+).

Health factor – also impacting demand of HI

Our ground checks revealed that some customers have stopped using household insecticides since they perceive these products to be carcinogenic, harming their health in the long term. We believe existing HI companies should run advertising campaigns to create awareness among customers that these products are free from harmful chemicals and are 100% fit for human consumption.

With a shift towards natural products across the globe, customers have started using traditional / old methods for repelling mosquitoes. Some have gone back to mosquito nets, even in urban areas.

Mosquito trap machines: We believe some customers have started installing mosquito trap machines, which although expensive (Rs 4,000-5,000), could prove quite effective with no health-related issues.

Alternative products that customers are using			
Product	Price (Rs)	Comments	
Mosquito net	800-1,000	Pros: It is effective, even in an outdoor environment and even when windows are open; no suffocation issues. Cons: Time consuming to set up, affects aesthetics of the room	
Mosquito killer machine	5,000	Pros: Gets rid of mosquitoes without the use of pesticides and chemicals; odour and maintenance free Cons: Though it is a one-time cost, it is an expensive product unless companies try to tie up with NBFCs	

Source: Company, PhillipCapital India Research

<u>A consultant pulmonologist and</u> <u>director of Getwell Hospital, Dr Rajesh</u> <u>Sawarnakar, said that one mosquito coil</u> <u>used per night in a household has the</u> <u>same effect on lungs as smoking 100</u> cigarettes a day



How does the mosquito trap machine work?

- 1. It has six UV A LEDs; 3 back-to-back give maximum exposure to UV radiation with a precise radiation of 365nm +/- 5 nm. This radiation is extremely effective in luring mosquitoes and not harmful to human eyes.
- 2. These machines have a coating of titanium dioxide just underneath the canopy, which generates very minute CO2 (carbon dioxide), simulating mammal body conditions, which attracts mosquitoes. Mosquitoes come close to the machine and are sucked into the draft of air caused by the rotation of a fan inside the machine.
- 3. The trapped mosquitoes are then deposited into a meshed can at the bottom of the machine and eventually dehydrate and die. Dead mosquitoes are caught inside the can making the operation very clean.
- 4. Other advantages: It does not contain any vaporizer/chemicals/pesticides, making it clean as human do not inhale anything. Moreover, since it functions on portable power, it does not require any electricity.



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Extreme weather conditions

Mosquitoes find it difficult to survive in extreme weather conditions (heat/cold and rainfall) and we believe extreme weather condition acts as a deterrent for household insecticides. Since the past 4-5 years, extreme weather conditions (extended and extreme winter and summer seasons) have started affecting India too, and the HI business. Demand for these products declines if mosquitoes do not germinate due to extreme weather or fluctuations.

Globally, countries are seeing dramatic shifts in climate. Australia recently faced a heat wave in which temperatures crossed 40°C, which was a multi-year high for the country. Recently in the US, temperature dropped significantly due to the Polar Vortex, according to National Pest Management Association. As per studies, Earth's global average temperature is likely to rise every year and recently researchers have predicted that the average global temperature could increase between 1.4° and 5.8° Celsius by 2100.

Improved cleanliness and better sanitation might lead to lesser use of HI products

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission), introduced in 2014 to drive cleanliness and build public toilets through Open Defection Free (ODF) mission, is creating awareness among citizens to keep their surroundings clean – which is reducing mosquito breeding.

Government allocation towards cleanliness programme Swachh Bharat			
Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) (Rs bn)	FY16	FY17	FY18
Rural	67	105	169
Urban	8	21	25
Total Allocation	75	126	194



CONSUMER: ON THE ROAD SECTOR UPDATE

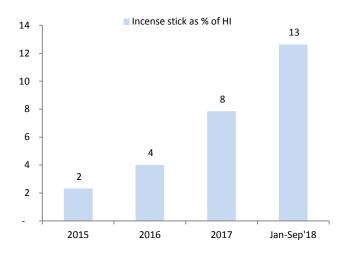
Google is trying some interesting experiment to eliminate mosquitoes

- Alphabet, Google's parent company, plans to eradicate mosquitoes all over the world through laboratory-bred wolbachia (a common bacterium) infecting male Aedes Aegypti mosquitoes, which are originally African. These are responsible for spreading dengue, chikungunya, zika fever, and yellow fever and are found in tropical regions in more than 120 countries including India.
- Wolbachia-infected male mosquitoes don't bite humans, but when they mate with females, the eggs laid from such a union do not hatch.
- Recent tests were conducted in California's Fresno County.

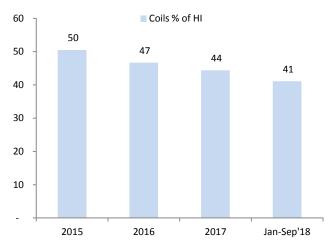
HI segment mix				
Segment (Rs mn)	2015	2016	2017	Jan-Sep'18
LV - Refill	11,800	13,140	14,200	11,530
Coils	15,920	16,000	16,660	12,530
Cards	3,090	3,760	3,740	2,570
Incense Sticks	730	1,370	2,950	3,850
Total	31,540	34,270	37,550	30,480

Source: Company, PhillipCapital India Research

Incense sticks now constitutes 13% of HI business



Customers have started switching from coils to incense sticks based on the latter's performance



Source: Company, PhillipCapital India Research

Organised players claim that the sticks of unorganised players contains the insecticide Fenobucarb, which incumbents say drives growth for these players. It is used as an insecticide for rice and cotton and is derived from methylcarbamic acid and a 2-sec-butylphenol. Fenobucarb is moderately toxic for humans and prohibited by law. Inhaling the chemical can cause various health complications, such as eye and skin irritation, dizziness, excessive sweating, central nervous system depression, and abdominal pain. Overexposure can also lead to nausea, diarrhoea, vomiting, headache, runny nose, watery eyes, pinpoint pupils, muscle weakness, bronchospasm, and difficulty in breathing, wheezing, a slower or faster heart rate, and seizures.

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Food for thought

Can ITC make a big entry into the mosquito-repellent incense sticks business?

With its brand *Mangaldeep*, ITC is a leading player (second-largest after Cycle Agarbatti) in the regular incense sticks market which has a total market size of Rs 50bn, equally split between organized and unorganized players. ITC is a market leader in the *dhoop* segment – these thicker sticks emit more smoke and better fragrance than *agarbattis* (incense sticks).

We believe there is a good probability of ITC making a big entry into mosquito repellent incense stick leveraging its 'hole in the wall' distribution network and its deep expertise in incense sticks. The mosquito repellent incense sticks market has now reached quite a meaningful size (Rs 6bn) for ITC to make a dent. The key challenge will be to make its product efficacious (vs. unorganized players who could be using harmful chemicals) and receiving timely product approvals from regulators. Jyothy Labs had said in its 2QFY19 concall that incense sticks do not require regulatory approval (from the Central Insecticides Board) if the product contains only natural ingredients.

We believe that if ITC tastes success in the mosquito-repellent incense stick segment, it might foray into other sub-segments (aerosols, liquid vaporizers) of the HI market. Existing players will keep saying that receiving product approvals + brand building is time consuming. However, we believe that R&D capabilities play an important role in this category since customers are ultimately looking for solutions to their problems and are less bothered about the brand. ITC has a decent track record of creating differentiated products. We believe some kind of collaboration/acquisition is possible between Global Consumer Products (run and owned by A Mahendran – a veteran in household insecticides), since its brand (DND) has not been able to make much headway after its launch two years ago.



CONSUMER: ON THE ROAD SECTOR UPDATE

Mumbai's largest incense sticks manufacturer – pictures from office and factory visit











Rating Methodology

We rate stock on absolute return basis. Our target price for the stocks has an investment horizon of one year.		
Rating	Criteria	Definition
BUY	>= +15%	Target price is equal to or more than 15% of current market price
NEUTRAL	-15% > to < +15%	Target price is less than +15% but more than -15%
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