# From Moov and Livon to Fogg and Glam Up - Positioning and Competition in the Indian FMCG Industry

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**Pedagogic Objective:** To demonstrate and discuss how market challengers can use consumer insights to launch innovative products, thereby achieving striking and discernible competitive edge, even when there are very strong and long-established players in the market. This case is primarily recommended in the context of topics related to Positioning and Competitive Strategies in a course on Marketing Management. It can also be used in an elective course on Brand Management, when handling topics on Brand Positioning and Brand Marketing.

**Abstract:** Paras Pharmaceuticals, a family-owned company based out of Ahmedabad, achieved significant presence in the Indian FMCG market by launching a series of OTC healthcare and personal care products, backed by tactful positioning and skillful marketing. While some of Paras' products were pitched against longstanding market leaders in their respective categories, often coming from multinationals, some otherssucceeded by creating new categories which did not exist before. Several of Paras' brands such as Moov, Krack, Ring Guard, Itch Guard, Livon, Zatak, Set Wet, D'Cold and DermiCool, became household names in India. However, Paras Pharmaceuticals was sold to the UK-headquartered Reckitt Benckiser plc in 2010. Reckitt in turn sold the personal care brands to Marico Industries in 2012. Interestingly, two of the original promoters of Paras Pharmaceuticals went on to set up their own companies, and they launched a slew of new brands such as Fogg, 18+, White Tone, Sundeo, GlamUp, Layer'r Shot and Wottagirl!in the same categories as those of the erstwhile Paras' brands, but often with a new twist.In their first innings as entrepreneurs, the promoters of Paras Pharmaceuticals competed against well-entrenched national and multinational players. In their second avatar, the competition included what were at one time their own brands! Can the Paras promoters outdo themselves and succeed again?

Key Words: Paras Pharmaceuticals, OTC Healthcare, Personal Care Products, Marketing, Positioning, Competition, Vini Cosmetics, Adjavis Venture, Reckitt Benckiser

This case study was written by **R**. Harish, Dean, IBS Business School, Bangalore. It was compiled from published sources and is intended to be used as a basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of a management situation.

The Ahmedabad-based Paras Pharmaceuticals Ltd was founded in the early 1980s by three brothers – Girsh, Devendra and Darshan Patel, and was a privately held company. Though having the word pharmaceuticals as part of its name, it was primarily in the business of over-the-counter remedies and personal care products, some of them based on ayurvedic ingredients and principles.

Over the years, Paras developed more than 15 brands in various categories, some quite successful and some not as much. These included  $OTC^1$  healthcare products such as Moov (a topical analgesic pain relief ointment), Krack (medicated cream for cracked heels), ItchGuard (itch relief ointment), RingGuard (ring worm ointment), Borosoft (anti-septic cream), Stopache (headache relief tablet) and D'Cold (cold and flu remedy tablet). The product range also included personal care FMCG<sup>2</sup> products – Livon (hair disentanglingserum,hair gain tonic and conditioning cream color), SetWet (hair gel and deodorant for men), Zatak (deodorant and cooling talc for men), Eclipse (deodorant and beauty talc for women), DermiCool (prickly heat powder), Mrs. Marino (hair softener), Recova (age-defying and fairness skin cream) and Dr. Lips (medicated lip balm).

The brands were created based on distinct consumer insights and out-of-the-box thinking. They identified and addressed consumer needs that were not addressed before, and some of them provided unique solutions and created new product categories that did not exist earlier.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> OTC = Over-the-Counter, i.e., non-prescriptive

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> FMCG = Fast Moving Consumer Goods

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This was no mean achievement, as several of the brands challenged and competed against heritage brands with a strong base of loyal customers. The leading competing brands often belonged to multinational companies, which were in a position to deploy large resources to protect their market share and thwart potential competition.

Nonetheless, Parasalso enjoyed advantage of the fact that one had a seller's market during the 1980s and the early 1990s, as the impact of liberalization was yet to set in.Existing players, including multinational firms, stuck to their legacy products and did not change or respond strongly. This opportunity was utilized by Parasto introducenew products with distinct differentiation from competing brands. They were not just me-too products. And they were backed by attractive packaging, in-store display, widespread distribution, and advertisements that were clear and direct.

Many of the brands took on market leaders in their respective categories. For example, Borosoft was launched in competition with Boroline(from GD Pharmaceuticals) as a non-sticky anti-septic cream. DermiCool competed against Nycil, while Krack captured market share from Vaseline. Set Wet and Livon created absolutely new product categories. Darshan Patel, youngest of the three Patel brothers, was the marketing mastermind behind most of the successful brands launched by the company. A brief note on some of Paras' brands and the competitive platformon which they were based, is provided in the paragraphs below.

#### Moov

Moov was Paras' most successful brand. It was launched in 1986 as a pain relief ointment, but without the problem of stain associated with the market leader – Iodex (from Glaxo SmithKline). While Iodex was black in colour and was sold in a bottle, Moov was white-coloured and was available in a tube, thus making it more convenient to use. It was based on an ayurvedic formulation containing nilgiri oil, tarpin oil, oil of wintergreen and mint flowers.

Moov was initially launched as an ointment for knee joint pain and it did not do as well as expected. It was re-launched as a specialist for back pains, while Iodex and Zandu were offered as general pain relief balms. This changed its course and made Moov, ParasPharma's most successful and flagship brand.

It was later launched in a spray variant, i.e., Moov Spray. A Moov Neck &Shoulder Gel was also introduced (with additional power of oil of wintergreen), while the original Moov was essentially for back pains.

#### Krack

In the early 1990s, Paras was keenly considering launching a burns cream to compete with Burnol, which commanded dominant market share in this category. It was however decided not to go ahead with this plan,based on the insight that consumers were using better pressure cookers, as a result of which burn cases were on the decline.

Regarding the launch of Krack, Darshan Patel, the man behind Paras' brands, is reported to have said "I was at a Mumbai railway station around that time. I noticed all women passengers who disembarked had cracked heels. It struck me what my product should address. We tweaked the formulation meant for the burns cream and launched Krack. It became an instant hit."<sup>3</sup>Krack was launched in 1993.

Cracked heel, a common problem faced during winter, was either ignored or treated with petroleum jelly (Vaseline). Krack was positioned to address this need. In three to four years, Krack became Paras' most-selling brand, and for some time, it outsold Moov. However, in due course, the sale of Krack began to stagnate. It was found that women had taken to using Krack as a preventive, even before the onset of winter; thus reducing its overall consumption. Though this may not have helped to increase the sale of Krack, the product had been very effective in finding a solution to the cracked heel problem, thus carving a strong place for itself in consumers' minds.

Paras took to television in a big way to promote its products. When Krack heel care cream was launched, Paras sponsored the AmbitabhBachchan starrer"MukaddarkaSikander"(which coincidentally means – "Conqueror of Destiny") on national television, which contributed significantly towards giving Krack a great start. In fact, Parasdepended heavily on aggressive advertising to make a dent in the market, which was dominated by several established players, including prominent multinationals.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Paras MENA Report Card Lured Reckitt, <u>http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2010-12-</u>20/news/27582835 1 moov-darshan-patel-krack

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## DermiCool

Research conducted by Parasindicated that it takes ten to twelve days to cure prickly heat rashes, but the consumer's immediate requirement is to get effective relief from the itching and irritation. DermiCool addressed this need by incorporating a cooling effect in its prickly heat powder, thus providing instant relief, in addition to the gradual cure of rashes.

DermiCool was thus a combination of prickly heat powder and cooling talc. It posed tough competition to the category leader Nycil, which was primarily a prickly heat powder. It was reported (in 2010) that in the Rs. 200 crore prickly heat powder market, DermiCool with 30 per cent share was a close second to Nycil (from Heinz India) which commanded 37 per cent market share. Emami'sBoroplus Ice accounted for 20 per cent of the market. HimaniNavaratna Cool Talc was another prominent entrant into this category.

## Livon

LivonSilky Potion, a post-shampoo hair detangling fluid,was launched in 2004.Hair detangling serum was a new category, and the only competitor was Marico's Silk-nShine, which too was launched during the same year.In the post-shampoo hair products, even conditioners too had not gained foothold, thus providing Livon with a distinct competitive advantage. With the passage of time, conditioners gained popularity, and other brands entered the hair potions market.As a result, Livon lost some of the unique position and prominence that it once enjoyed, but nonetheless continued to have a successful run in the market. The brand was extended to two more products - Livon Conditioning Cream Color and Livon Hair Gain Tonic.

## Set Wet

The male hair grooming market had just one prominent player – Brylcreem from TTK Sara Lee, which commanded 75% of the hair cream market. Paras got into this market with its Set Wet (a hair styling gel), pitched against Brylcreem (which was a hair cream). It was promoted through commercials with an international finesse in execution. Set Wet was portrayed as a naughty and cool brand and was marketed with the tagline – "Set Wet style: very, very sexy!" Set Wet overtook Brylcreem and became the largest selling male hair grooming brand. The brand was later extended to deodorants.

## Zatak

Zatak was Paras' answer to the likes of Axe. It was a male deodorant brand positioned as having an instantly charming effect on women. It was initially launched as a sub-brand of Set Wet by the name of Set Wet Zatak. Later on, it was marketed as an independent brand. The television commercials were very suggestive and provocative, not to speak of the tagline – "Just Zatak her". The brand was later extended to Zatak Cool Talc for men, with the same positioning and advertising theme as the parent product. Both Set Wet and Zatak figure among Paras' top-notch success stories.

## Stopache

One of Paras' earliest successful products was Stopache, which was launched in the 1980s. It was an analgesic pill, and it took on Aspirin and Anacin, the most prominent brands in this category at that time. It was marketed as a revolutionary single dose headache buster, at a time when the common understanding was that analgesics had to be consumed two pills at a time for pain relief. This idea was ingrained in consumers' minds by Aspro'spopular advertisement jingle – "Do Aspro to khalo, to dardbhaagjaaye" (Eat two Aspros and pain, i.e., headache, will run away). Stopache's active ingredients were Paracetamol 500 mg and Caffeine Anhydrous 50 mg. Aspro on the other hand comprised Aspirin or Acetyl Salicylic Acid. Soon, Aspirin itself lost favour as an analgesic due to concerns about its side effects, thus providing an edge to analgesics that contained Paracetamol. However, in due course, many brands of Paracetamol came into the market, thus vastly reducing the initial visibility and advantage garnered by Stopache. Nonetheless, the foresight behind Stopache's unique positioning and marketing need to be appreciated. It was distributed primarily in Gujarat, Orissa and West Bengal.

## D'Cold

D'Cold was pitched against Vicks Action 500, both of which contained Phenylpropanolamine (PPA). Over time, D'Cold went on to become the second most-selling cold and 'flu relief tablet after Vicks Action 500, commanding a market share of 24 per cent. However, in later years, a new drug – Phenylephrine,became popular for over-the-counter cold and cough remedy, thus reducing the advantage that D'Cold had built up. Eventually, in 2011, the Drug Controller of India banned medicines containing Phenylpropanolamine, in

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alignment with the prevalent norm elsewhere in the world. In response, Vicks Action 500 was re-launched as Vicks Action 500 Extra and D'Cold as D'Cold Total, with both of them having changed their formulation to contain Paracetamol, Phenlyephrine and Caffeine as their active ingredients.

## Recova

Recova marked Paras' entry into the age-defying creams business, but this brand did not pick up momentum. In 2010, Recova was re-launched as Recova  $360^{\circ}$ , to strengthen its position against international giants such as Olay and Ponds Age Miracle. The latter were supported with large promotional budgets and offered a range of products, while the Recova brand had been limited to just one cream. The Recova  $360^{\circ}$  range comprised three new products to provide holistic care and rejuvenation – age defying + fairness night crème, day crème and under eye crème. These were launched in addition to the traditional cream. As anti-ageing is a premium category, the objective was to present Recova as a premium brand;but it lacked the international mileage enjoyed by its competitors. This was compensated for by highlighting that the Recova  $360^{\circ}$  Age Defying Skincare Range was based on revolutionary plant stem cell technology, with the stem cells being extracted from a rare Swiss apple,which remained fresh and firm long after being plucked.Recova offered to make the user look up to five years younger in just 30 days and was advertised with the tagline: "Get ready to rediscover a more beautiful, radiant, glowing and youthful you."

## Mrs. Marino

Yet another product from Paras' stable was Mrs. Marino, ahair softener which was launched in 2005. This product was meant to neutralize the drying of hair caused by detergents and chemicals contained in shampoos. Mrs. Marino was to be applied after shampooing for two minutes and then washed off. This was once again a product offering a distinct benefit, but it did not find much success.

## The Entry of Venture Capital Firms

Paras, which had sales of Rs.40 lakhs in 1985, grew progressively to achieve a turnover of Rs. 190 crores in 2002-03. As the company grew bigger, additional funds were required to support and sustain further growth. The proposal for a public offering of shares to meet this need did not go through.

In 2006, differences among the promoters eventually resulted in the youngest brother Darshan Patel selling his 30 per cent stake in the company to UK-based private equity firm ActisCapital LLP for \$ 43 million. During late 2006, Sequoia Capital, a venture capital firm, acquired a minor stake by investing \$ 12 million. In 2008, the second brother Devendra Patel, who had 30 per cent stake, also sold his share to Actis.

Actis Capital now held 63 per cent stake in the company, while co-founder Girish Patel and his family owned around 30 per cent, while the rest was held by Sequoia Capital.

With the entry of Actis as a dominant share holder, the company's distribution network was substantially revamped and upgraded during 2008-09. New products such as Moov Neck &Shoulder and DermiCool Skin Defense Talc were introduced.

In 2009,Paraslaunched Moov, ItchGuard and RingGuard in sachet tubes across 200 smaller cities and towns in India, and also in the lower socio-economic pockets of the large cities. The five-gram tubes priced at Rs. 10 were displayed prominently at chemists' shops to provide visibility; as against the larger tubes which had to be taken out from the shelves only when asked for. However, in these markets, Moov and Itch Guard faced competition from home remedies and local brands which were available at even lower price points. An added risk was cannibalization of sales of the larger packs by the smaller ones.

## The Sale of ParasPharma to Reckitt Benckiser

In December 2010, Paras Pharmaceuticals was sold to UK-headquartered Reckitt Benckiser Group plc for Rs.3260 crores (USD 726 million). This amount was around eight times Paras' revenue of Rs.401.4 croresfor the year 2009-10. Paras' EBITDA during the same year was Rs.108.3 crores.The acquisition of ParasPharmaformed part of Reckitt Benckiser's strategy to build its healthcare business, primarily through inorganic growth.

In 2011, the Moov product range was extended to include a gel variant and a heat-belt. Moov gel was targeted at the younger active women with rushed life styles, who did not have the time to massage or apply the cream and then lie down after applying. To conveythat Moov gel was the same product as the cream but in a different format, it was advertised as New Moov No Massage Gel "Dardka instant ilaaj bin massage" (instant pain remedy without massage). This product contained a combination of Diclofenac and Capsaicin for providing faster relief.

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Moovorthopaedicheat belt was offered as a more convenient option to hot water bags. The television commercial depicted an elderly couple in a slice of life situation in a humorous way. The heat belt (operated with electric power drawn from the mains) was communicated as being safe and simple to use. The tagline was "Button dabao, dardbhagao" (Press a button and drive out pain).By 2010-11, Paras' sales had increased to around Rs. 550 crores.

#### **Transfer of Personal Care Brands to Marico Industries**

In February 2012, the Paras' personal care brands – Livon, Set Wet,Zatak, Eclipse, Recova, Borosoft and Dr. Lips – were purchased by Marico Industries from Reckitt Benckiser for around Rs. 600 crores. These were organized under the fold of a new company – Halite Personal Care India Ltd, a 100% subsidiary of Marico. The brands together had an annual turnover of about Rs. 150 crores. The acquisition of Paras' brands added a new dimension to Marico's personal care business, which was otherwise largely confined to hair oils and related products through its Parachute and Nihar Naturals brands.

#### Fogg and GlamUp – Paras' Promotersin a Second Innings

When ParasPharma was sold to Reckitt Benckiser in 2010, Girish Patel (the eldest of the three copromoters) received nearly Rs. 1000 crore for his 30 per cent stake, and planned to invest the same in Sterling Hospitals and other family-owned businesses. However, the other two brothers – Darshan Patel and Devendra Patel - took the plunge into OTC healthcare and personal care products business once again, soon after the expiry of their respective non-compete agreements. While Darshan Patel left Paras in 2006, Devendra Patel had exited in 2008. Given below is a brief narrative of the initial days of their new businesses and the brands launched by them.

#### Vini Cosmetics Pvt Ltd

Having quit Paras, Darshan Patel started his own FMCG company – Vini Cosmetics Pvt Ltd – in 2009, and began creating brands once again.

"I have decided to create new brands which would fight it out with all OTC and personal care products from Paras to give me back my 33%", said Darshan Patel, as reported in the Economic Times. He went on to add, "I know it would not be a cakewalk for me (considering they are all strong brands), but I have set sail." Brand loyalty is much higher in OTC healthcare items, as against personal care products. In this context, he said, "I need to grab the market share of the existing Paras brands, but intend to bring in new customers towards OTC drugs."<sup>4</sup>

Vini Cosmetics' turnover increased from Rs. 20 crores in 2010-11 to Rs.170 crores during 2012-13. Venture capital firm Sequoia Capital acquired 9 per cent stake in Vini Cosmetics by investingRs. 110 crore in August 2013, suggesting that the company was valued at around Rs. 1000 crores, nearly six timesthe sales revenue. This investment was used to fund expansion of product portfolio and distribution network. Vini Cosmetics' turnover was expected to increase further to Rs. 250 crores in 2013-14.

By the end of 2014, Darshan Patel's Vini Cosmetics had a portfolio of several brands and products -White Tone (face powder), Glam-Up (instant glow cream), 18+ and Fogg (both being deodorants), Seven-X (itch-relief cream), Jinjola(prickly heat powder)and O Crème (ring worm ointment).Foggwas extremely successful and went on to become the most selling deodorant brand in India by January 2014, with a market share of nearly 12 per cent.

Some brands addressed niche requirements through careful observation of consumer needs andby identifying the unmet gaps, and appeared to hold good promise. At the same time, some others did not seem to be doing too well. Among these were Jinjola and Seven-X, which were direct equivalents of corresponding Paras brands in the same category. Also, O Crème, which was launched as a triple-action solution for addressing ring worm and other fungal infections, together with the accompanying itching and burning sensations, did not seem to achieve much success. Nonetheless, the more successful brands were taking Vini Cosmetics to greater heights year after year. More brands were expected to be launched in new product categories such as hair care and neutraceuticals; and the company was also planning to go international. A brief note on the positioning and marketing of some of Vini Cosmetics' brands is provided below.

<sup>4</sup>Darshan Patel targets Paras Pharmaceuticals Brands, November 17, 2010;

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2010-11-17/news/27575145\_1\_itchguard-borosoft-paras-products

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#### Sundeo

Sundeosummer powder was launched in April 2010, in the peak of summer. It was advertised as providing relief from the stickiness of perspiration during summer and also the associated body odour (a unique combination of anti-perspirant and deodorant in the form of talc). One of the advertisements also advised consumers not to use "medicinal" prickly heat powder when there is no problem of prickly heat, but use Sundeo instead, during summer. Thus was born a new product with a distinctive benefit and positioning.

#### 18+

18+, a deodorant for men, was launched in July 2011 with the usual theme that it would attract girls, but with an interesting twist. The television commercial showed a pretty girl playing beach ball being drawn towards a handsome man using an unidentified brand of deodorant (presumably Axe, going by the color of the container), but the voice-over said that this happened only in television ads. The voice-over went on to state that girls are attracted not by deodorant but by perfume, and that 18+ contains a lot of perfume (and implicitly therefore, it can have an alluring effect on girls). Another advertisement showed a charmingly beautifulgirl being mesmerized and captivated by a man using 18+ deodorant; and towards the end, the advertisementdepicted a perfume bottle metamorphosing into a bottle of 18+. Yet another ad showed a bottle of 18+ refusing to remain placed in the deodorants section at a retail outlet, but sliding swiftly towards the perfumes category, immediately when left free. The ad pointed out that while deodorants predominantly contained alcohol, 18+ had a lot of perfume. The distinct positioning of 18+ therefore was that it was more a perfume than a deodorant. It was marketed as a "perfume deodorant".

#### Fogg

On seeking consumer feedback after the launch of 18+, one issue that came up repeatedly was that deodorants tend to get consumed quite fast. It was therefore decided to develop a deodorant without gas so that it did not vaporize easily; thereby reducing wastage and making the can last longer. Also, as the product would not vaporize when sprayed on, the fragrance would linger for longer.

Thus, Fogg was launched in December 2011 as a perfume deodorant for men, with the tagline – "Bina gas wala spray" ("Spray without gas"). This was a complete departure from the typical theme of "attracting girls." The product was a huge success. It was also extended to include a range of deodorants for women. Fogg's market share, which was just 0.5 per cent (value share) in January 2012, had shot to 10.5 per cent by January 2013. By January 2014, according to Nielsen data, Fogg (including deodorants for both men and women) had emerged as the leader in the Rs 2,000 crore deodorant market in India, with 11.9 per cent value share, out-beating Hindustan Unilever's Axe, which had a share of 10.4 per cent. Foggwas marketed with the promise that each 100 gm offered 800 sprays. It useda non-aerosol pump, which did not require gas, thus providing almost two times more sprays per bottle. With the marketing pitch focused on number of sprays per bottle, the value proposition was irresistible, though it was priced around 20 per cent higher than the competition. Having established a strong base, the brand was extended to Fogg Black Collection (for both men and women), with a premium positioning in a higher price range.

#### Jinjola

Jinjola cooling talc was advertised as "Lambithandakka formula" ("Formula for remaining cool for long"). This point of difference was conveyed through a comparative advertisement which showed that while those using talcs named "Thandam" (which appeared similar to Navratna Cool Talc) and "Coolam" (evidently DermiCool) failed to walk on burning charcoal, the contestant applying Jinjola on his torso was able to joyfully sing and dance his way barefootedover red hot charcoal. The advertisement ended with packs of Jinjola powder tossing out two other brands named "ThandaThanda" and "Cool Cool" (i.e., Navratna and DermiCool again). Though the advertisement was interesting, the product itself did not have anything distinct to offer.

#### White Tone

White Tone fairness face powder was launched in April 2012. It was recommended to be used in order to get an even and oil-free white tone instantly. The positioning of White Tone was that it provided immediate benefit. One could look nice and fair for a few hours almost effortlessly, as against elaborate make up which required a lot of time and effort, or a fairness cream which promised change in the long run.

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## Glam Up

The launch of Glam Up (in August 2013), marketed as an instant glow cream, marked the entry of Vini Cosmetics into the beauty benefit cream market, i.e., concealing creams and foundation creams. Glam Up offered an instant solution to women who wanted to look good for a special occasion at short notice. Competing with products such as Garnier Miracle Skin Perfector and Pond's White Beauty BB+, Glam Up combined product benefit with attractive pricing.

## **Adjavis Venture Ltd**

Consequent upon completion of the non-compete clause period agreed to with Actis, Devendra Patel, another co-promoter of Paras, also entered the personal care business. He established a new company named Adjavis Venture Ltd (AVL) in 2013, and began by launching fragrantbody sprays (i.e., deodorants) under the brand name Layer'r, with two sub-brands – Shot and Wottagirl! - for men and women respectively.

Adjavis' product range also included Layer'r hair styling gel in two variants and Layer'r perfumes for men and women. Next on the anvil were a series of hair care and skin care products, including Delicca, a face wash in powder form. The flagship brands – Layer'r Shot and Layer'rWottagirl – are explained in brief below.

## Layer'r Shot and Wottagirl!

Adjavis' leading brands - Layer'r Shot and Layer'rWottagirl! - were launched as fragrant body sprays for men and women respectively. One of the advertisements for Layer'r Shot even took a dig at the no-gas claim, which was the unique selling proposition offered by Fogg. The two brands (i.e., Shot and Wottagirl!) roped in upcoming and youthful film actors Imran Khan and Ileana D'Cruz respectively as their brand ambassadors, so as to enhance their appeal with the younger generation.Wottagirl! was advertised as being neither a deo nor a perfume, but a fragrant body spray. It was packaged in elegant transparent bottles, which was quite different from the packaging style followed with conventional deodorants, thereby providing it an exclusive look and making it stand out among other deodorant brands displayed in retail outlets.

## Annexure 1

#### Stills from Television Commercials - Moov, Krack, Livon and Zatak



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#### Annexure 2 Stills from Television Commercials

- Fogg, GlamUp, Layer'r Shot and Wottagirl!



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