

RSB Transmission expands footprint, product portfolio

Story : T Murralli

The automotive division of the Pune-based RSB Transmissions (I) Limited (RSBTIL) is expanding its product portfolio by foraying into manufacturing new aggregates including the complete gearbox, in addition to castings and forging parts.

The vice chairman and managing director of the company S K Behera said the company is developing a gearbox for Ashok Leyland Nissan - Dost at its I Design Engineering Solutions. "We have commenced supplies to the OEM by importing some units," he said. RSBTIL will be the second source for Dost. The company is also developing live axles for vehicles up to four tonne GVW. At present, it makes dummy axles and beams for intermediate and MHCVs. Recently it has submitted transmission part samples to Honda Cars for evaluation.

The three-decade expertise acquired by RSBTIL in design and development of propeller shafts is yielding fruits now. The company is talking to a few customers in Brazil and the US to supply these components. Once finalised, RSBTIL will set up an assembly plant in Brazil and an assembly line at its existing US factory to assemble components shipped out of India. This strategy will help leverage adequate capacities created at its facilities in India while being cost effective to local customers.

RSBTIL has recently commenced forging operations in Cuttack and will start ferrous castings in March. The company has invested Rs 85

crore in this 2,500 tonne per month capacity greenfield facility. One fourth of casting capacity will be for captive consumption of RSB group while the rest is for exports in fully finished condition. Towards this the company is setting up a machining facility that will make castings up to 20 kg. It plans to make few components including cylinder blocks, for smaller engines (up to three cylinders) and a few housings.

RSBTIL has two divisions: automotive and construction equipment. Under the automotive division it makes propeller shafts, axle beams, transmission parts and front axles. It has three plants in Jamshedpur, two in Orissa, one each in Lucknow, Pantnagar and Pune. The plants of construction equipment division are in Jamshedpur, Dharwad and Chennai. Abroad, it has plants in Belgium, Mexico and in the US.

Last November, the automotive division had bagged the Deming Prize. Practicing TQM for more than five years has helped RSBTIL to improve clarity, and align clearly with its vision and mission. Transparency and uniformity, stronger business planning including the selection of new products, focused investments, benchmarking products, best processes and costing, strictly following the PDCA (Plan, Do, Check and Act) has resulted in improvements in every area of operation. These initiatives have helped in resource maximisation, cost reduction and customer satisfaction, which has ensured that customers think of RSBTIL first for all supplies.

INTERVIEW - S.K. Behera, vice chairman & managing director RSBTIL

What are the benefits of getting the Deming Award?

It is on how to align the organisation to achieve goals and objectives. It has taken five years to drive the mission and vision of the company from the top management to the operator level.

The exercise also demarcated the responsibilities of every individual to satisfy not only customers but also every stakeholder including employees and bankers.



How have your customers taken it?

Customers' own assessment on delivery and quality levels at which they get components or systems from us, have been incorporated in our system. It has helped in identifying and plugging the gaps by getting information from the plants at Jamshedpur, Pantnagar and Pune. Deming highlights our cultural change of delivery to customers in terms of right quality, time, volume and sequence. The award educates the customer of this change, to expect only top class products from us. We have started work on the next stage of Deming.

How has this journey helped in managing the slowdown since you primarily depend up on CVs that witnessed the worst dip?

The CV segment has been down for the last seven quarters. It is a tight situation and we are trying to keep the breakeven point low. The journey has enabled us to continuously prepare ourselves to keep our costs low. **ACI**