



## “Accuracy and speed will always be in demand”

“Indian companies are now investing in high-end machinery and technology including 5-axis machines and automation. They have also started catering to other markets like Europe and North America, which is a good sign,” says **D. Sundar**, President, Rane (Madras) Limited – Die Casting Division in conversation with **Nishant Kashyap**.

**Q Please tell us about your Die Casting division...**

We started our Die Casting division in 2006 with the acquisition of a Hyderabad-based Die Casting company. It was a strategic move looking at the growing demand for die casting products requirements. We provide design, development and machined aluminum casting components to automotive, luminaries and other engineering industries. Automotive industry is our major customer and we export most of our services to the North American market. Equipped with the latest technologies, we are serving some of the largest OEMs across the globe through tier-I suppliers.

**Q India is a significant market for automotive industry. What are the factors driving the demand in India?**

The per capita income in India is increasing and so is the purchasing power of the Indian middle class. These are the major factors

that helped the automotive industry to grow. Apart from this, the overall economy and infrastructure growth is also fueling the demand for commercial vehicles.

**Q You must be dealing with several vendors vendors for die mould solutions; can you chart out your expectations from the Indian tooling suppliers?**

Till date we were working only with Indian suppliers, but very recently we have started working with some suppliers from Taiwan and China too.

Indian companies are now investing in high-end machinery and technology including 5-axis machines and automation. They have also started catering to other markets like Europe and North America, which is a good sign. Indian tooling suppliers have become quality conscious, however, the only issue I feel is delivery. Adhering to a strict delivery schedule is very important in our kind of business and that

is the only area Indian tooling suppliers lag. The other challenge for die casting industry is concerned in terms of SMED activities (Single Minute Exchange of Dies). We expect new ideas from the tooling industry to meet the SMED and expect tooling providers to come up with innovative solutions. For India to become globally competitive in manufacturing, a strong die mould industry is necessary.

I would also suggest them to work on skill development specifically in areas like moldflow analysis. Indian companies need to sharpen the die manufacturing skill and become more competitive.

**Q Now that you are dealing with some overseas suppliers as well, what are the basic differences that you see when compared to Indian suppliers?**

Delivery time. Companies from Taiwan and China are very particular about the delivery dates, but it's a bit challenging in India to get the tool on time. This is the only difference I see between the Indian and overseas suppliers. But, there are certain advantages while working with Indian companies as communication become very easy. Also, minor changes or corrections in the design, can be done easily in India.

**Q How much of your tooling requirement is met by Indian suppliers?**

At the moment, we source about 80-85% of our tooling through domestic market and remaining from imports.

**Q New technology trend in the industry...**

Accuracy and speed will always be in demand which means we all need to invest in good technologies that can meet the above requirements. Having right CAM and analysis software also pays in the long run. According to me, 5-axis CNCs will continue to be in demand; apart from this reverse engineering is also gaining momentum.

**Q Everyone is talking about the emergence of 3D printing, IIoT and industrie4.0. Do you see any impact on the tooling industry?**

These technologies are already in practice and discussed in developed countries. We are yet to witness the impact of such technologies in India. Die casting industry in developed countries has already started working in IoT concept

where data is collected, analysed and used for predictive and preventive maintenances. These technologies are the future of manufacturing and will certainly make its way into the Indian market as well. It will take a few years to actually see the larger impact of IoT and 3D printing in India.

**Q Coming back to automotive, do you see Electric vehicles impacting the component suppliers and tooling services providers?**

Electric vehicles will change the way we as solutions providers and part providers to automotive industry operate. In my opinion, demand for IC engines will reduce, which will also impact the powertrain and transmission manufacturers. Engines will be slowly replaced by the motors, batteries and configuration for other parts will also change.

OEMs around the world are constantly looking to reduce the friction and weight of the vehicle. This means companies working on aluminum parts and providing aluminum alloys will have good opportunities. Aluminum industry on the whole has a huge opportunity because aluminum content will definitely be more in EVs.

Battery part and motor casing parts configurations and specifications will become complex in the coming days which might be a challenge as well as opportunities for tooling suppliers. The structure itself will be very complex, so high-end dies and tooling will be required in the future.

**Q Future of Indian auto components industry...**

In the last 10 years we have seen several OEMs setup base in India and also expanding. Today, India is a hub for small cars as we also export to other countries. It means we are globally accepted and our components are at par with the global standards. Since the last decade, Indian auto component suppliers have become quality conscious. I see more opportunities for auto component manufacturers in India and they are well equipped to meet the demand.

**Q How can Indian tooling suppliers enhance quality and competitiveness?**

They need to adopt new technologies, upgrade competency and work on skill development. These are the key to our business. We need to work on our productivity improvement in order to be globally accepted. 🌈