

# PROPEL

ISSUE 10 | JAN 2017

## IN FOCUS : WOMEN @ RANE



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# THE WORLD OF RANE

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Expanding Horizons

Rane Holdings Limited (RHL)

Rane Brake Lining Limited (RBL)

Rane Engine Valve Limited (REVL)

Rane (Madras) Limited (RML)

- Steering & Linkages Division
- Diecasting Division
- Rane Auto Parts
- Rane Precision Die Casting Inc. (RPDC)

Rane NSK Steering Systems Private Limited (RNSS)

Rane TRW Steering Systems Private Limited (RTSS)

- Occupant Safety Division
- Steering Gear Division

Rane Holdings America Inc. (RHA)

JMA Rane Marketing Limited (JMA Rane)

Please send in your feedback to [propel@ranegroup.com](mailto:propel@ranegroup.com)

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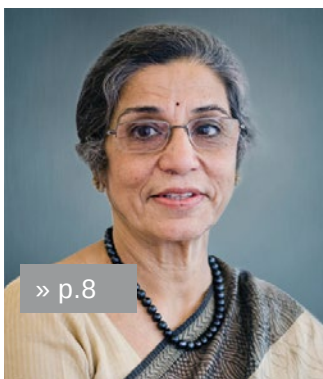
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# GEARING UP FOR 2017

At the outset, here's wishing you all a wonderful 2017. May this year bring in a lot of cheer, happiness and good health to all.

Let me begin this note by addressing two important economic subjects – GST and demonetization.

As you are aware, the GST bill has been passed and is expected to be implemented from July 2017. We expect this to benefit the economy and industries, as it will simplify processes and unify taxes. We hope this will achieve its purpose and facilitate economic growth. Meanwhile, to understand how it will impact Rane Group and its processes, we have invited experts to talk to us and are gaining an understanding of the implications of GST.

The other development that took us all by surprise was demonetization. It not only caused some inconvenience, but also affected businesses, especially in the retail segment. Sale of motorcycles as well as spare parts and second hand cars slowed down a fair bit. Rane Group, as you know, has a significant presence in spare parts and the lack of enough cash put systems under stress. The engine valve business for the two wheeler segment also faced difficulties, but we hope it is behind us now.

In addition to this setback, Cyclone Vardah also caused damage and work stopped for three to four days in some of our Chennai plants.

With the new government in the US, there is concern about protectionist policies being introduced, which will have an impact on Rane, as it is a key export market for us.

### ***Forging Ahead***

In spite of many of these challenges, we continue to forge ahead across all our businesses. Here's a quick round up of some of our key announcements.

Rane Madras has bagged orders to export steering gears to the Europe and the U.S. markets. This augurs well for the company, and is the result of persistent efforts to enter these markets for the last three years.

Rane TRW started supplies on the significant order from Hyundai-Kia in South Korea for seatbelts.

Also, Rane Holdings has decided to divest its stake in the aerospace venture, SasMos HET Technologies, and we're now looking for newer opportunities in aerospace and other areas.

### ***Capex and R&D***

For FY 17, we will spend the capex of around Rs. 280 crore more or less as planned, except in a few cases, where the customer pull was strong and we made some deviations from the original plan. For the current year, the plans are still being firmed up and we should know clearly over the next couple of months.

Meanwhile, research and development continues to be an area of focus, with special emphasis on design capability, validation and testing in India. Rane NSK upgraded its testing and design capability for manual columns. NSK, the partner company, also plans to use this facility to design and test its products.

Additionally, this year Rane Brake Lining will focus on testing for NVH (Noise, Vibration, Harshness), and with enhanced testing capability, we expect to be on par with our Japanese partner. This, we believe, will certainly save cost and time for RBL's customers.

### ***Acquisition in the U.S.***

Rane had acquired an aluminum die casting company in the U.S., with the key goal

of becoming geographically close to our customers.

The first year was spent in understanding the needs of the existing customers. In the first phase of our operations there, we put systems in place and this year, the operations will start in right earnest, and we expect a turnaround by next year. So far, we have done better than planned.

This experience will also help us understand global markets better and look for further opportunities.

### ***In the medium term***

In the short to medium term, industrial growth in India looks robust. If the GDP grows at 7%, there is certainly room for industry to grow, and we need to capitalize on any opportunities in the domestic market.

Internationally, the US and Europe are our main markets, where our presence is not very significant yet and so, we have enough headroom to grow.

In the long term, we will be looking at new areas. There is much happening in the automotive segment – disruptive technologies, emission control, light weighting, higher efficiency engines, etc. We need to work on these and our R&D efforts have to be aligned to take advantage of these opportunities.

### ***Encouraging diversity***

As a philosophy, we would like to encourage more women at Rane. We have women across the organization, and we have certainly come a long way.

Overall, we attract and groom talent based on experience, qualifications and competence. From a HR standpoint, we put together strict policies to deal with discrimination and abuse, and have ensured that Rane's culture is one of diversity and inclusion. Overall, we want to make Rane a wonderful organization to work at, for both women and men. At the end of the day, it is a good work environment that matters.

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# “WHILE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ARE IMPORTANT, DIVERSITY IS ABOUT NUMBERS AND INCLUSION IS ABOUT MAKING THE NUMBERS COUNT.”

Venkatanarayanan R, President - HR, IT & Education, at Rane Group, believes that it is not just about the number of women in an organisation and their role really matters. In this conversation for Rane Propel, he states clearly that today, it is not so much about 'gender' as it is about 'gender balance'.

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***Q) According to you, how can high-potential women professionals plan and strategize their own career growth?***

This is most important in the early to mid-stages, when women often face challenges in smoothly managing transitions on the family front. They take a break from work due to children and other commitments. Nurturing networks with other women professionals and finding mentors, during this period, will help them. They can turn this into an opportunity for planning and learning which can give them a head start when they resume a full-fledged role. They should keep themselves informed of developments in their industry. They also need a support system that can help them balance their personal and professional roles. Choosing a conducive area of work can help.



VENKATANARAYANAN R, PRESIDENT - HR, IT & EDUCATION, RANE GROUP

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**Q) What are some critical policies and approaches to encouraging diversity and career growth for women?**

As an organisation, we are gender agnostic; talent is welcome. We seek the right profile and the right fit for the role, instead of choosing by gender. That's what talent managers look for.

Having said that, we also want to increase the women workforce in the organisation. Currently five per cent of our employees are women, a number we hope to increase to 15%. We have women in several important positions across the organization. Recently, we recruited about 25% women graduate engineering trainees. In fact, we recruited many of them from outside South India, like Nagpur; and all of them have been with us for a year now. The Great Places to Work survey showed Rane gain a high ranking / score as a safe place to work at. We can attribute it to Rane's culture. We have been very considerate with issues around childcare. We give extended leave and work-from-home options wherever possible. Of course, in the shop floor, that is difficult, so we give them an alternate role. When women marry and move, we try to give them a transfer where possible.

**Q) What about women in leadership roles? Do you have any interventions to help them take on greater responsibilities?**

We have a development program to identify high potential leaders, and have identified six women (out of a total of 50) so far. They are given special training, assignments, promotion and responsibilities. They undergo a self-assessment in a discovery workshop, which also includes a psychometric assessments and leadership coaching. Furthermore, they undergo



a three day out-bound and a six-day residential leadership training program at a Management Institute. While diversity and inclusion are important, diversity is about numbers and inclusion is about making the numbers count.

**Q) In sectors like banking, there are already several women leaders in India today. Do you see more women leaders emerging in the manufacturing sector?**

Highest percentage of working women is in the rural areas (unorganised), followed by education, banking and financial services, and medical services. There is a vacuum in the manufacturing segment.

Give us 10 more years and I am sure women will have more and better representation. In fact, we should appreciate that women have been achievers of their own accord in politics, banking, medicine and a variety of other fields. So women should look for roles beyond the traditional ones, based on their passion, priorities and abilities.

**Q) What advice would you share with young women professionals?**

Talent and opportunities shake hands often enough irrespective of gender. Pursuit of passion, focus on building competencies and cultivating a support network will help.

**Q) In a Harvard Business Review study (along with a Gender Consulting Firm) conducted in 2014, there was a conclusion that, women in leadership roles bring in a whole new dimension to understanding the opportunities for a business. How can women at work, especially in leadership roles, aid business growth?**

Like I said earlier, diversity and inclusion enriches the quality of strategizing, decision making and execution all of which are vital to growth. Women are therefore an integral part of the growth agenda.

# THE VIGILANT LEADER

Taking a leaf out of her over four decade-long enriching career, Ranjana Kumar shares vital lessons on what young budding professionals should watch out for.

When you meet Ranjana Kumar, you can't help but be inspired by her professional journey and her achievements during her 44-year service to the Government. A gold medallist in public administration and sociology, she reminisces a time when she was 21 years of age, when she set out to attend her first job interview at Bank of India, Mumbai. It was for the role of a probationary officer. Subsequently, she went on to hold several senior positions in the Bank, worked in seven states in India and also served as the Chief Executive Officer of its US operations based in New York.



MS. RANJANA KUMAR

If that's not enough, she also served as the Chairperson and Managing Director of Indian Bank until November 2003 and eventually, she retired as a Vigilance Commissioner at the Central Vigilance Commission, Government of India. Since 2010, she has been on the board of many companies; she's been an independent non-executive director of Rane Brake Lining Limited since January 2015.

In this tete-a-tete with Rane Propel, she shares with us some gamechanging lessons she has learnt during her journey, the role of women on company boards and in the manufacturing sector.

## **Key Lessons Learnt:**

I led a protected life and the fact that I ventured to Mumbai all alone for

the interviews was in itself a big step. Among the first lessons I learnt was in 1966, during one of my job selection interviews at Bank of India. I was left stranded in Mumbai railway station, where I spent the night. I also had no idea how to commute within Mumbai and yet I managed to get to the interview the next morning. This led me to believe that sometimes you just need to take the first step and some force will help you push forward.

Secondly, while I was a career-oriented woman with no breaks in between, I also realised that as a woman I had to do more on the home front, simply because I was capable of it. To explain in better words, in an organisation, there is always that one person whom you depend on a lot and that person is not necessarily exploited. Similarly, you, as a woman,



have that competence at work and on the home front. That being said, if you choose to take a break from work, you can use that time effectively by upgrading your skills and knowledge, such that, you can equip yourself for different types of roles within the same organisation. It is not just the management's job to seek candidates who fit the role; it is also your personal responsibility.

Furthermore, when you are loaded with work, it's important to keep yourself happy. You need to understand and remember that career was your own choice. Once you are happy, you add onto your energy levels.

Thirdly, dealing with union and associations is not simple. There is no question of right or wrong but the confidence with which you approach the problem makes a difference.

Fourthly, everyone wants soft options. Take for example, in a bank, everyone wants to be at the headquarters and doesn't want to take up challenging assignments. But, today, if you want to grow in an organisation, you need to evaluate and understand what difference you have made to that organisation. Ask yourself; am I a performer? Am I a decision maker? Let me cite an example from my

experience. When I used to work with BOI, my last assignment was to travel abroad and head corporate credit. Similarly, in Canara Bank, I held the position of the chairman for 14 months. I came to know that Indian bank – in 1999, was not doing well for almost eight years, with losses, negative net worth, capital adequacy and other challenges. Still, I chose to take the plunge and headed Indian bank. Today, I can say things worked out well. I saw an opportunity there and told myself; how could someone condemn this institution? I created work for myself and the rest is history.

So, career planning and building is something very realistic and you have to keep yourself focussed. Unless you take up challenging tasks, you will not realise your own potential. Career planning is your responsibility as much as that of the management's. You will realise your potential only when you seize such opportunities.

Also, invest in yourself and don't ask for concessions. Finally, have a happy domestic life.

### ***Women leaders on company boards:***

A woman is more of a doer and understands the best ways to tackle something and putting it into action.

She has the ability to get into details and take things more seriously.

While women have just started joining company boards, more so after it has been made mandatory for last two years, I believe more women should become board members, particularly of their own merit.

In fact, right now, there is a forum wherein we are training women to be board directors, and I can see a lot of women singing up for it.

### ***Advice to budding women managers and leaders:***

During my time, a job was more like, "....till death do us part." There is such a wide array of career options to choose from today. So, identify your choices and decide firmly. While this is on the professional front, at a personal level, be clear about how you would like your partner to be, because, at many times, your career will depend on your spouse.

### ***Best advice received and from whom:***

It was from my grandmother. She told me to learn to digest some spoken words and not retaliate to everything. She meant to say, don't hold grudges.

### ***The role of women in manufacturing***

If you study India's corporate landscape, you will notice that there are many successful women in finance, law, banking and investment banking. But there are not many women in the manufacturing sector. This needs to change.

I am on the board of a paper manufacturing company, pesticides company and from my experience; I believe women will do well in fields related to issues of safety and setting quality standards. This has some natural relationship with the psyche that women like patience, eye for detail and a more serious approach towards work and life.

# Women Leaders @ Rane

In this article for Rane Propel, we speak to women leaders at Rane Group and capture their experience. Read on.

In the past, women in the manufacturing sector were few and far between, and mostly served only in the support functions. When Gowri Kailasam, President – Steering and Linkages Division, Rane (Madras) Limited, joined the organization, many in the shop floor thought she was there because she belonged to the family. “Even women who have the lineage have to prove their capability,” she points out. But this societal view is not unique to India. When she was doing her Post Graduation in the US, she was supposed to become a teaching assistant in the summer. But instead, she was given a front desk job. “When I asked my professor, he said that your husband has a job, so I am giving the TA to someone who needs it,” she recollects. At that time, she thought it was fair, but now she realizes that this is disparity, an attitude that a woman’s career is secondary to man’s.

J Radha, Vice President – Finance and Chief Financial Officer, Rane (Madras) Ltd. – also recollects her senior in an earlier company she had worked, getting upset that he had been given a woman commercial officer. “I think they do not value the contribution of this department,” was his complaint. But the same man, when he retired a few years later, admitted that Radha had been his best employee.

“Women have to go the extra mile to prove themselves equal to men,” the two women leaders say. That’s also the reason women leave their jobs at

the drop of a hat – because of guilt that every woman carries, about her home, her family and children.

They should become aware of this conditioning and break off. In today’s world when families are going nuclear and women have no support systems, financial independence is important too.

## **Right Corporate Policies**

Research done by I-WIN, the women’s division of CII, shows that women enter the corporate world after completing education and then drop off around the time they get married.



**Women have to go the extra mile to prove themselves equal to men.**

Very few return. Corporates need to have friendly policies to encourage and get women back. It should also have policies that enable men to be part of the child rearing process – like providing them with paternity leave and providing crèche in their offices so that they could bring their children along if that is feasible.

“We started a crèche in Rane, and I requested men and women to bring their children,” Gowri recalls.



However, many travelled long distances on two wheelers or public transport and hence it did not work out.

"It is a misconception that manufacturing does not suit women because they have to work in shifts," explains Radha. Gowri agrees and adds, "If anything, manufacturing is more planned and so offers predictable working hours."

But it is also heartening to see more women these days even in the shop floor. "They are focused and complete their jobs well," says Radha. Rane too has made them comfortable by arranging for their pick up, drop and stay. Many of them are in the ages ranging from 17-19 and need the job to sustain their families.

### **Sky is the Limit**

The glass ceiling does exist, but not so much in the attitude as in the policies. Many of the policies in corporates have been written at a time when women were not working. And then, societal prejudices such as 'women cannot

handle the union' come in the way of giving them roles that need them to interact with the union. Women themselves have these mental blocks. They must try to know if they can or cannot. Men have their handicaps, women theirs. So they must test their capabilities, and their employers must give them those opportunities.

The one advice the two women give to other women is to be aware of their conditioning, which is the greatest hurdle to their becoming true professionals. The guilt associated with that makes them defensive or offensive. To achieve balance within and in their lives, they need the awareness and acceptance.

To their own younger selves, Gowri and Radha would give this advice: they should have been more persistent; and not be as timid or emotional. Take each day as it comes, and instead of agonizing, be more focused on her strengths. Things will pan out. Be strong internally. Network and demonstrate your capabilities in the right fora. Create the right balance between



**It is a misconception that manufacturing does not suit women because they have to work in shifts. In fact, I'd say manufacturing is more planned and so offers predictable working hours.**

aggression and submission – letting go where needed, but being assertive at times.

The best advice Gowri got, when she became a manager: "What you allow is what you teach." Another one was, "When you have people who do not support you, engage with them, do not hold back".

Radha heads a young team whose average age is in the 30s. "It is very important to have the right approach as they are aspirational, knowledgeable and sensitive. I deal as the situation demands: sometimes I take decisions, sometimes I train others and sometimes I let them decide and learn through experience."

The work culture at Rane has been supportive and encouraging for women, regardless of their level in the organization and women are always treated with respect and as peers. "I love to come to work," Gowri says with a smile, and it is the environment that makes all the difference, she says as she wraps up.



# THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN AND GROW

In this article, nine women in various positions at several Rane Group companies share their experience of working in the Group. Overall, the company is focused on helping all the professionals build their careers on the pillars of trust and opportunity to learn and grow.



AHALYA - RTSS OSD



AISHWARYA - RNSS



INDUBALA - RML

Changes begin at the top. At Rane Group, the management has shown continuous commitment to diversity and inclusion, not just in employing talented women but also in providing them with a safe working environment and a culture of growth. Most importantly, it has allowed them to dream and facilitate making those dreams come true.

When talking to the women, it emerged that they were learning about continuous improvement, to communicate expectations, to be willing to go beyond, to create the culture of optimism, to delegate responsibility and authority, to innovate and to come up with creative solutions.

Their roles varied from finance, engineering and quality to program management and even fire safety. They worked on it both as individual contributors and as team leaders. These women nurture ambitions to become heads of operations, heads of organizations and, over time, possibly entrepreneurs. And they get the kind





SAKSHI - RTSS OSD

of training and experience that will help them achieve these goals.

### ***Overcoming Challenges Faced by Women***

Ahalya – RTSS OSD, who works in the Finance team, believes that one of the greatest challenge women face generally at workplaces is the idea of male superiority over women. Women have to have greater expertise and efficiency as they rise up the ranks. Rane equips women to deal with this expectation by providing them with training and seminars by outside professionals as well as in-house resources at regular intervals, enhancing their professional competencies. Benchmarking and horizontal deployment within the Group helps in continuous improvement of skills and knowledge. “I have gained customer awareness, business awareness and industry awareness,” she adds with a proud smile.

Indubala, who works in the treasury department of RML, affirms that Rane

group offers greater independence at work and is open to new ideas. “What one feels is extremely important for any professional,” she says, and it feels wonderful to be a part of the Rane journey. Her role in the company allows her to understand the nuances of the wide varieties of bank/financial products, the implications it has on the company as a whole and using this knowhow to manage the treasury. “My job involves interacting with lot of bankers. Of course, negotiation is the key skill and I believe I have picked up my people management skills at the company,” she adds.

Padmasani, Administrative Assistant to the CEO of RML, says that a few women have inhibitions at work, which they have to ultimately overcome. “At Rane Group companies, there is an equal platform for men and women to learn, grow and do well in their careers,” she adds.

Vani works in the marketing department taking care of receivables for RTSS SGD, handling the internal

and external customers independently with a fair bit of travel. She believes that Rane management identifies the individual's strength and supports its employees. “We can approach the superiors anytime, whenever we have issues, and they are sorted out then and there.” In addition, Rane provides education and training to upskill and motivate them to perform better and grow.

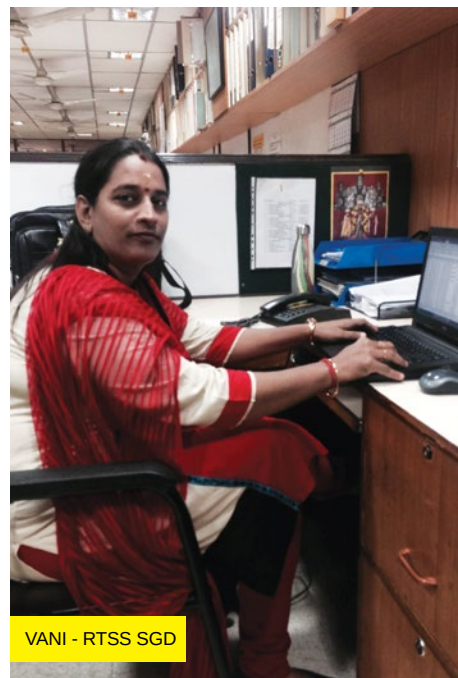
Lakshmi Priya is part of the Program Management function at REVL, where she is responsible for various projects for customers such as BMW, Daimler etc., handling new product launches and ensuring ramp up to steady production. Establishing oneself as a reliable professional initially and an inspiring leader later, is the main challenge women face generally, but at Rane, they have been encouraged to prove themselves. “Throughout my career, I have been given opportunities to demonstrate my capabilities,” she explains. “Now, I'm part of the HPLD (High Potential Leadership Development) program



PADMASANI - RML



RENU - RNSS



VANI - RTSS SGD

and being exposed to a systematic continuous development process. As a part of the HPLD program, various workshops and training programs are conducted through which I was able to calibrate myself and work towards personal development,” she shares. Rane has also helped her by sponsoring her management course at IIM Trichy to equip herself with an end-to-end understanding of business management.

Renu of RNSS provides induction training to new employees and ‘skill up’ training to existing employees as per requirements. “My professional aspiration is to find a challenging position which builds on my good skill,” she explains. In manufacturing industry, the number of women employees is less when compared to men, because of which they hesitate to share their problems and issues. Rane provides technical training for women to upskill and improve their professional knowledge, a key part of the process to help women achieve their career aspirations.

Sakshi joined Rane Group in 2016 as graduate engineering trainee in the

production department in Occupant Safety Division. She coordinates for operational activities such as organizing manpower, planning dispatch, checking for material availability, ensuring contingency material shortage, tracking daily plan against the requirement etc. In the early days, she had issues on the people management front. But Rane provides the environment and encouragement needed to overcome these challenges.

Tripti takes care of Fire Safety and Environmental Management activities at Rane NSK. Although the manufacturing industry is a difficult place for women to work and grow in their careers, Tripti has been attending numerous training programs to boost up her managerial skills.

Aishwarya, a Graduate Engineer Trainee in R&D Application Engineering at RNSS, candidly states that in many organisations, harassment and lack of respect are common. But Rane follows a culture that ensures that such issues automatically get prohibited. “Rane provides proper training, information

and infrastructure at work. This helps everyone grow and perform well,” she points out.

Challenges exist everywhere. But the women at Rane believe that the Group has provided them with a culture that is safe and enabling. More importantly, the environment is such that there is encouragement to enhance their skills, upgrade themselves, learn and grow in their professional careers.

### ***Learning on the Job***

An enabling environment makes the job enjoyable as well as provides opportunities to learn.

Ahalya, who is focused on her quarterly management reporting, enjoys the fact that she works independently without a supervisor micromanaging her every move, thus getting greater job satisfaction. “Encouragement and guidance from the superior also motivates. There is adequate work space making the physical environment good,” she says.

One of her key learnings has been in networking with people to accomplish



LAKSHMI PRIYA - REVL



and learn from their experience for effective and efficient completion of the work. "Creating solutions and having backup plans helped in solving the problems," she says.

Indubala enjoys the wide exposure she has and believes her greatest learning has been on team management. "At RML, I have the opportunity to interact with a wide variety of teams like product management, payables, receivables, indirect tax, secretarial, marketing etc. which in itself is a great plus," she explains.

Padmasani enjoys coordinating and arranging foreign travel plans for the CEO. "I see the world through them," she jokes. "Rane has allowed me to express myself as an assertive and motivated women. I have learnt the art of multitasking and time management," she adds.

Vani points out that there is a good system and periodical review mechanism by superiors, which gives the management an understanding of the employees and their achievements. The good training

provided as well as upgrading her skills in safety and security are the two valuable lessons she cherishes.

Lakshmi says, "My present role calls for 360-degree view in understanding the customer requirements, stated and unstated, and implement those in the New Product Development till ramp up." This demands technical understanding of the product and process, business sense in that program and also more important is the soft part, communication with the customer. "I enjoy the aspect of integrating all the above in my role," she says.

Her journey of learning continues as she is now able to comprehend customer requirements and translate those into the system. Effectively, she has learnt that long term business sense evolves from understanding both the commercial and the technical side of the business. "At Rane, being in various roles helps one learn many different things," she concludes.

Renu enjoys the opportunity to enhance her knowledge by solving different queries raised by trainees.

"I feel happy when I see the impact of training in real," she says. The constant interaction has also helped her learn some better ways of teaching and giving training that has a lasting impact on the trainees.

Sakshi enjoys the challenges that the direct interaction with machines and their assembly process provides her. "Understanding the process involved in the assembly of individual parts in making a product amaze me and adds to my curiosity," says she. She also enjoys the emotional ups and downs that come with this role and is able to be proactive and creative at the same time.

In addition to the role demanded by her job, she has learned to manage effectively a group of individuals in the shop floor to manufacture a product. "I oversee the daily operation of facility and monitor workers and product through a combination of office work and direct shop floor supervision, which indeed enhances my social skills, which in turn helps with people management," she observes.



Aishwarya enjoys being in R&D as she finds it an interesting department where she gets to find solutions for problems. "The company provides special training in steering columns covering all technical aspects. You can ask and get doubts cleared without hesitation. CATIA introductory training is also provided to all engineers," she explains.

Tripti enjoys being responsible for incident prevention activities and representation to top management. "I learned skills such as people management, how to handle a situation and be calm during negative situations, and especially how to handle audits," she shares.

All these women have been with Rane for different duration – six months to more than 16 years. But they speak as one when sharing their experience working at Rane - that women are taken seriously, that their presence counts.



# PUTTING RBL ON A GLOBAL GROWTH TRAJECTORY

Rane Brake Lining is taking several steps to stay abreast with the technological advancements taking place in the global friction materials industry; setting the benchmark for quality standards, ensuring last mile communication of its vision and goal to its employees and further strengthening its relationship with its Japanese JV partner, Nisshinbo.

Rane Brake Lining (RBL) is the third manufacturing company to have been founded under the Rane brand in 1964. Initially, the company, through collaboration with a UK-based firm, manufactured brake linings for commercial vehicles.

Since its early days, the company has traversed a long journey, keeping pace with industrial and technological advances and establishing itself as a leading player in OE and after-market space. For example, in the 1990s, when the passenger vehicle industry picked up speed in India, RBL capitalised on this opportunity by entering into a technical collaboration with Japanese firm, Nisshinbo. "Since then, our relationship with the Japanese firm has grown from collaboration to licensing to joint venture. In fact, RBL is probably unique in being a JV as well as a group promoted listed company," says Vinay Lakshman, Managing Director, RBL. While the Japanese firm initially took 10 per cent equity, the share has now risen to 21 per cent. "The Japanese get involved more on the technology than on the management front, though there is much to learn from them," says he.



VINAY LAKSHMAN, MANAGING DIRECTOR, RBL

## ***Embedding Efficiency into Process***

As is the norm with the other Group companies, quality plays a very important role for RBL. In fact, it was the first Rane company to receive the Deming Prize in 2003; a recognition which has set a benchmark for other players in this space. RBL received Deming Grand Prize in 2013, and again in 2016, the company went for a JUSE post-prize review. Furthermore, it was the first company to embrace



for vehicle testing training sessions to countries such as Japan. “The Japanese, for example, have strong preference to their own technology. So initially, we used to test our products in Japan. But now, we have an in-house testing lab, through which we compare results with our Japanese counterpart,” says Vinay and adds, “Our technology is now on par despite infrastructure challenges typical to India.” RBL is now also shifting its focus to raw material testing. But in this case, friction components are made with non-asbestos organic, which has no steel; and low steel, which has high NVH. Since the jury is still out globally on which one is better, RBL offers both options. “Being a Tier II supplier, tests are conducted at several levels by our customers up the food chain,” states Vinay.

### ***The Future Outlook***

Apart from the significant Deming achievements, the company was rated the third best place to work by ‘Great Places to Work’ in 2015. In fact, RBL has also invested in technology and people, and going forward, it plans to strengthen its presence in existing markets while expanding its reach to newer ones. In this regard, exports will gain significant attention. However, since it is a joint venture, and the parent company has acquired a large player in Europe, it will have to work closely to identify new markets to reach out to.

### ***Going Above & Beyond***

RBL believes in being more than a mere supplier. For instance, a month before launching Swift, Maruti – which had a different partner for friction - faced a noise problem that remained unresolved. RBL was able to test and resolve the issue, thus winning Maruti’s trust as well as the project. Since then, RBL has ramped up its production and just like the car, their relationship has also been running strong.

TQM. It has an internal TQM apex committee that audits every plant and every function at least twice a year. This exercise is management driven and plays a key role in ensuring the success of the company’s endeavours.

Transparency is another trait the company has adopted to align its employees’ vision and goal with that of the company’s. RBL is driving this practice into the company by moving from a silo-based approach to promoting cross-functional alignment – right from product design and costing to manufacturing, marketing and customer services. For example, RBL has established a project management office that includes members from all the functions, who report directly to the managing director. This, it believes, provides a holistic view and improves efficiency and decision making. “Initially we did experience resistance, but as employees realised the benefits of this approach, it has gained more acceptance,” Vinay adds.

The third area of focus for RBL has been to change its approach to selling, by integrating marketing with research and development. “Since technology selling has become the focus of marketing, the collaboration with R&D in the process improves client engagement as well as helps understand client requirements and integrate inputs into design,” he notes.

### ***Staying Abreast with Tech Advancements***

While customer feedback is an effective approach to improving design and meeting market needs, RBL has also taking an alternate route; that of participating in industry events such as Brake Colloquium (U.S.) and Euro Brake, to stay on top of new technologies and developments taking place in the industry world over. For example, the recent focus areas in the industry have been to use raw materials which minimise costs and reduction in the usage of copper.

RBL is incorporating each of these advancements by sending its staff

# THE IMPACT OF CYCLONE VARDAAH

Chennai had not seen such a cyclone in a long time. Cyclone Vardah swirled and left a deep impact, affecting lives and property. Rane TRW Steering Systems' Guduvanchery plant was no exception. But prompt action helped save the day.

**V**ardah cyclone was not only unprecedented in the recent history of Chennai, but at 100 KM/hour, it was beyond imagination! The landfall between 2.30 PM and 5 pm on 12th Dec '16 saw sturdy structures shaken and age old trees uprooted mercilessly.

Rane Group too experienced several damages, one such being the Guduvanchery plant of the RTSS Steering Gear Division (SGD). With constant warnings being issued by the government and the company, it was decided to close the plant by 1 pm and all preparatory arrangements were made to face this natural calamity.



## Severe impact at the plant

Since that morning, rain had been very heavy and the wind was gradually picking up speed. TNEB cut power at 12 noon for safety reasons, and so the plant had to use the generator to continue work till 1.

It took the employees almost 7 hours to reach home due to trees blocking the roads. Meanwhile, the cyclone was also wreaking havoc in the factory: uprooting trees, rendering power cables useless and blowing roof covers of pump and PR&P plants away. Rainwater had entered the machine shop and continued to pour on the machines. By night, the plant was severely damaged.

## Project teams formed to manage the disaster

The next day, the entire city faced power outage and water scarcity. Despite personal inconvenience, a

team of 20 managed to reach the plant by 6 am to assess and control damage.

The extent of damage wreaked by Vardah came as a shock. Restoration work was started in right earnest, but met with a hurdle right at the entrance, which was blocked by around 100 uprooted trees that people had to climb over to reach the plant. The roofs of both Pump & PR&P plants were damaged and machines were drenched. False sealing fragments were strewn around, making it look like a battlefield.

To deal with the restoration activity, the work was divided into manageable units and different teams were formed:

- Machines Restoration Team: under the PLE Head
- Building & Utility Restoration Team: under the PLE Head

- Cleaning Team: led by the HR Head
- Estate Restoration: led by the HR Head
- Supplier Readiness Assessment Team: led by the Materials Head
- Assurance of the Product and the process Team: led by the QA Head
- Production Restoration Team: led by the Manufacturing Head
- Safety Team: led by the Safety Officer
- Customer Support Team: Managed by the Marketing Head

Since rains threatened to continue, restoration of the roof was given priority. However, due to mobile networks being down still, no mason could be contacted and an engineer was dispatched to locate one. Public transport had not resumed and there were no cabs either, forcing the use



of personal vehicle in precarious road conditions.

Meanwhile, earth mover was needed to clear the trees from the pathway. But all the main roads in the city were also blocked by the fallen trees and all earth movers were busy clearing them up. So, 50 of the staff undertook the task and cleared the path by 10 am.

There was more debris to be cleaned inside too. By noon, the mason came and removed the damaged false ceiling; all the machines were covered with tarpaulin. Most of the machines in the pump division were also made operational before the end of the day.

The staff in Chennai could not turn up to work the next day since the city was still beleaguered by the consequences of the cyclone. Much cleaning had to

be done at the factory. To meet this demand, staff from the Trichy plant was called for the purpose, which helped speed up the activity.

After working nonstop for three days and nights, the roof was replaced and the machinery rectified. The 18 meters high asbestos roof was repaired with all safety measures in place.

The plant was restored in record time of four days – possible only because of the enthusiastic and energetic team that worked on it.

While initially the focus had been on getting the plant operational, the next was to restore the surrounding greenery – many of the uprooted trees were nearly 20 years old. A tree replanting expert surveyed the grounds and listed around 60 trees

that could be salvaged. The task was undertaken with gusto and a month later, the trees have started sprouting leaves again.

### **Customer Management**

The marketing team had been given the responsibility of keeping the customers informed of progress; review the stock situation at the customer end; and identify and highlight critical part numbers to the Plant Operations team. Marketing personnel at the plant coordinated with customers and managed customer visits to the plant. Ashok Leyland and Renault Nissan Purchase teams visited the plant almost every day and reviewed the progress of the plant's restoration.

To support critical customers, assembly and certain critical machines in the machine shop were quickly restored and the pumps and gears with available FG & WIPs supplied to avoid customer line stoppages. Renault Sourcing head appreciated the quick restoration and supply support.

### **Supplier Management**

A team was formed with members from Materials department to visit all suppliers impacted by the cyclone and all help provided.

The other notable incidents include:

#### **Diesel shortage**

Due to failed billing system in IOC, 205 litre barrels from three petrol bunks were bought to meet the need of 250 litres per hour. This had to be managed till power was restored 14 days later.

#### **Demonetization Effect**

Due to demonetization, there was shortage of currency with suppliers to arrange daily wages, procure local material. They were unable to use the e-money due to network issues. RTSS SGD helped suppliers with cash to meet their daily demands.

# NEWS ROUNDUP



Rane Brake Lining Limited, Trichy received BRONZE Award for 'HR Excellence' in All India level (Large category) from ACMA, on 30th August 2016. This is the first HR Excellence Award in Rane Group from ACMA in All India Category.



REVL received "Best Supplier 2016 - Quality" award from Tata Motors Limited on 14th October 2016.

## John Deere India Private Limited

### Certificate of Appreciation

Rane Engine Valve Ltd.

In recognition of your commitment and contribution in building a strong global John Deere brand that will guide our success today and in the future.

Hereby we congratulate you for building strong Quality culture by achieving -

**"GOOD" Quality Rating in FY16**

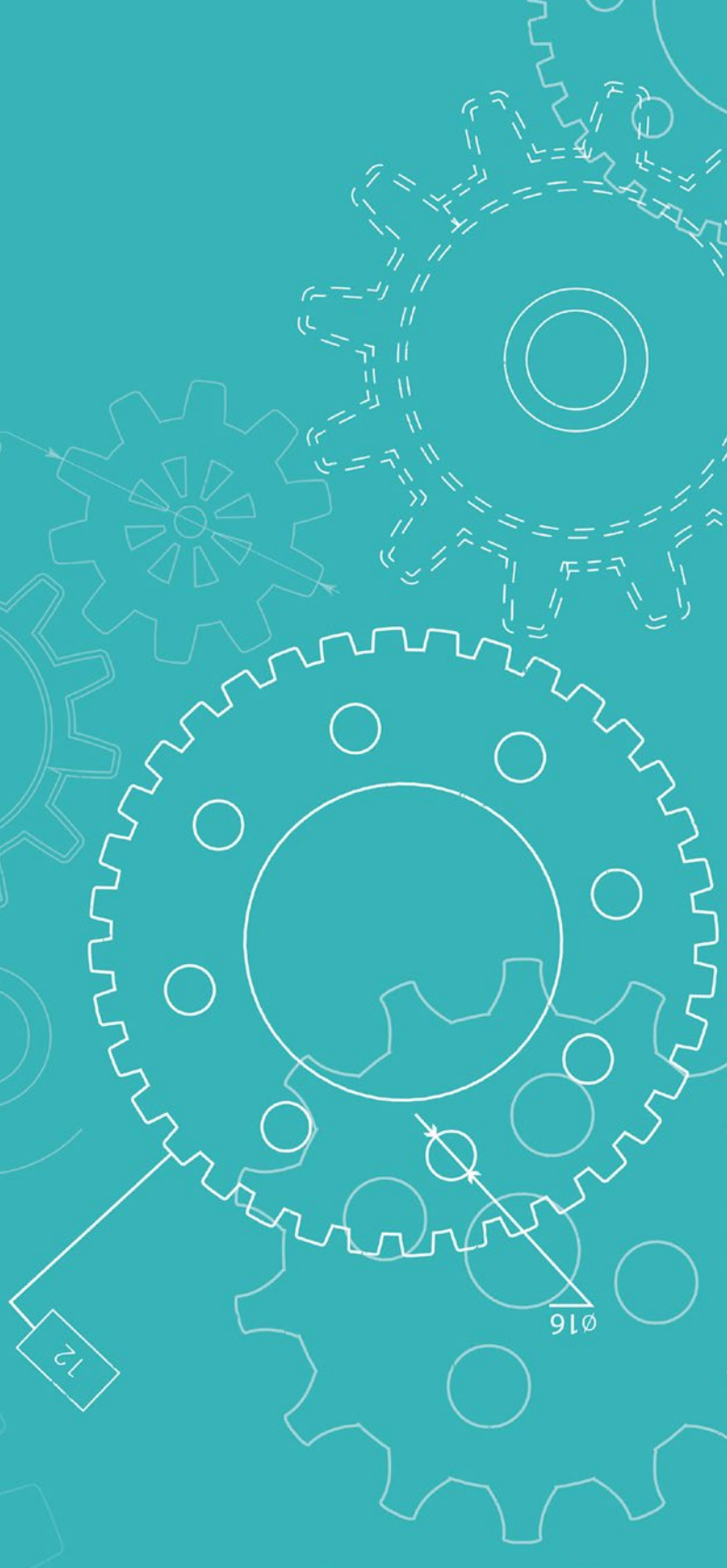
**Sandeep Mote**  
Quality Manager  
Engine Factory  
John Deere Pune Works

REVL won Appreciation award in recognition for commitment & contribution towards Strong Quality Culture from John Deere India Pvt. Ltd.

“

“IN THE FUTURE, THERE WILL BE NO FEMALE LEADERS. THERE WILL JUST BE LEADERS.” - SHERYL SANDBERG IN THE BOOK LEAN IN: WOMEN, WORK, AND THE WILL TO LEAD

”



Expanding Horizons

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