

RANE-TRW's success through innovative approach



Mr. G. Parthipan, President, Rane-TRW Steering Systems Ltd.

The success of Rane-TRW Steering Systems Ltd., a well-known manufacturer of hydraulic power steering systems and seat belt systems, is mainly attributed to the company's innovative approach backed by skilled manpower. This is very well demonstrated at the company plant at Viralmalai near Tiruchi, set up in 1989. Almost every employee shared his ideas with the management to bring about a lot of developments, particularly related to cost saving methods of manufacturing. In other words, the company has become a trend-setter with its excellent innovative approach adopted at every manufac-

turing stage.

The following are excerpts from MOTORINDIA's exclusive interview with Mr. G. Parthipan, President, Rane-TRW Steering System Ltd.

MOTORINDIA (MI): Could you throw some light on the successful collaboration between Rane and TRW?

G. PARTHIPAN (GP): The collaboration has been quite successful. TRW provides us the technology which is customized to Indian market needs by the JV. Further, TRW also provides export opportunities for select global customers supported by our cost-competitive

manufacturing solutions.

MI: What are the special advantages derived from TRW's technical support for the Indian market?

GP: We have introduced TRW's latest steering technology for commercial vehicles that has been well received by our customers. Similarly, in the passenger car segment, they have done their best in providing customized NVH solutions.

MI: Being an OE-driven company, what are your USPs to maintain good profitability?

GP: Maintaining profitability continues to be a major challenge. Also, with ever-increasing commodity prices and other associated costs, containing the price level is all the more difficult. However, in tandem with our continuous TQM practice, various measures are taken to address this issue.

MI: Given the innovative ideas of your workforce, do you plan patenting your products?

GP: With our focus on TQM culture we encourage our employees to come out with innovative ideas. These ideas are patented as appropriate.

MI: What is your strategy towards tackling the competition from Chinese products?

GP: The low quality of Chinese products is definitely of major con-



Inside view of the Viralimalai plant

cern. However, to counter this, we have been continuously upgrading our products and technology towards offering superior products to customers. In addition, we have a wide service network supporting the end customer's post-warranty needs.

MI: According to reliable sources, TRW is planning to make its own investments in India in the coming years. What would it mean to our tie-up?

GP: Our tie-up with TRW is for the hydraulic power steering system and TRW's investments, if any, in other areas will not affect the JV.

MI: Since India has emerged a major commercial vehicle market, do you propose setting up a dedicated facility for the segment?

GP: We already have a dedicated facility for the CV segment in Trichy. We also recognise the continuous growth in the CV market and have recently set up our

fifth plant in northern India to cater exclusively to this segment.

MI: Could you comment on your company's export prospects?

GP: We consider exports as a key thrust area, and our JV partner TRW is supporting us in this initiative. For instance, we recently bagged a major export order from one of our European customers through TRW for an annual supply of 150,000 steering gears.

MI: Finally, any specific strategy change to meet the emerging situation?

GP: We expect robust growth in the automobile market in next few years and propose taking certain proactive measures in due course to keep pace with this growth.