

Rane TRW

Steering plans exports to Europe

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Chennai, Dec. 21

Rane TRW Steering Systems is planning exports to Europe. Despite the impact of the global slowdown, the 50-50 joint venture company between the Rane group and American corporation TRW Automotive, sees an opportunity in the utility vehicle segment.

Currently, Rane TRW exports hydraulic power steering systems to Romania, Brazil and Columbia. Its marquee customer is Renault, for the SUV Duster.

EXPORT REVENUE

The export business is around Rs 90 crore. It has the potential to nearly double that over the next 2-3 years, says Harish Lakshman, Managing Director. Rane is in discussions with TRW to export to Russia for a utility vehicle player. Eventually, it wants to cover the whole of Europe.

While passenger cars globally, including India, are moving towards electric power steering, utility vehicles are still powered by an oil pumping mechanism (hydraulics). It is not easy to design an electric (battery-driven) power steering system for utility vehicles, says Lakshman.

“Since the utility vehicle is heavier (than passenger cars), electric inflow would be slow and not efficient.”

Hydraulic power steering for a utility vehicle is also an opportunity in the domestic market. Rane TRW already supplies to Mahindra's Xylo and Duster.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

The steering systems are made at its plant in Guduvanchery, Chennai. The plant produces 7 lakh units (for passenger cars) and 1.75 lakh units (for commercial vehicles). “As passenger cars move towards electric systems, the 7 lakh units will actually come down in 5-7 years. But we hope exports will offset this.”

Apart from steering systems, the company also makes seat-belts, which is a Rs 70-crore business. It recently expanded into manufacturing of airbags.