

MATERIAL RECYCLING

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THE VOICE OF INDIAN RECYCLING INDUSTRY

Special Feature
INDIAN AUTOMOBILE RECYCLING

OPENING THE FLOODGATES



Exclusive Interview
'Not to ban, but to plan'
DR RAJAGOPALAN VASUDEVAN
THE PLASTICS MAN OF INDIA



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BRINGING ABOUT AN INCLUSIVE REVOLUTION

GEMINI CORPORATION'S NEW OFFERING TO THE SOCIETY - GEMCORP RECYCLING AND TECHNOLOGIES HAS INNOVATED AND PERFECTED A NEW MODEL FOR WASTE RECYCLING USING THE EPR AS IT EXISTS IN THE COUNTRY. THE SOCIALLY RELEVANT PROGRAMME HAS MANY COMPONENTS THAT ARE BY DEFAULT RESOURCEFUL ENOUGH TO ATTRACT MORE AND MORE PEOPLE, PLACES AND MATERIALS TO THE PROJECT. **AIYAPPAN V** DWELLS DEEPER INTO THE PROJECT AND COMES OUT FULLY CONVINCED ABOUT THE WAY IT IS GOING TO MAKE TOMORROWS DIFFERENT FOR WASTE RECYCLING IN THE COUNTRY

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hen it comes to capturing and addressing someone's most basic needs and issues and turning unfavourable conditions to favourable ones using common sense, there are very few to beat it. By nature stubborn and hardworking, it can very easily overcome difficulties.

The above descriptions may be that of Gemini, considered as one of the most important signs of the zodiacs, but they are more apt and perfectly fit the Belgium-based Gemini Corporation to the t.

One of the leading players of the global recycling fraternity, it may be a known fact that, the Surendra Patawari-led companies are front runners as far as innovations in recycling are concerned. If its acclaimed, socially empowering initiatives in Rajasthan and elsewhere are transforming societal and village living even as they enrich and enliven age-old cultures and traditions, what the company recently unleashed in Mumbai has the potential to fundamentally turnaround waste recycling as we all know it in India. It is simple but dynamic and sure to

demonstrate to the whole world a live and shining example of how to innovatively use the dynamics of the complex activity called waste management to an all-encompassing, socially-relevant project that is welfare oriented and inclusive at the same time.

“We have coined the project as a Material Recycling Project (MRP). It is basically a social construct project, with economic benefits to all stakeholders in the entire value chain,” says Hanumant Saraf, in-charge of Gemcorp Recycling and Technologies Pvt Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Gemini Corporation NV, Belgium. With this latest addition, the group is expecting to bring about a paradigm shift in the way waste is handled in the country. A recycling industry veteran, Mr Saraf, who has been specially picked up for the project by the Belgian Group, is busy adding more and new operational areas into the programme’s ambit across different geographies throughout India.

LAYOUT OF THE PROJECT

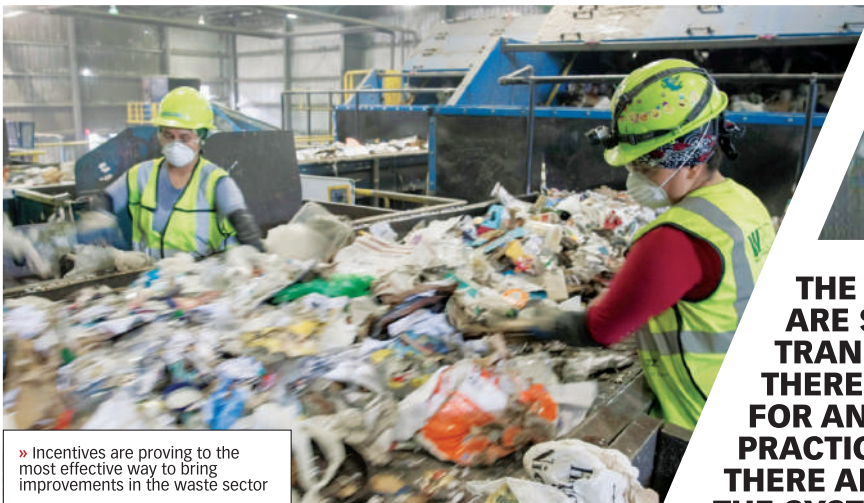
To start with, Gemcorp identifies Kabadiwalas who are in business but are not able to grow in their business beyond a point.

The selection process includes a background check of the person, who, it insists, should be from the same fraternity and must be generating a minimum of 10-15 tonnes of waste per month.

“Once we select a Kabadiwala in an area after an elaborate screening based on certain criteria, we have a whole package of support for him, besides buying his material at an attractive price,” informs Mr Saraf.

Gemcorp does not provide working capital finance, nor does it provide space, which should be owned. It only funds for the equipment. Right now, it provides ma-

» Gemcorp could introduce value additions like bailing to give better returns to Kabadiwalas



» Incentives are proving to be the most effective way to bring improvements in the waste sector



THE OPERATIONS ARE SO TRANSPARENT THAT THERE IS NO SCOPE FOR ANY UNFAIR PRACTICES NOR ARE THERE ANY LOOPHOLE IN THE SYSTEM

“In the race to make money people forget that we have a life also which is part of the value chain. We should not be scarifying our health, safety, environment, etc., which, in fact, is the sad story especially of all those engaged in vast proliferating informal waste collection sector in the country,” Mr Saraf said as he tried to laid out the frame work of his pet project.

“MRP is designed in such a way to cover important aspects like health, safety, environment of those people working in our projects. Along with the right to live in the best of conditions, we also help them better their businesses, at the same time saving some money for ourselves. Ultimately, what we want is to make a successful model in which all the stakeholders in the waste value chain are benefited,” he added.

chines for bailing and weighing.

In future it may help the operators in logistics, by giving them pick-up vans, etc.

Initially it took Gemcorp almost 2 months to get its first associate, as it was new, nobody knew it and people were very susceptible. The ice-breaking sessions took some time. But once started rolling, they understood what Gemcorp is trying to do and things have changed so drastically that now the associates are supporting it 24/7. They have started introducing their friends for business.

Through the programme, Gemcorp is expecting to bring about a paradigm shift in the way waste is handled in the country

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» A bailing machine installed by Gemcorp at one of its associates



If an operator was getting around Rs 20-23 per kg for his material, after becoming a Gemcorp associate the same material is fetching him Rs 25-28 as he is now able to add value to it: the segregated material leaves his place neat and all baled.

Right now, it is only PET, PP and HDPE from the post-consumer waste which the waste pickers collect from nearby areas.

Gemcorp buys the waste from its associates at the market rate and pay them within 24 hours. It in turn gives it to an authorized recycler who pays the company as per the payment terms.

Currently Gemcorp is operational in five sites at two places – Shilphata and Mandala, on the outskirts of Mumbai city. The five sites jointly contribute around 150 tonnes per month of used plastic waste.

Going forward, Gemcorp is planning to introduce similar operations in Bangalore, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Delhi, Varanasi and pockets of Gujarat where it already has some deeds in the pipeline. It will also be extending the project to eastern parts of India.

It plans to close the calendar year with over 50 units. Mr Saraf and his team are busy working to add 10 units per month on an average.

As it is dedicating one center to one brand, it is like an adopted center by the brand

By the end of 2020, the company expects to have 200-250 bailing collection centers, cumulatively contributing about 7000 to 8000 tonnes of waste every month.

The basic philosophy that Gemcorp believes is that it will fetch the best value for the products, be it in India or abroad.

The making of a game changer

But what is the most important aspect of MRP and what makes it a game changer extraordinary of the waste and recycling sphere is the benevolent social construct components that Gemcorp has been able to incorporate and some of the additions that it plans to add once project advances.

Gemcorp wants to ensure that those employed at a collection center get minimum wages. "If a center is able to ensure minimum wages to all those are employed, we encourage it with cash incentives.

"We don't want to penalise anybody for not doing something, but instead we try to motivate them to undertake initiatives that are desirable or ideal through instant rewards. Our incentive programmes are so designed that there are parameters based on which they are made eligible for cash rewards.

"For example, besides implementation of minimum wages, providing personal hygiene, protective equipment like shoes, gloves, safe drinking water and sanitation will make a center eligible for incentives.

Going forward, Gemcorp is planning to offer incentives for providing insurance to the workers, the details of which are being worked out.



» Lack of health and sanitation of females working in the sector is a serious challenge that Gemcorp is trying to address through the project

As part of the programme, Gemcorp plans to organize programmes like medical camps for the benefit of the people from its operation areas. The first medical camp of kind, organized on 2nd October 2019 in Shilphata, saw more than 224 people benefitting. It was such a great success that the company had to curtail it because the turnout was more than what was expected.

Being a Muslim dominated area, local Imam also attended the programme. So impressed was he with the camp that he

MR SURENDRA PATAWARI

I believe that the challenges in plastics recycling are much more serious than being led out to believe.

IN HIS LATEST, CHAIRMAN OF GEMINI CORPORATION HAS PUT HIS MIGHT BEHIND ALLIANCE TO END PLASTIC WASTE

PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES

Mr. Surendra Patwari, Chairman of Gemini Corporation NV, Belgium, has recently joined the august organization of world's leading corporates, Alliance to End Plastic Waste (AEPW) as a Board Member.

This new CEO-led Alliance of global companies to advance solutions to eliminate plastic waste in the environment is currently made up of nearly 40 member companies. Alliance members including Gemini have committed to invest \$1.5 billion over the next five years for this cause.

The Alliance membership represents global companies located throughout North and South America, Europe, Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Middle East and includes oil majors Shell, ExxonMobil, and Total.

The Alliance is a not-for-profit organization that includes chemical and plastic manufacturers, consumer goods companies, converters, and waste management companies.

David Taylor, Chairman of the Board, President and CEO of Procter & Gamble, is the chairman of the AEPW. BASF, Berry Global, Braskem, Chevron Phillips Chemical Company, Clariant, Covestro, Dow, DSM, ExxonMobil, Formosa Plastics Corporation, Henkel, LyondellBasell, Mitsubishi Chemical Holdings, Mitsui Chemicals, NOVA Chemicals, OxyChem, PolyOne, Procter & Gamble, Reliance Industries, SABIC, Sasol, SUEZ, Shell, SCG Chemicals, Sumitomo Chemical, Total, Veolia, and Versalis (Eni) are the founding members of the Alliance.

The members have developed a global vision, as well as a comprehensive and integrated strategy focusing on infra-

structure development for the collection and management of waste and increasing recycling around the world.

Mr. Patwari said: "I am very happy that the Alliance inducted me as a Board Member. The Board consists of only the CEOs of the world plastics industry. Plastics and plastics recycling are not only my business but also is my passion. Over the course of last 30 years, I have been fortunate to guide and give second life to over 3 million tonnes of plastics waste in practically all regions of the world. I believe that there is so much to do in plastics recycling, not only from commercial point of view but also from social point of view. The plastics recycling business is a fine example of a good marriage between ecology and economy. I believe that the challenges in plastics recycling are much more serious than being led out to believe.

"This CEO-led Alliance has earmarked an amount of \$1.5 billion with a view to end plastics waste. I believe that this amount is just the beginning. We will need over tens of billions of dollars to address this challenge. Being a person who knows the ground realities of plastics recycling, I hope to influence the CEOs to increase the amount to 10 billion dollars," he added.

Mr. Patwari-led Gemini Corporation NV is one of the largest Circular Economy market makers. Gemini completes the circular economy by organizing and controlling the fragmented value chain of recycling through sourcing, quality control, logistics, distribution, compliances and buy-back arrangements for converters. In addition to plastic, Gemini enables recycling for 50 million tyres, 1.5 million refrigerators and 300,000 cars annually.

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» **CLEAN ROOM FACILITIES:** The entire ambience gets a face lift



» **LET THERE BE ORDER:** Neat and clean 'operational' areas

suggested organizing more such camps at different places.

For Mr Saraf and his team, it was an eye-opener of sorts to find that more than 80-90% of the participants were not knowing their blood group.

LEVERAGING ERP TO THE FULLEST

The backbone of the project is EPR that the government has put in place, making manufacturers responsible for the waste generated out of their products. Accordingly, every brand has some EPR obligation and Gemcorp gives EPR credits to those brands that associate with it. Whatever support or funding that it gets from the brands, it uses partly for business expansion and partly for social causes. Appreciating the good work done by Gemcorp, many brands have extended their support. According to Mr Saraf, the company has already tied up with UNDP and brands like Marico, Coca Cola, and discussions are going on with other brands also.

And there are reasons for it, adds Mr Saraf: "We are giving complete traceability to the brands. The whole process at a project is so transparent that all the documents and controls are accessible to the brand. As we are dedicating one center to one brand, it is like an adopted center by the brand."

"The operations at the site are so transparent that there is no scope for any unfair practices nor are there any loophole in the system as we do not want anyone to mess up our system," he says.

Despite the attractiveness of the project, like anything new, it also faces multiple challenges. For example, it is becoming a challenge for Gemcorp to establish traceability of the material it collects as their associates are not willing to give much details about the source of materials they get.

Another major issue is socio economical - issues that exist with the families of waste workers. Their children, for example, need to be occupied and bringing them to the mainstream is one of the major challenges

that Gemcorp is not finding an easy solution.

Another serious challenge is lack of health and sanitation of females working in the sector. Females are not given proper care or attention. They are very much deprived of even the basic facilities like toilet or washroom. "We are in talks with brands who are ready to offer support for the personal health and care of females working in such facilities," said Mr Saraf.

A NEW WAY TO REWARD PERFORMANCE

The model operationalised by Gemcorp is totally performance driven: if any associate fails to deliver the quantity of waste material that is mutually agreed upon, he will have to start giving EMIs for the machines. The company buys the machines and leases them out to its associates. After successful completion of the contract period of 3 years, the machines become the property of the associates.

Of late, the company has come up with a new strategy, which, according to Mr Saraf, has the potential to be a winning formula for Gemcorp. If an associate is already having machines, Gemcorp will buy them out by paying cash which the associate can use as working capital.

The beauty about the whole project is that it is not taking any rights away from the scrap dealers but is designed to strengthen them, even as it is enriching and ameliorating the whole line of stakeholders throughout the waste value chain. It is perhaps such salient features what endeared the audience at the World Economic Forum in New York, when Mr Patawari presented the model recently. The huge interest and support that the socially ennobling project elicited has not ebbed ever since.

The simplicity, ingenuity and purposefulness of the social construct programme seem to be resourceful enough to attract more and more people, places and materials to Gemcorp. No wonder tomorrows look pretty promising.