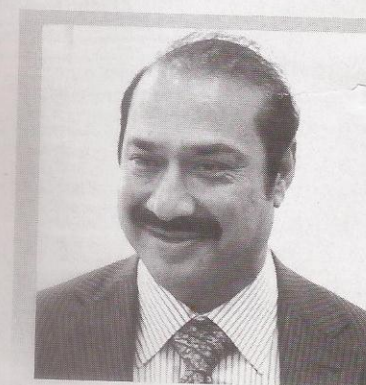


Viraj Profiles now sets sight on Indian market

Today Viraj is one of the largest manufacturers and exporters of stainless steel long products in India. With a turnover of USD 1.5 billion, the company is exporting its stainless steel products (wire rods, rods, wires, flanges, fasteners, bright bars and profiles) to more than 1,300 customers based across 90 countries spread over 6 continents. It has a total melting capacity of 528,000 tonne per annum, producing more than 50,000 SKUs in various grades like austenitic, ferritic, martensitic, duplex and electrode in various shapes and sizes. The core competency of Viraj lies in its integrated manufacturing facilities which enables it to meet customer specific requirements.

Viraj also functions as one of the world's largest stainless steel flange manufacturers, which has led to the company's trusted reputation as a leading provider of flanges for marine applications. Each of these product range enjoys substantial acclaim worldwide produced at a site with five induction furnaces within its melting workshop, as well as a high degree of automation throughout.

Befitting of the company's global focus, Viraj Profiles' production volumes are impressive indeed, with the bright bars plant producing 180,000 tonne per annum and the wires division manufacturing 50,000 tonne per annum. Approximately 18,000 tonne



"Our core competency lies in our ability to fulfill specific requirements of every customer as we have integrated manufacturing facilities"

Neeraj R Kochhar
CMD, Viraj Profiles Ltd.

flanges are manufactured per annum, complemented by 60,000 tonne per annum of fasteners and 78,000 tonne per annum of

Pramod Shinde

stainless steel profiles. Viraj also produces 300,000 tonne per year of stainless steel wire rods.

In line with its commitment for world-class quality products, Viraj

operates facilities replete with advanced technologies, in order to generate a broad array of stainless steel solutions. Viraj's stainless steel products find application in automobile industries, food processing industries, boilers, pressure vessels, shipbuilding, oil pipelines, petrochemical facilities, construction projects and surgical instruments – among many other means of utilisation.



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Mr Neeraj R Kochhar, CMD, Viraj Profiles Ltd and Mrs Renu Kochhar, MD, Viraj Profiles explain how it charted its journey to become the world's largest long product stainless steel manufacturer and shares key insights regarding the importance of remaining competitive by quintessentially maintaining quality of its products in the global export market in this interview with *Minerals & Metals Review*.

Excerpts :

Can you update us on the success mantra of Viraj Profile journey towards becoming world's largest stainless steel manufacturer?

Viraj started its journey in the year 1990 with a modest strength of 150 employees and started its first melting shop in 1991. The journey of two decades saw extension of product lines and backward integration in order to achieve the maximum efficiency. In the year 1995 we started manufacturing stainless steel. In the same year we commissioned our flanges division and bright bar division and started exporting Bright Bars. Then after around 5 years, in the year 2000, we established our Profiles division predominantly catering to overseas clients. 99% of our total Profiles products are already being exported.

One of our biggest achievements came our way in the year 2008 when Viraj was



Mrs Renu Kochhar
MD, Viraj Profiles

ranked 3rd largest producer of stainless steel long products in the world. And from then on there was no looking back. The company has come a long way from manufacturing the utensil grade of steel to manufacturing specialized engineering products in stainless steel for various industries like petrochemicals, ship building, defence sector, automobile sector, architecture and construction segment etc.

Today we are one of the largest producers of stainless steel long products in the world and are exporting to approximately 90 countries spread across six continents and our employee strength has grown multi-fold touching the figure of 9,000 employees. Viraj Profile manufactures stainless steel products like wire, wire rods, fasteners, flanges, bright bars and profiles in various sizes and

grades. Our product portfolio comprises of more than 50,000 SKUs spread across these verticals.

Mr Neeraj R Kochhar shares "Our core competency lies in our ability to fulfill specific requirements of every customer and which becomes possible because of our integrated manufacturing facilities. Our backward integrated facilities enable us to source and produce the exact quality of stainless steel product as desired by the customer. Product of one unit serves as a raw material to another product so we are very clear about what quality do we need to produce. Today, Viraj is one of the largest producers of stainless steel long products in India."

Please provide us the salient features of Viraj Profile product basket to remain competitive in the global market?

Viraj manufactures a wide range of products using austenitic, ferritic, martensitic and duplex stainless steel grades. Mrs Renu Kochhar, Managing Director, Viraj Profiles Ltd shares, "We produce stainless steel wire rods, wires, fasteners, flanges & fittings, bright bars. We manufacture more than 50,000 SKUs in austenitic, ferritic, martensitic, austenitic-ferritic (duplex) and special stainless steel grades.

Our steel melting shop is well equipped with five induction furnaces, two AOD converters, two continuous billet casters and has melting capacity of 528,000 tonne per annum. We have recently installed 3 high-powered induction furnaces from ABP, Germany. Our melting shop is equipped with mechanized scrap charging system, mechanized slag skimming system, mechanized dismantling of AOD & ladle lining."

In wire and wire rod section we manufacture different types



of wires like welding wire, cold heading wire, fine wire, electro polish wire, spring wire, rope wire, redraw wire, tie wire, nail wire and conveyor belt wire in size ranging from 0.09 to 15 mm. We manufacture wire rods in the size ranging from 5.5 to 39.5 mm and our wire rod manufacturing facility runs on Level-2 automation. We also produce austenitic grade of fasteners, nuts, bolts, screws in various types and size range.

We produce equal & unequal angles, taper & non-taper channel, cold drawn, hot rolled flats, polished & hairline angles, flats, s-beams, tee bars. We also manufacture flanges in size ranging from 1/2" to 40". In addition to this we also manufacture cold drawn bars, peeled and polished bars, rolled bars, forged bars in various shapes such as round, hexagon, square and in various size ranging from dia 3 mm to 600 mm.

We are continuously working on technological upgradation, new product development and quality improvement of our products so that we can serve our customers better and better. Our Research & Development team is constantly working towards scanning the customers' needs across different industries and developing new products to meet their requirement. Our products have more than 90 approvals and certifications which enable us to meet different kinds of specific usage conditions. The enviable list of approvals also shows the commitment the company has towards manufacturing and supplying world class quality products.

Among Viraj Profile's product variant, please highlight the highest selling product with its application market?

Mrs Renu Kochhar, who also heads the sales and marketing of

all products' verticals, enumerates "every product is equally important for us. Some of the products find good demand in one particular region or in one industry while the other finds its own share of demand somewhere else.

Having said that, yes bright bars, wire products and flanges command a very good demand across geographical boundaries. Our wire and wire rods are mainly used in shipbuilding, medical, agriculture, food processing, fastener making and paper industry. Our bright bars find huge market in automobile, textile and automobile industry. Our stainless steel flanges are very popular in middle-east region and are predominantly used in the oil and gas and pipeline industries. Viraj is one of leading manufacturers and exporters of stainless steel flanges in the world. Our ability to produce flawless quality products has made us the preferred choice for our customers.

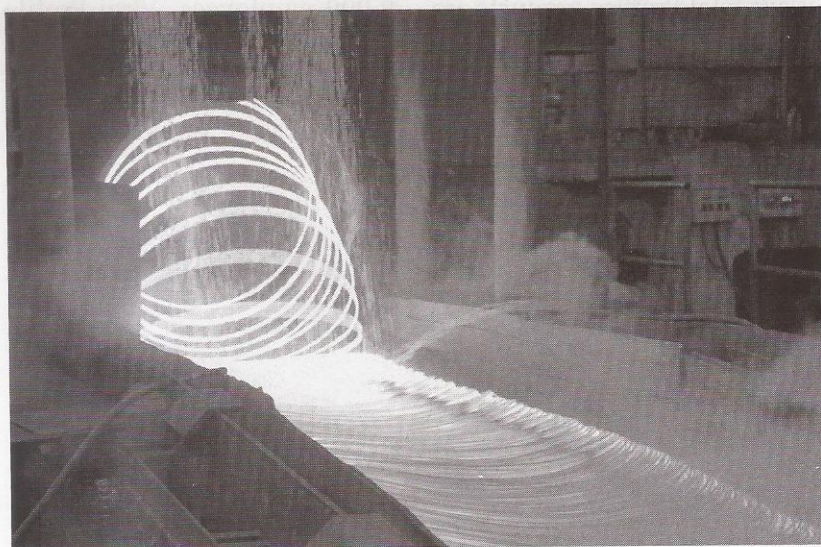
Today our products are being exported to more than 90 countries and contribute towards the modernization and technological upgradation happening in these countries. Now, we are aiming to bring these products to Indian market also. We would be offering our products to the end customers

as well as to the channel partners.

How do you support PM Narendra Modi's Make In India campaign?

With the launch of Make in India campaign, Modi aims to place India on the global map as a manufacturing hub. It aims to bring Indian economy in the spotlight on global level and which in turn will open several new doors for the Indian economy. Mr Neeraj R Kochhar shares "This announcement actually boosted the morale of the industry overall. The manufacturing sector of the country has set its objective of increasing contribution of manufacturing output to the GDP of the country from current 16% to 25% in next ten years. Off late the rate of growth in the manufacturing sector has not been as good as expected but now we hope to see the upward growth in the same. Another positive development towards this initiative we saw in the move to pitch India as a manufacturing hub in one of the popular fairs in Hannover, Germany. The government has already started receiving proposals from top manufacturing companies based in India to expand their operations and set up new units."

"However the road to this is not going to be easy and first we will have to gear ourselves up to



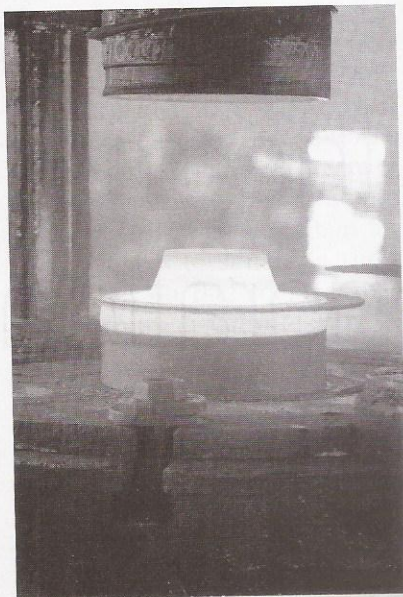
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meet up the new challenges and Government will also have to support this in every way possible. And then only we would be able to place India on the same level as that of China and Japan that have strong manufacturing sectors. Developing manufacturing sector will also contribute towards improving the economic conditions of the country and generate millions of new jobs."

Any plans to expand capacity? Any diversification plans in India or abroad?

As of now we are focusing on our existing product lines and strengthening ourselves with the required technological upgradation to keep pace with the dynamism of the industry. Viraj continuously upgrades its manufacturing process by introducing new machineries and adopting latest technologies into its manufacturing plants. The company has recently installed



three high powered induction furnaces from ABP Induction Systems in Germany – the first of its kind in the industry. We have recently installed FEHR cassette rack system for automatic storage & retrieval and for smooth storage of materials. We have

recently commissioned our fully automatic section rolling mill, which is first of its kind in India.

The new plant with annual capacity of 528,000 tonne per annum, is equipped to manufacture more than 700 different shapes and sizes of angles, flats and other profiles. The plant is quite unique in terms of Online Pickling facilities, Automatic Labeling inter-alia Packaging line.

Mr Kochhar elaborates "As part of our growth strategy, we are now planning to foray into the Indian market. Our products, already well-known brand across the globe, are now set to be the game changer in the domestic market as well. We, recently participated in some of the exhibitions to announce our shift towards the domestic market and we received wonderful response. Consumers are already aware and have complete faith in our product quality."