

A heritage of six decades in Nation building

Ador Welding Limited (formerly known as Advani-Oerlikon Ltd.) is the pioneer and brand leader in welding in India. The company which celebrated its diamond jubilee recently, has played a pivotal role in the country's industrialization and infrastructure development. It has progressively extended its welding knowledge and expertise to cover many high end specializations, catering to sophisticated and critical needs in domestic and international markets. Specializing in welding, cutting & automation, the company offers a comprehensive range of products, systems, services and solutions which also includes project engineering. Its investments and initiatives in welding education and skill development have helped in churning out over 60,000 trained welders who are today gainfully employed in various sectors of the industry including infrastructure. Thus the company richly deserves the sobriquet, "Welders to the Nation". Mr. P.K. Balasubramanian speaks to Mr. Satish Bhat, Managing Director, Ador Welding Ltd, to understand the company from close quarters and to have clear insights into its values, vision & thrusts in its pursuit of excellence in this vital field. Excerpts:



**Mr. Satish Bhat,
Managing Director,
Ador Welding Ltd.**

Q. Ador Welding is a leader in welding in India. With many international players setting up shops here, can we still say that the company enjoys its predominant position?

Yes. Ador was and is (?) the leader in welding in India. We have a basketful of products & services to meet the exact needs of the user industry. And we have the acumen and wherewithal's to meet the demands of diverse industries, however critical the applications may be. Besides a comprehensive range of consumables, equipment and systems, we also offer project engineering solutions.

We ensure the highest level of customer satisfaction backed by our R & D, four state-of-the-art manufacturing plants, our knowledge-based centers of excellence, and a nationwide sales, distribution and service network. Added to this is our capabilities for skill development and expertise for welding and fabrication excellence. Ador has highest plant capacity in India along with testing facilities like XRF / ICP. Ador is the only company which caters to the entire range of customers – the full range of the pyramid.

Q. What's your current range of products and services?

We make welding electrodes of all

types including mild steel general purpose, mild steel special, cellulosic, low alloy high tensile, stainless steel & heat resisting steel, cast iron, hardfacing and non-ferrous. In continuous welding consumables, we make wire-flux combinations for gas-shielded metal-arc, flux-cored arc, submerged arc, and gas-shielded tungsten arc welding. We also manufacture Inconel, Incoloy, Hastalloy and various aluminum consumables. We make consumables for every type of welding processes – SMAW / MIG / MAG / TIG / SAW. The products are delivered in different modes – 1 / 5 / 15 / 25 kg spools, 100 / 250 / 550 kg drums; fluxes in 30 kg bags / 250 kg drums / 1 M.T. bags.

Coming to equipment, we make AC arc welding transformers, DC arc welding equipment, rectifiers, motor generator sets, engine driven welding sets, gas shielded metal arc, submerged arc, and gas-shielded tungsten arc welding equipment, air plasma cutting equipment, welding accessories and gas cutting products. In welding automation, we offer a whole range of columns & booms, positioners, rotators, orbital welding systems, special purpose welding machines and robotic welding solutions. For robotic solutions we have tie-up with ABB Robots, India. In heavy fabrication shop, we make flares, vessels and tankages. The Ador





Ador's fully equipped equipment plant in Chinchwad, Pune

Welding Academy helps in fine tuning welder skills, upgrading local skills on latest technology applications, providing supports to institutes, ITIs, and providing infrastructure, faculty and curriculum support, even at remote project sites. So far we have imparted training to over 60,000 welders who are gainfully employed in industry, academia and projects in India and abroad.

Q. Ador makes the widest range of welding consumables. What are the recent additions to the range?

Nickel-chromium products as well as metal-cored wires for submerged arc welding used especially in power and oil & offshore industry are the new additions to our range of consumables. Similarly we offer consumables for Super Duplex Stainless steels; 9Cr / 1Mo creep resisting steels and creep resisting stainless steels.

Q. In power sources which are the latest additions?

In power sources, we have now introduced indigenously developed inverter technology. So you have inverter tig, rectifiers, DG sets, MIG and SAW equipment. Unlike diode

or thyristor-based technology, the inverter –based ones are light in weight, portable, consume less power; the welding arc is stable, and the quality of welding is much better. Our inverter based equipments are a huge success. They have won the heart of customers and we have several repeat orders from them.

Q. Automation and productivity is the order of the day. What are the innovations in this sphere?

We develop tailor -made Automation system which coupled with standard automation offerings help our Customers to improve their cost, quality, productivity, safety. Our job & welding head manipulators offering with proper fixturing enable our Customers to achieve the same. Some noteworthy SPMs are for Plus beam, Star Beam and H-Beam of different sections, shells, barrels, idler rollers, axles, auto components .We have full expertise to integrate Robot in the solution package as well.

Our equipment using plasma-MIG is also something unique. This is a patented technology & only we can offer the same .Most of it's solutions

are integrated with mechanized solution including Robot in which we have full capability to deliver in totality our indigenously developed inverter based MIG/MAG power source is ready for integration with Robot & is one of its kind developed in India where the power source can talk to different Robot controllers seamlessly. We have recently launched CNC cutting machines capable of cutting with both plasma & oxy fuel for improving productivity ,quality ,cost of the user. We have a set up to offer live solution ie Cutting demonstration based on Customer job drawing to the end user, same can be viewed live through the net as well.

Q. Could we say that Ador harnesses all modern welding processes, including laser?

By and large we are using all modern welding processes viz. MIG, TIG and their derivatives, inverter TIG, FCAW, SAW, Plasma and its derivatives, etc. We do not use laser. It is a costly process hence people seldom prefer. It is used for special applications demanding high precision

Q. What 's your edge in custom-built systems?

Most of the machines are supplied from our existing range. However, when a customer asks for something outside our standard range, we adapt our existing models and supply. Recently we had a similar requirement from Bahrain for 500 amps thyristorised GMAW and SMAW machines which we executed. ADOR R & D is capable of customizing the standard models to exactly suit the customer application, which may be widely different from the standard model. In this matter, ADOR provides maximum flexibility.

Q. What are the solutions you offer for offshore welding?

For offshore, we normally supply

the requisite consumables from our wide range. In specific high strength low alloy consumables with very low weld hydrogen levels / corrosion resistant stainless steels and Duplex stainless steel. The requirements come from offshore contractors.

Q. Does nuclear fabrication continue to pose challenges?

Yes it does. But we don't do nuclear fabrication. It is carried out by major fabricators like L & T and Walchandnagar Industries and others. We supply consumables specially developed for this critical application.

Q. What are the opportunities and challenges brought to you by the infrastructure industry?

As far as we know, there is nothing much happening in the infrastructure industry in last few quarters. We don't find any new investments in infrastructure including power, oil & gas and other sectors. But we are optimistic that these sectors will pick up momentum, touching a growth rate of 4.5 to 7%. When this boom takes place, it will improve our utilization of assets. This in turn will create more demand for welding products. This would give us an opportunity to develop a few specific products suitable for new metals used in fabrication – both light weight and heavy sections.

Q. What's your R & D engaged in at the moment?

At the root of our product developments and innovations is our full-fledged and equipped R & D. We have separate R & D units for 'consumables' as well as 'equipment & automation'. Recently we have come out with super duplex stainless steel consumables, duplex stainless steel consumables and 9 chrome electrodes – all for critical applications in power plants. The



Ador's sprawling manufacturing facility at Silvassa

equipment wing of our R & D is currently working on pulsed-MIG and pulsed-TIG equipments. They are also working on improvising controllers for robot applications.

Q. Ador has made a mark in welding education in the country. What precisely is your contribution?

The scarcity of trained and qualified welding personnel including welders, welding supervisors and welding engineers was foreseen by us as far back as in 1960 when we started our Welding School. Skill development has been an integral part of our business activities.

Over five decades we have trained over 60,000 welding personnel who are now gainfully employed in the industry in India as well as several parts of the world. Our close involvement with industry shop floors, inspection and approving agencies and design consultants have helped us acquire valuable insights into the training needs of the industry.

Today, Ador Welding Academy runs regular courses for welders and supervisors, who are already working,

and to freshers who want to make a career in welding. We have also tied up with engineering colleges to offer welding courses which will bring out welding engineers in large numbers. A recent example of our co-operation and involvement is the Shegaon Engineering College near Amravati whose first batch of engineers with specialization in welding has just come out.

Q. You have also made a dent in the international market. What's your export performance and which are the countries to which you export and what products?

About 15% of our current turnover (Rs.400 Crores) comes from our exports. Some of the markets we cater to are Middle East (UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi, etc), African countries (Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, etc.) and Indonesia. In Turkey we have a tie up to market products with co-branding. Entire range of our products goes to these overseas markets. Some of the overseas end users are: Evershendai, L&T, Fabtech, NPCC, Al Shirawi, Gorica, Target Engineering, Adyard,



A training session in progress at the Ador Welding Academy.

Nigeria Docs, African Marine, Civicon, Dubai Dry Dock, etc.

Q. What are the thrust areas for Ador today?

Our present market share in the organized sector is only about 15%. Our endeavour is to increase it to at least 25% in the next 2-3 years. This would take our turnover to about Rs.600 crores. This is not difficult since we have a complete range of products and most of the approvals are in place.

Q. Does the past help the company in facing the present day challenges?

Certainly. Ador has a huge brand equity. This is obvious. When we develop something and go to a client, the product acceptance becomes relatively easy. And we have the best infrastructure available to support new product development and meet the expectations of the customers.

Q. What steps do you take to maintain your leadership position and deserve the sobriquet, 'Welders to the Nation'?

Following are some of the measures and initiatives we take to

maintain our leadership position:

- (a) Nurturing human capital is very important in building a dynamic and vibrant organization. We take care of this aspect. We train our people and make them knowledgeable.
- (b) We invest a good amount in R & D so as to develop new products and also improve the performance of existing range of product through value engineering.
- (c) Help improve our customers productivity and save costs in their operations.
- (d) Develop customized products to meet the requirements of the customer
- (e) By imbibing quality culture in the organization so that quality permeates in everything we do.
- (f) Drive innovation in every sphere.
- (g) Look at failures as a stepping stone to success
- (h) Set the objectives but measure them against the old practices (not understood).
- (i) Changing the mindset of people, breaking the barriers and help the company work towards one goal.
- (j) Evaluate team performance and make the team and individuals

realize that nothing is impossible.

(k) We are into LEAN culture in every aspect of our business to minimize / eliminate wastage at every level.

We coined, promulgated and explained our axiom for the current FY which reads as "Break the Barriers and Move Fast". This has worked very well. Our manufacturing cost has come down drastically and manpower turnover has come to almost naught. People are charged with positive energy. They are prepared to go beyond the call of duty to achieve the goals set.

Q. Ador has a chequered history spanning over six decades. What are the lessons you have learnt from the past?

- (a) The leader has a responsibility to continuously offer new products which help the customer to improve his efficiency
- (b) Never become lethargic or complacent. The corporate world has become more dynamic.
- (c) Though new product innovation is necessary we have observed return on investment in product innovations is the lowest as compared to innovations in other functions of the company. Hence we also drive innovations across all our plants.

Q. How do you see the journey of Ador from now on and ahead?

Once the GDP touches 7% and above, Ador will have a huge scope in terms of surpassing the expectations of the stake holders. This would usher in exciting time for us because we would then get to utilize our assets to the fullest capacity and we can fill the product gaps that prevail now. Ador would then be truly a 'One Stop Shop' for the entire gamut of welding products & services. ■