

Growing talent in the backyard

Cement plants are usually located at odd locations, far from the comforts of city life. Acquiring and retaining talent is anyway a challenge at such remote places.



Sumant Moolgaokar Technical Institute is one of the most prestigious institutes in India.

The acute shortage of capable hands to man the plants has worsened the situation further. It makes sense to upgrade skills of youth in the vicinity of a plant, then to depend on scarce talent inflow from urban locations. ACC, India's largest cement manufacturer, took proactive approach to deal with this problem. **Behram Sherdiwala**, elaborates on two of the many initiatives taken by ACC to bridge the skill demand and supply gap.

ACC is also amongst India's responsible corporates, which have taken persistent steps for knowledge building. One such significant contribution of ACC towards talent development is the establishment of 'Sumant Moolgaokar Technical Institute, Kymore,' popularly known

as SMTI. With SMTI the company has not only satiated its own demand for industry ready workforce, but has also helped the community around it to become self-reliant.

Sumant Moolgaokar Technical Institute

Sumant Moolgaokar Technical Institute is one of the most prestigious institutes in India. It is a 50-year-old institution named in the honour of its founder the late **Dr Sumant Moolgaokar**. Initially this institute was known as The Kymore Engineering Institute, which was established in 1957. It was formed with the objective of training young men in specialised trades to become artisans, foreman and first line supervisors to meet the needs of the

company. Training at SMTI is valued and perceived as being superior to the training provided at various Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in the country.

ACC has established schools across all its locations, wherein children from both the surrounding communities and its employees are provided quality education. Management of these schools is outsourced to reputed educationists like the DAV or the best locally available institution, thereby ensuring that the schools maintain high standards of education.

Kymore is a town in Katni district in Madhya Pradesh, basically a remote area where modern infrastructure is far away from the domicile of its residents. In an attempt to support young talent and drive employability

in Kymore, ACC provided SMTI with technical, infrastructural as well as faculty support under the aegis of ACC Knowledge Management. ACC's plants are located across India in such remote areas, so the company's efforts are focused towards enhancing these communities.

SMTI offers courses in electrical engineering, instrumentation, diesel and fitting trades in cement plants. These courses focus on building niche skills required to manage and run cement plants at artisan level. Once the course is completed, selected candidates join ACC as technicians. ACC hires about 100 people every year from this institute. This is one of the finest initiatives taken by ACC, which helps to improve the employability of youth and provide them a platform to upgrade their skills.

SMTI has a distinguished track record of producing more than 3000 artisans and foreman trainees who have put in valuable service in ACC and other cement plants in India and abroad. Most of the students are kin of employees, workers and members of the local community around ACC cement plants. This institute welcomes candidates initially as students sourced



Behram Sherdiwala
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ACC is focusing on systematic training of local diploma holders to work at the plant.

SUMANT MOOLGAOKAR (1906-1989)

Dr Sumant Moolgaokar was born in Mumbai on March 5, 1906. He took his B.Sc (Hons), degree in engineering from the City & Guilds (Imperial College), London, in 1929 and began his career in the cement industry as an engineer at the C P Cement Works in 1930. Having seven years of hands on experience in three cement plants, he joined ACC (Associated Cement Companies, at that time), on its formation in 1938.

In 1944, he took charge of production and expansion activities of the group of eleven companies of ACC. He pioneered heavy engineering equipment production in India. Dr Moolgaokar undertook the production of heavy cement machinery in a factory set up for the purpose at Shahabad in Hyderabad state. The factory produced heavy cement machinery such as the kiln, grinding mills, crushers and ancillary equipment.

In 1949, he was appointed a Director of Tata Industries, ACC, the Cement Agencies, and the Director-in-Charge of Tata Locomotive and Engineering Co. He was also a member of the National Planning Council of the Planning Commission, Chairman of the Engineering Capacity and Survey Committee, Government Housing Factory and Machine Tools Development Committee. In recognition of his valuable contribution to production engineering in India, the Institute of Production Engineers awarded him the Sir Walter Puckey Prize in 1967. In February 1970, he was made an Honorary Life Member of the Indian Institute of Engineers. In December 1983, he was conferred Honorary Fellowship of Imperial College of Science & Technology, London.

Dr Moolgaokar strongly believed that to build an industry, you must first build a talented workforce to support it. He was able to foresee that as the nation moves towards industrialisation, it would need specially trained minds. He was instrumental in setting up the Engineering Research Centre, the Machine Tool and the Press Tool Division. He enjoyed bringing out best in the youth by giving challenging assignments and seeing them learn from them.

COVER STORY - ACC



ACC's plants are located across India in remote areas where it is difficult to attract talent from cities.

through an open competition. The one-year course includes six months of on-the-job training at any one of the cement plants. The curriculum is continually updated to incorporate technological advancements and is taught by engineers with considerable experience in ACC or by experts in the field of technical education. Today the students coming out from SMTI have huge demand from other cement plants.

ITI Development

Another initiative taken by ACC is in strengthening of Industrial Training Institutes in the country. India has huge talent potential, most of which is unexplored. This potential is invariably associated with the performance of industries across sectors; the industrial sector being one of them. To bridge the gap between growing demands of the industrial sector and efficiency of the knowledge system, the Indian

government entered into a public private partnership to form Industrial Training Institutes, commonly known as ITIs.

Many big corporates have been involved in the transformation and upgradation of these institutes over the past few years. In an attempt to strengthen the vocational training system in the cement industry, ACC entered into the PPP model with 7 state governments of India for providing infrastructural, financial and faculty support. These ITIs are located near ACC plants in the remote areas, which are:

- Jamul, Chhattisgarh
- Bundi, Rajasthan
- Wadi, Karnataka
- Chaibasa, Jharkhand
- Bargarh, Orissa
- Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, and
- Gagal, Himachal Pradesh.

Under this scheme ACC helps ITIs to obtain interest free refundable loan from the government up to

Rs 25 million. ACC's management committee for each institute, consisting of representatives from industry, ITI and government, has been vested with necessary authority to:

- Make development plan for the institute
- Assess emerging skills and suggest changes to the curriculum
- Bring in new trades
- Facilitate placement for ITI trainees
- Appoint faculties as per the need, and
- Generate, retain and utilise revenue.

Today, there are about 6000 ITIs across the country, training artisans, electricians and other technicians. A very small number of these centres is being upgraded presently. It is a slow but a gradual process, which will soon widen the prospects of industrial training in India.