



# Bringing a different perspective to AGI glaspac management

Following the sudden death of Arun Kumar Dukkupati at the end of 2016, Harsha Kadam has taken up the reins as Chief Executive Officer at India's AGI glaspac. Mr Harsha spoke exclusively to *Glass Worldwide*, preferred journal of AIGMF, about this key position about this key position as head of the leading glass container specialist, as well as his role as President of the All India Glass Manufacturers Federation.



Harsha Kadam, Chief Executive Officer at AGI glaspac and AIGMF President.

Having spent more than 26 years with the global technologies group SKF, Harsha Kadam is a valuable addition to the Indian glass industry's management ranks. He recently took over as Chief Executive Officer of Hyderabad-based AGI glaspac from Arun Kumar Dukkupati, the man who originally selected him for the role, before dying suddenly at the end of 2016. "It was unfortunate that I didn't have the opportunity to work with Mr Arun Kumar" Harsha Kadam

commented. "He was a respected intellectual and the key architect of AGI. He was an authority on the subject of glass and we at AGI genuinely miss his visionary leadership and drive. Mr Arun Kumar has built a climate of strong teamwork, which is one of the hallmarks of AGI, not to mention the deep customer connect and relationship that has helped to grow our business.

"I certainly have some big shoes to fill and I am committed to deliver what the organisation needs. The responsibility now for me and the team is to ensure that we consolidate and further build upon the sound principles and building blocks that Mr Arun has put in place. Having travelled so far successfully, I see that AGI must prepare itself for the next leap forward and raise the bar on ambition to a higher level."

Harsha Kadam brings skills in multiple functions of a business organisation to AGI glaspac. His experience and knowledge spans areas of managing a P&L Business Vertical in a multi-cultural and multi-location area at an international level. He comes with a vast knowledge of best practices in business

excellence, TPM, 6 Sigma and project management, as well as strategy formulation and execution. Having gained rich experience in manufacturing, sales, application and product development, he has managed SKF factories in multiple locations. He successfully spearheaded the group's global two wheeler business for six years and developed a series of game changing value-based solutions. Prior to SKF, Mr Harsha worked as a Project Engineer with CICB and as a Marketing Engineer with Beacon Controls. He graduated from the University of Bangalore with a degree in mechanical engineering, before pursuing a postgraduate diploma in marketing and finance.

Harsha Kadam believes his previous experience can add value to the AGI business. "I've worked in manufacturing for more than two and a half decades, including involvement in design and development, where the main driver has been innovation. The manufacturing technology in my previous industry had evolved more than in glassmaking, with strong manufacturing systems in place and very strong innovation processes. I would like to bring this knowledge to the glass industry and look for opportunities to find new ways to work; there is no harm in trying to do something in a different way if it can bring better results."

## HUNGRY FOR GROWTH

Since assuming management responsibility for the glass packaging arm of HSIL Ltd's Packaging Products Division, Mr Harsha has observed AGI glaspac is a progressive organisation with strong fundamentals such as good value systems and sound thought processes. "What attracted me to AGI was the fact that here was a company steeped in strong value systems of high empowerment, high ethics and good teamwork, laid on a firm foundation of faith, commitment and confidence, reposed by all relevant stakeholders, be it the promoters, customers, >



Harsha Kadam with Joachim Schäfer, Managing Director of Messe Düsseldorf at the official opening ceremony for glasspex INDIA 2017.



Harsha Kadam on the Heye International stand at glasspex INDIA 2017. Heye is a supplier to AGI glaspac.



Harsha Kadam addresses delegates at the AIGMF's 12th International Conference, themed 'What can glass do for you?'

shareholders or employees.

"A fantastic team that drives the business with a high level of professionalism is a very stimulating and humbling experience. I decided to contribute my might as well, to take performance to the next higher level."

State-of-the-art factories are located in Hyderabad and Bhongir, south/central India, manufacturing glass containers that meet demanding quality standards for food, pharmaceuticals, soft drinks, spirits, beer, wine and other industries. Flint, amber and green containers are produced, in addition to which forehearth colouring technology is installed at the Bhongir plant. In excess of 1600 tonnes/day of glass is melted.

Among the AGI glaspac CEO's short and medium term priorities is to effectively manage the dynamic market

**AIGMF/GLASS WORLDWIDE PARTNERSHIP**

"The qualitative nature of the subject and content of *Glass Worldwide* is truly informative and educational. My compliments to the team for ensuring the excellence of editorial content. I can see that *Kanch* on the other hand has tried to emulate *Glass Worldwide* but for the Indian market, including a number of articles first published in *Glass Worldwide*. I see good synergy and cross pollination between the two magazines, although the content from *Kanch* that appears in *Glass Worldwide* is occasional and small. I am sure *Kanch* too will build further on the already good work undertaken and I believe co-operation between the two magazines is going well."



Harsha Kadam with *Glass Worldwide's* Dave Fordham at glasspex INDIA 2017 exhibition.

situation and deliver promised results. In the long term, he strives for higher levels of excellence in the areas of operations and product innovation. "In a nutshell, the mantra will be not only 'what' we do but 'how' we do it. We need to excel in these areas, so I'll be developing strategies to reach these performance levels."

**INVESTMENT PRIORITIES**

To keep in line with market requirements, furnace No 3 in Hyderabad is currently the subject of a rebuild. This is one of two 300 tonnes/day furnaces at the site, where the opportunity has also been taken to upgrade aspects of production technology. This includes the increased utilisation of NNPB technology. The management team is currently analysing opportunities for market expansion and diversification before determining further investment projects.

Manufacturing capacity at Bhongor already stands at 1000 tonnes/day, so the generation of enhanced efficiency levels from existing equipment is the main priority at this facility. "I think we can squeeze a little more from the machines we have there and gain greater market share in the process."

According to Harsha Kadam, future investments will be made when opportunities are identified and once the business case has been considered. He emphasised, however, that local glass container industry growth is significantly below the country's GDP performance.

Historically, the ability of AGI glaspac to develop new products

has contributed significantly to the company's success. This innovative approach will continue to be a focal point in the future, strengthened by the recent installation of forehearth colouring technology and the development of several individual if challenging ware shapes. These innovations pose additional challenges in terms of the machine speed efficiencies expected, as well as the quality of ware produced.

"My role is to build a growth strategy for the business going forward. Of course, it goes without saying that the customer would be at the centre of everything we do. I will have to leverage all the inherent strengths of AGI, strengthen where there are gaps and also complement that with new approaches to deliver results consistently and effectively."

**SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIPS**

One of Mr Harsha's first impressions when joining AGI was the importance of suppliers in the whole business chain. "It's a major strength that AGI works with the world's leading vendors, including Agr International, Antonini, Bucher Emhart Glass, Heye International, IRIS Inspection machines, Pennekamp, Sheppee, SORG, Zecchetti, ZIPPE and other strong, established brands that want to be associated with AGI and that we want to be associated with... I must say, it's a win-win situation for all parties."

While acknowledging the value of continuing to grow together and develop their respective businesses, however, Harsha Kadam believes international suppliers need to adopt a different approach when dealing with >



Harsha Kadam at the AIGMF's 12th International Conference with Mohan Lalvani (owner and President of Mascot Engineering Co and Editor of *Kanch*), former AIGMF President Sanjay Somany and AIGMF Secretary, Vinit Kapur.





Harsha Kadam meets representatives from IRIS Inspection machines at glasspex INDIA 2017 exhibition.

India. "One of my initiatives is to set new challenges by emphasising that India is a different market with different rules. We need suppliers to help us to perform better by thinking about two broad areas: How can solutions be customised for the Indian market?; and localisation; today most equipment and parts come from Europe and I'm asking if items can be made locally because they will be more economical, enabling us to be more competitive globally. A deeper engagement between AGI and the technology suppliers would certainly go a long way to achieving a win-win in the market for both. My belief is that our technology suppliers too should capitalise on the 'Made in India' initiative, initiated the the Industry Ministry, thereby bringing in a win-win for both. Surely, India is a competitive place when it comes to manufacturing today."

The AGI glaspac CEO indicated that leading brands need to start thinking differently. "We want vendor partners to take the challenge." According to Mr Harsha, a positive response to this message has been received, with some suppliers already establishing technology transfer agreements with Indian companies. "The process has started but it's at an early stage and there is a lot of room for improvement" he added.



Harsha Kadam in discussion on the CGE stand at glasspex INDIA 2017 exhibition.



The AGI glaspac glassworks at Bhongir features two melting furnaces, with a combined melting capacity of 1000 tonnes/day

This February's glasspex INDIA 2017 exhibition provided an excellent opportunity for Harsha Kadam to learn how Indian companies are working with their foreign counterparts. "The timing of the exhibition was very fortunate for me because it would have taken months to meet all of the players in this market and learn about their technologies. The exhibition came as a blessing in disguise because in three days, I was able to meet, connect and interact with all the industry giants and learn about the value-add they can bring to AGI. Nothing can be better than that! It was a terrific experience for me to learn and make new friends in the Indian and global glass industry. It was a fantastic exhibition and the accompanying AIGMF International Conference covering the possibilities of glass added significant value."

**NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

As well as succeeding Arun Kumar Dukkupati as Chief Executive Officer at AGI glaspac, Harsha Kadam has also been confirmed as President of the All India Glass Manufacturers Federation in recent weeks. "AIGMF has withstood the vagaries of time for more than four and a half decades and that in itself is a testimony to the purpose for which it was formulated. It also demonstrates the commitment of members to use the platform effectively to further their cause. It is good to see that the scope is now widened and even flat glass manufacturers have joined hands.

"I consider it an honour and a privilege coming into this role" Harsha Kadam confirmed. "I am thankful to the members and committee for believing in my competence and leadership skills by entrusting me with the responsibilities of President. With my background from a different industry, we will be trying to do things a bit differently and we should see success in several areas."

The priority is to instil greater awareness about the use of

container glass among school pupils, with a series of initiatives already at the planning stage. Other key issues include ongoing dialogue with government representatives about the high cost of soda ash for India's glassmakers. "We will keep a watch on all factors that affect the glass industry and appropriate representations will be made with the authorities to help the glass community as a whole."

While container glass represents almost 50% of the Indian glass industry's output, its growth rate is just 4%-5% year on year. This compares unfavourably with flat glass, which is growing phenomenally faster because of the link to the real estate sector. "Different industries have different challenges and government legislations will play an important role in defining the future" Mr Harsha commented.

"I see exciting times ahead because there is a lot of awareness entering the mindset of Indian consumers that glass is a better packaging product. Customers have been telling me that they know glass is the premium product and the AIGMF initiative is to further leverage awareness that people should use more glass; as President, I take responsibility for this programme, which is high on the AIGMF agenda. We will find new methods to increase awareness and we want to leverage some of the initiatives that have been brought in by the Indian government... we want to make India clean and glass can play a critical role in this project. With the collective thinking of all members of the AIGMF team, we can make a leap forward in what we are doing, not just an incremental change." ■

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