



Over the past three decades, SPML Infra Ltd has evolved as a leading EPC contractor in the power sector. Its expertise spans a wide canvas from village electrification to high-voltage power transmission systems. SPML Infra has recently even turned into a power distribution franchisee. In this exclusive interaction, **Malay Kanti Chakraborti** takes us through SPML Infra's core competencies in the power sector, and also gives keen insights on how India can accelerate its power infrastructure development. An interview by **Venugopal Pillai**.

India's power transmission must move to higher voltage regimes

— Malay Kanti Chakraborti,
Vice President—MMD & Power Projects, SPML Infra Ltd



SPML Infra has been executing village electrification contracts, under RGGVY, since 2005. Tell us about the quantum of orders executed so far and the current order backlog.

SPML Infra Ltd is a leading infrastructure developer with operational experience of managing and implementing over 600 projects across sectors in almost all states in India. It provides EPC project management and commissioning services on turnkey basis in the power sector leveraging its proven project management and delivery experience of its construction capability with qualified engineers and domain experts. SPML is one of the largest contributor to rural electrifications in India with over a million rural household across the country benefited through its transmission & distribution (T&D) initiatives.

SPML has executed a number of power T&D projects in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan and West Bengal and currently working on such projects in different states. Under RGGVY scheme, SPML has executed T&D projects worth over Rs.1,000 crore and currently executing around Rs.1,300 crore worth of projects. Power T&D projects under different schemes executed and under execution are over Rs.3,500 crore.

RGGVY was earlier fraught with challenges both at the policy and the implementation level. Do you see matters improving or late?

The Electricity Act 2003 has visualized that quality and



INTERVIEW: SPML INFRA

affordable power will be provided to the consumer in a competitive and regulatory environment. This Act promoted greater competition that saw the installed generation capacity almost doubling from 107 GW in 2002 to about 224 GW currently. The per capita power consumption also increased from 512 kwh (units) to 917 kwh in past 10 years. The country's per capita power consumption has increased but electricity reaching to wider population, reliability and quality, distribution and tariff have remained elusive issues.

The State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERCs) need to balance the interest of consumers as well as discoms while determining distribution and tariffs so that private companies engaged in T&D do not suffer losses. The issue of governance of the utilities needs to be addressed and adequate technology adoption are significant. High distribution losses (at around 47 per cent) are a major concern and India needs to take adequate measures to reduce these losses. The network infrastructure upgrade such as transformers, substations, distribution lines with standard



equipment as per required specifications are important. Even a simple step like accurate metering can result in reduction of 3-4 per cent of losses.

What could be done further to ensure smoother and faster implementation?

RGGVY projects still have issues in the execution that need to be addressed considerably for smooth and fast implementation. Some of the steps that require proper attention and improvement will be to reduce time gap between tendering

process and finally awarding it for execution. The companies executing the projects suffer financial losses due to long gap between the submission of tender and actual award for execution and clearances as it increases the execution cost due to escalation of prices of materials and manpower. Another matter that needs the attention of the authorities is the time taken in closing of the contract after completion of work due to lengthy procedure and delay in processing and the companies executed the project suffers financially due

CENTURY RUBBER & CABLES INDUSTRIES

An ISO 9001 : 2008 Certified Company



Trailing Cable Sheet (TRS)

We offer superior quality and highly durable Tough Rubber Sheath for cables that are made from synthetic rubber. Our TRS is flexible for 1100 volts and has longer life. It has insulation EPD/ Butyl and SBR or general purpose compound jacket SBR, Neoprene (PCP), Hyplon - chlorosulphonated polyethylene or NBR-PVC.

Heat Resistance Silicon Rubber Cables

We bring you superior quality Silicon / Fluoro Silicone Rubber Cables that are known for their endurance to voltage fluctuations and flame resistance make them ideal to be used with electrical equipment & appliances. Temp. range - 60 To +220° Constantly.



- FRLS Cables
- Multycore TRS Cables
- Welding Cable (HOFR)
- Fire Survival Cable
- Instrumentation Cables.
- High voltage Cable
- Ignition Cable.
- Ship wiring Cables.
- Electro medical equipments Cables (Electrical Conductive pads/silicons Rubber Surgical items)
- Thermocouple / Compensating Cables.

RUBBER MOULDED & Extruded goods in EPR, PCP, CSP, PU SBR, NR, VITON & ETC.

G-1, 2, 9, Jay Vailankanni Indl. Estate, Behind Tirupati Gas Godown, United Rubber Compound, Bhayander (E), Dist. Thane - 401105
 Phone: +(91)-(22)-28147776 • Telefax: +(91)-(22)-28149874
 Mob.: 9987228484 • 9869804701 • Email: centurycables@yahoo.co.in
 Web.: www.centurycablesindia.com • www.centuryrubberscable.com

AUTHORISED DEALER



Scientech



MOTWANE

- Micro Ohms Meters
- Insulation Testers
- Earth Testers
- Multi Meters & Clamp Meters

SCIENTECH

- Digital Storage Oscilloscope
- Spectrum Analyzers
- Function Generators & Power Supplies
- All Types Of Educational Trainers Kit For (Electronics / EXTC / Electrical / BIO Medical Labs) For Engineering Colleges.

TESTO

- Thermal Imagers
- Infrared Guns
- Tachometers
- Hygrometers

RENUKA Enterprises

Dealers In Electrical, Electronic Instruments & Systems

E-mail : sales.renukaenter@gmail.com / renuka.enter@yahoo.com
 13, 1st Floor, Bldg. No. 17, Shree Everest CHS,
 Opp. Station, Near Vodafone Gallery, Dombivli (W) - 421202, Dist. Thane, Maharashtra.
 Mobile No : 9769606071 / 9870201624, Telephone : 0251-2480403



to indefinite delay in getting final payments. The utilities must avoid these by awarding the contract on time, fast clearances and immediate taking over once the project is complete.

How is SPML faring with respect to 220kV substation EPC contracting? We understand that you were planning to move to 400kV substation contracts. What is the current status?

SPML has executed 220kV substations and already received the order for execution of 400kV substation and transmission line project from Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam, which is under execution.

India is moving to even higher voltage regimes like 765kV, 800kV and even 1,200kV. Is SPML Infra building competencies to address this future demand?

With the evolution of technology and demand for better quality electric supplies, India has to move forward to a long-term growth prospects in the power T&D sector by adopting higher voltage regimes. We at SPML are planning to upgrade our facilities and expertise to enhance our execution capability to higher grades.

With so much expertise in power T&D projects, is SPML planning to groom itself into a developer of power transmission lines as an independent power transmission company?

With broad experience in power T&D sector, we are also planning to upgrade ourselves to other sectors as an independent power transmission company as per the government policies.

What about taking up the role of a power distribution licensee or franchisee?

In fact, SPML has already recently been awarded and has started working as power franchisee in Bhagalpur, Bihar. We are looking forward to get more such projects to showcase our expertise in other cities as well.

The high technical and commercial losses, poor infrastructure, weak financial position and lack of customer orientation by the power utilities in the country has given way to power distribution franchisee models. This new trend has evolved to supplement the ambitious plan of the government to provide electricity to all and reduce the T&D losses.

What is SPML Infra's overall order book position and what is the share of power T&D in this? Do you envisage a significant growth in this proportion over the coming years?

The order book position of SPML Infra stands at Rs.7,000 crore at present and we expect to add more projects in the remaining months of this fiscal. Out of this total orders, almost 20 per cent orders are for the development of power infrastructure and T&D. We are currently executing two large power T&D projects in Bihar in Patna and Gaya districts under RGGVY.

As per the government's ambitious power generation, transmission and distribution plans and investment in the XII five-year Plan period, we expect this sector to grow at a good rate and there will be good business opportunities in T&D sector in the years to come.

Given that power will continue to remain a thrust area on the government's agenda, how do you see the road ahead for your EPC contracting business?

India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world today with a substantial population. But it is also energy-deficient. An estimate suggests that almost 600 million people have no access to electricity and a majority of them lives in rural areas. The pace of rural electrification has been very slow; electricity has become accessible to around 56 per cent households in rural areas in the past two decades from just 36 per cent in 1994. The difficult geographical topography and low purchasing power of rural consumers has been the obstacle in creating, sustaining and maintaining the infrastructure for electricity delivery. The electricity consumption pattern in India differs in urban and rural areas, 92 per cent urban households use electricity for lighting as compared to 55 per cent rural households.

The overall investment required for the power sector in the XII Plan period is about Rs.14 lakh crore. The investment pattern should focus on generation, transmission and distribution segments in order to achieve balanced growth in the power sector.

Since the inception, SPML Infra has been executing EPC projects in various sectors including power T&D. In the last three decades, we have made an important transition to become a successful and trusted partner in domestic power projects. Our proven business model is based on our core competencies of offering customized and innovative solutions, strong knowledge in project management and trusted partnership. 