

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Upskilling the Indian Rubber Industry

There is an urgent need to develop modular, short-term skill development programmes for frontline shop floor workers and supervisors

By **Anupama Giri**, CEO Rubber Skill Development Centre (RSDC)



India has a vibrant rubber sector and ranks second in natural rubber consumption in the world after China. In terms of production, India is the fourth largest producer of Natural Rubber and numero uno in per hectare productivity.

The rubber industry is fairly developed in India with around 5,000 rubber units across large, medium and small scale sectors scattered across the country, accounting for upwards of ₹50,000 crore in turnover. The industry is currently directly employing more than 4.5 lakh personnel. Given the impressive growth rate of the industry and immense potential for its growth, around 6 lakh people will be required by the year 2020.

Clearly, there is a dire need to create talent that is industry-ready. Skill development of existing personnel is also critical to sharpen the competitive edge

of the industry. To meet these objectives, Rubber Skill Development Centre (RSDC) has been set up by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), in collaboration with rubber industry bodies – All India Rubber Industries Association (AIRIA) and Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association (ATMA).

Current skill scenario

In the current scenario, most of the skill learning on the shop floor, particularly in the small and medium scale sector is largely unstructured. The technical institutions running certification courses with rubber specialisation are few. There is an urgent need to develop modular, short term skill development programmes for frontline shop floor workers and supervisors. It is also very important to build capacity and affordability to encourage persons from the less educated and lower income groups to opt for such courses and develop fruitful careers in the Indian rubber industry.

Objectives of RSDC

RSDC has been formed with a wide range of objectives such as providing skilled manpower to meet the requirement of the industry in coming years; offering tailor-made courses that satisfy the industry's need for technical professionals; framing certifications and accreditations for short- and mid-term courses in various trades of rubber industry – both for new people joining the industry and for upgrading skill level of existing employ-

ees; designing and offering courses to create career opportunities across functions at all levels, especially at the entry level; and setting standards of quality in the skills required for different job roles in the rubber industry.

Besides, RSDC also aims to frame occupational standards and competency matrix for job roles in the rubber industry and align the training content and curriculum with them. The other objective is to develop training programmes, which are application-based, with simulation or live projects, as per the requirement of the industry, to ensure training of adequate number of trainers to cope with the skill development and to encourage private players to participate in the skill development initiative to build capacities.

Progress so far

RSDC has set in motion the process of initiating its Phase I of National Occupational Standards (NOS) formats for critical job roles. The project contract has been awarded to KPMG and IInd phase is being planned for February, 2012.

"Skill Gap Analysis" is also being carried out for all sectors and sub-sectors for selected states, viz Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh in the rubber industry. The study would be initiated by the last week of this month.

"RSDC is committed to meeting the requirements of trained manpower across the ecosystem on a sustained and evolving basis," says Vinod Simon, Chairman, RSDC. ■