

Metalworld

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Editor - D. A. Chandekar



Editorial Desk

Dear Readers,

I am happy to put forward the first 'Annual Issue' of 'Metalworld'. Incidentally, with this issue 'Metalworld' completes ten years of its existence.

Last decade saw a very big transition in non-ferrous metals sector as well as in foundries. In ninties, the non-ferrous metals sector was very small with a production level of few lac tones per year. Only few big companies were catering to the relatively underdeveloped markets in the country. Unlike today, not many applications of non-ferrous metals were developed for the user sectors like construction, transport, auto etc.

As such the process of industry expansion was flagged off in 1991 with the decision of economic liberalization, the real growth started with the turn of the century. The vehicle buyer (i.e. you and me) started putting pressure on auto makers for more fuel efficiency, aerodynamic shapes, modern in house gadgets, low prices etc. and this effect started travelling backwards. A lot of auto parts, originally made from steel, are now being re-developed with the non-ferrous metals, especially aluminium alloys. The process of developing new applications is still on and this has given the non-ferrous metals and the foundry sector a big boost. The growth story of construction industry is no different than auto. There also it was the end customer who started demanding modern house gadgets, aesthetic looks, longitivity etc. and this triggered many new applications of non-ferrous metals in this sector too.

The demand for new applications also helped the industry to develop the down the line processing verticals like die casting, extrusion, rolling, foil making etc. This surely ensured the all round growth of the non-ferrous metals sector and the foundry in India. Though all this is true, there are some deep problems and hurdles too. Getting land for the big projects has become very difficult. Farming community has become very conscious about their rights. Also environmentalists have become very active and agressive. Of course, I do support the farmers rights and the cause for which the environmentalists are fighting but one should also keep in mind that it is the industry which can create jobs, make a livelihood and bring about the overall development of the region. Today, getting mine allocation and mineral linkages has also become extremely difficult. Infact the whole business of primary metals production depends on how much control one has on its raw materials. Furthermore, getting technically qualified manpower is becoming a big bottleneck in the growth of this core industry. Most of the metallurgical graduates from the celebrated institutes want to leave the country at the first opportunity and the other want to work in AC offices. Who will come to this dirty industry ? If this is so, then how this industry will survive and grow ?

'Metalworld' has been fortunate to witness all these fascinating and exciting changes in the structure and the outlook of the industry. I am sure it continues its role of information dissemination through publications, conferences, web portals and industry research !!!

D. A. Chandekar