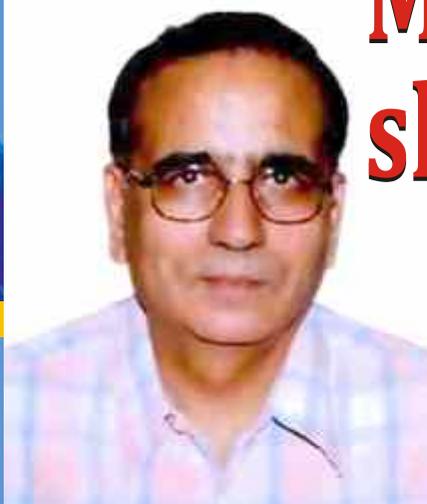


Face-to-Face

# Market for Spring Steel should remain Good

- Rakesh Kumar Malhotra



**RAKESH KUMAR MALHOTRA**  
Executive Director (Marketing)  
Sunflag Iron & Steel Co.



Sunflag Iron and Steel Co. Ltd. is a prestigious unit of the SUN FLAG GROUP. It has set up a state-of-art integrated plant at Bhandara, India. The plant has a capacity to produce 200,000 tonnes per annum of high quality special steel using iron ore and non coking coal as basic inputs. The plant comprises a 1,50,000 tonnes per annum Direct Reduction Plant, to produce sponge iron for captive consumption in the Steel Melting Shop. This shop comprises a 50/60 tonnes ultra high power Electric Arc Furnace with Eccentric bottom arrangement; a Ladle auto mould level controller and electromagnetic stirrer. The billets produced at the steel melting shop are rolled at the Mannesmann Demag Designed ultra modern 18 stand Continuous mill. This mill has a walking hearth reheating furnace, quick roll-changing facilities, a 65 meters long walk and wait type modern cooling bed and above all computerised process control linking and controlling the various stages. Within a short period of its inception in 1989, the SUNFLAG STEEL has established itself as a major global force. This modern complex pulsating with world-class

technology, expert human resources and a commitment to excellence, has created a distinct niche in spring steel and attained the position of market leader in the segment. Today SUNFLAG STEEL has also embarked on an export thrust and is regularly receiving prestigious orders from Japan and many other Far East, Afro-Asian and Middle-East countries.

The ASM commenced production in the year 1997, enabling Sunflag to expand their product range upto 90 mm dia Rounds; 75 mm RCS and upto 120x25 mm Flats. Production capacity of rolled product is also enhanced by 60, 000 MT. per annum. In order to save energy, a captive Power Plant of 30 MW capacity has already been commissioned using waste gases.

In a candid chat with Steelworld, Rakesh Kumar Malhotra, Executive Director (Marketing), Sunflag Iron & Steel Co. shared his insights on the spring steel market and on the growth charter of Sunflag Iron and Steel for India.

Excerpts:

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*Within a short period of its inception in 1989, the SUNFLAG STEEL has established itself as a major global force. This modern complex pulsating with world-class technology, expert human resources and a commitment to excellence, has created a distinct niche in spring steel and attained the position of market leader in the segment.*



Can you elaborate on the present spring steel market in the country ?

- Automobile industry is the major consumer of spring steel. While heavy commercial vehicles use large quantity of spring steel flats, the passenger vehicles use mainly value added spring steel in small quantity. The other major consumer is the Indian Railways for manufacture of springs for their Coaches & Wagons. Besides, there are other users of spring steel for various applications in General Engg. Industries.

Sunflag has been a leader in the spring steel production for many years, tell us something about your products, applications and market share.

- Sunflag has been a major supplier of spring steel till the year 2000. However, subsequently it moved to more value added products & hence supply of spring steel reduced substantially. Presently we make special spring steel for application in automotive sector and Railways.

How do you see the future of spring steel market in the country ?

- With almost 12% to 15% per annum growth in automotive sector, the spring steel market should see similar demand growth. Indian Railways also have big expansion plans by way of dedicated freight corridor and on their existing net work. Hence, market for spring steel should remain good.

Sunflag has been a big exporter of spring steel, which are the export destination and the emerging markets around the globe?

- Major export market for Sunflag has been South East Asia and Europe but now due to stiff competition from China, the export of spring steel from India has gone down substantially.

Tell us something about the future plans of the company.

- Sunflag has recently commissioned a Blooming Mill and with that now we have much larger range available and we are focusing on this market. We are also concentrating on making more value added products by adding more downstream facilities as per market requirement.



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