

A PROFILE OF SUCCESSFUL INDUSTRIALIST

Dr. NEELKANTH A. KALYANI

Kalyani Forge Ltd., Pune-411 001.



Dr. Neelkanth A. Kalyani

Born on August 20, 1928, Dr. Neelkanth A. Kalyani hails from reputed family of Karad in Satara District, engaged in farming and trade. He capped a brilliant school career by securing a rank amongst the first ten and appearing on the merit list at the Matriculation Examination. Thereafter he straightway plunged into the family business of trading in various commodities. Simultaneously he also devoted his attention to farming.

His interest in agriculture soon attached his attention to the Co-operative Movement. He was one of the founder promoters of the Krishana Co-operative Sugar Factory at Rethare, District Satara, which today ranks amongst the biggest and best co-operative sugar factory in India. Later during his long tenure of 12

years (1962-73), as the Chairman of the Maharashtra State Co-operative Land Development Bank, he brought to bear his business acumen and foresight in introducing new ideas in the working of this institution and making it more service - oriented and thereby beneficial to the farming community.

As a member of the Maharashtra State Electricity Board (1964-76) and latter as Director of the Rural Electrification Corporation (1971-75), Dr. Kalyani contributed significantly towards meeting the vital power needs of not only the State of Maharashtra, but also the electrification of Rural India as a whole.

Dr. Kalyani entered the industrial sector of the country's economy by promoting and establishing a Steel Forging Plant under the name of Bharat Forge Co. Ltd. in 1961. He secured a technical collaboration form the well-known U.S. based, Steel Improvement & Forge Co. of a Cleveland. He also successfully in negotiated a foreign exchange loan of U.S. \$ 4 million for starting Bharat Forge Co. Ltd. This Steel Forging Plant has since then made significant achievements and today ranks as the country's Number One Forge Shop and is also the largest in Asia. It is capable of producing sophisticated and complex forging

jobs and in the process has contributed substantially in the conserving of the foreign exchange resources of the country by delivering jobs as and by way of import substitution. As of date, this plant caters to the vital needs of Defence Ministry, Railways, Atomic Energy Establishment etc. apart from the requirements of the transportation sector of the country. Dr. Kalyani's contribution in establishing the forging industry in India on a firm footing is significant. He has not only looked to the growth and the development of the company now renamed as Bharat Forge Ltd. but has also given his valuable time for the industry in general, and accordingly he has served as President of Association of Indian Drop Forging and Stamping Industries (AIDFASI) during the years 1965-70, 1976-78 and 1989-90.

A major milestone achieved by the Indian forging industry during Dr. Kalyani's last tenure as President of AIDFASI was the successful organising and conduction of 13th International Forging Convention at New Delhi in January 1990.

Dr. Kalyani embarked Bharat Forge on a massive modernisation and technology upgradation programme which has propelled the company into becoming one amongst the first three technology advanced forge shops in the world. This project was undertaken at a cost of about Rs. 2000 million. Bharat Forge is now reputed to be a quality conscious, cost effective and reliable international source for a wide range of forge based product and components.

Recognising that the entry of Japanese two-wheeler manufacturers in the

early 1980s into the Indian market would lead to a large demand for precision close tolerance small forgings Dr. Kalyani established Ellora Engineering Co. Ltd. which is now known as Kalyani Forge Ltd. This Co. was perhaps the first to make extensive use of Press technology to manufacture forgings in India.

In 1974, Kalyani was the guiding force in establishment of Kalyani Steel Ltd., a mini- steel plant set-up with an idea to help Bharat Forge meet its diverse requirements of steel and there by reduced dependence on imports of steel.

Another major landmark in Dr. Kalyani's illustrious career in industry has been the establishment and setting up of Automotive Axles Ltd. at Mysore in Karnataka State for the manufacture of all types of complete axles and axle assemblies including components there of and corresponding brake sets. AAL has been set-up in financial cum technical collaboration with Rockwell International Corporation of U.S.A., a technological giant with interest in aerospace, electronics, apart from the auto and general industry. The association with Rockwell has helped Dr. Kalyani to forge close links with the American business Community. Spurred on by his success in getting Rockwell international Dr. Kalyani persuaded Bendix Corporation of USA, now a part of the world renowned Allied Signal Group, another technological giant, to set a joint venture company in India for the manufacture of Brakes system and Brakes including disc brakes. Kalyani Brakes Ltd. is technologically the most advanced brake manufacturing unit in India, catering to 70% of the requirements of Maruti

Udyog Ltd. (A joint venture between Government of India and Suzuki Motor Co. of Japan) and other Japanese and German based automotive collaboration ventures in India.

In 1986, Dr. Kalyani launched his group into a thus far unrelated area for diversification into the field of consumer electronics. He persuaded Sharp Corporation of Japan, one of the leading consumer electronics giants in the world, to set a joint venture with him in India. Kalyani Sharp India Ltd. has, in the last five years, become one of the five leading manufacturers of Colour and Black & White television sets in the country, accounting for a sizeable Market shares. The company has widened its product range by entering into manufacturer of VCRs / VCPs. It has also introduced a new range of audio products in the Indian Market thus strengthening its position.

He accepted the Chairmanship of the State Industrial Investment Corporation of Maharashtra (SICOM) from 1977 to 1980. During his tenure, he piloted the Revised Package Scheme of incentives - 1979, put into effect by SICOM, with a view to encouraging the dispersal of industries in the backward regions of Maharashtra State at a time when the industrial climate in the State was not very propitious. SICOM's scheme has served as a model for other States committed to industrial development and has pioneered many new concepts in the

development of backward areas.

Dr. Kalyani in his capacity as a member of the executive committees of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Confederation of Engineering Industry, is a senior spokesman of industry at various fora. Dr. Kalyani is a Past President of the Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce and Industries, the leading representatives body of trade, commerce and industry in Western Maharashtra. Dr. Kalyani's stature in international business circles stems out of his participation in various international needs organised by World Economy forum of Switzerland, Business International and SRI International of USA. He is on the Advisory Board of the World Economy Forum and regularly attends Forums Annual Meeting at Davos every year.

The Karnataka University in 1976, conferred on Dr. Kalyani a Doctorate in Science 'Honoris Causa' for his outstanding achievements in agriculture and in the co-operative field. The President of India awarded the "Padma Shri" to Dr. Kalyani in 1991 for his substantial contribution to the indigenous steel industry, the core forging industry and for the immense work that he has done in agriculture and co-operatives besides his all round extensive contribution to the economic, industrial and social sections of Indian Society. The Gulbarga University awarded Dr. Kalyani "Doctor of Letters" (Honoris Causa).

★