

STEELY MOVES

ANIL LINGAYAT, EXECUTIVE VP & BUSINESS HEAD, GODREJ MATERIAL HANDLING, EDUCATES US ABOUT MHE SOLUTIONS FOR THE STEEL INDUSTRY.

Which of your products are suited specifically for handling steel? What is the latest equipment control software that is making the automation of MHE easy for use in the steel industry?

With India being a competitive space for steel and iron ore, we see more and more companies focussing on steel coils, steel pallets and steel longs. Forklift and allied products find many applications in steel plants, steel handling and steel alloy plants. Godrej offers forklifts which can handle steel coils, steel pallets (stacks of steel sheet) and steel longs (profiles, I section etc.), and have supplied them to all major steel plants in India.

Some major applications where Godrej forklifts have contributed towards the steel industry are:

1. Standard three tonne forklifts are used in refractory. Major steel plants have big ovens, which are lined with refractory bricks. Whenever they undergo maintenance, the old bricks are replaced by the new bricks using a forklift.
2. Forklifts with ram attachment are suitable for handling coils, starting from one tonne all the way up to 30 tonnes.
3. Godrej offers special container stuffing/de-stuffing model forklifts that can stuff steel coils up to 10 tonnes inside the container. This is a major advantage for users as they transport these coils inside a container rather than break bulk or open top, thus reducing the cost of transportation and also damage.
4. Forklifts with stoker and furnace attachment are used in the steel allied industry. This is one segment where we have a very strong presence in India.
5. As for handling steel longs, there is also a product that has been indigenously designed and developed and is known as the side loader, which is critical in handling steel longs in reasonable size spaces. It takes considerably less space to stack than a regular forklift as it can handle loads in line with the direction the truck is moving in.

Within the user industry, especially auto and consumer durables where pollution is a major concern, Godrej has launched its five tonne electric forklift that can handle coils up to that capacity and can be used comfortably within the plant (factory). We also have

tied up with a global player to provide electric forklifts having a capacity up to 15 tonnes to be used within the plant.

Over and above this, in all steel-oriented and allied industries of steel like forgings and castings, India has a competitive edge, as a result of which, exports of such products will have a huge potential in the future. For subsequent downstream activities of steel like machining of auto components and auto ancillaries, which are finding a huge advantage in the global market, Godrej has dedicated products, operated on electrical technology, used in auto shops where high-end technology machines are used.

To sum it up, we have forklift and allied product solutions available across the value chain of steel, right from steel making to steel component processing.

How far do these products ensure faster, easier and safer movement of steel products, without significantly increasing the logistics/handling costs of your customers?

The main advantage of the forklift is it being a free-path equipment. It is a flexible and versatile equipment, which does the job of picking, placing and moving loads from one point to the other.

Unlike fixed path equipment like a gantry crane, it is dedicated to a specific purpose and area. So the forklift becomes economical in the sense that it can do multiple work with one machine. For example, if you are handling coils, you can use a coil boom attachment and if you want to handle steel pallets, you can use the forks. Even for handling machinery or any load in your plant from one place to another, a forklift comes handy.

What are the problem areas when it comes to conveying steel?

From a free-path equipment point-of-view, safety is a major concern as the forklift is a big equipment that handles heavy loads. Just imagine you are handling a load of 15 tonnes and the weight of the forklift is 20 tonnes travelling at a speed of 10km/h; the momentum is massive. Godrej offers safety features such as host burst valve and fail safe brakes, which ensure safety from any major mishap inside plants. Lastly, a forklift should be engineered for all round visibility. ■

