

SLOW PACE OF MECHANISATION...

Mechanisation in material handling is not new to India. Forklift trucks have been in use for more than four decades now. However, mechanisation did not register the expected growth due to availability of cheap labour, absence of scientific practices in material handling, logistics, return on investment as well as lack of timelines.

UPCOMING TRENDS

The cranes are going in for redesign wherein optimisation of geometry & other parameters are being brought in for improved controls, better handling of loads, etc. Also, since increased travel speeds and low creep speeds improve deliverables, the machines are being made increasingly versatile to give increased value for money and

of loads in the plants has led to an increase in demand. With increase in plant sizes, three shift working & high productivity machines need matching material handling, which cannot be done manually. For example, in an F&B plant, a single line produces 600 bottles per minute and one plant can have 4-6 such lines; forklift is the only way to handle such output.

Chinese market is 20 times the Indian market as of today

“The forklift market in India is still very small as compared to the US & European market or even other Asian countries. With India getting increased acceptance as a manufacturing destination, the market is bound to grow,” informs Rajindra Raina, Head - Forklift Business, Escorts Construction Equipment Ltd, during an interaction with Suprita Anupam. Excerpts...

SAFETY STANDARDS @ ESCORTS

Forklifts are used in enclosed areas & keep shuttling all around; brakes are used very frequently. These determine the safety of men & material in a plant. Also, the braking distance needs to be small. Oil Cooled Disc brakes are the answer. As for the cranes, Escorts took the technology to newer levels from time to time and also customised machines for specific applications. For the last one year, ‘Safety’ has been one of the focus areas besides upgrading the engines to the latest BS standards. The new genre of safe cranes ‘TRX’ series is to cater to high standards of safety being ensured at various project sites like metro rail, power, refineries & other infrastructure projects, which are the major consumers of these cranes.

also multi-purpose usage.

Software, battery in particular, has become an integral part of forklift trucks, as it can be put to better use in such machines and logic cards help in easy & exact diagnosis, thereby easing maintenance. Moreover, better control, mode selection per job demand helps the operator set the machine and make it work intelligently for better efficiency and low cost of operation.

CURRENT MARKET GROWTH

Till 2000, the cranes as well as forklift market size was around 1,000 units each but, thereafter, both the segments registered a decent growth. Cranes, in particular, grew at twice the rate as compared to forklift trucks. The forklift market is growing, but is still far from the expected levels and palletisation

Mechanisation in logistics has opened up new avenues and is going to drive growth in future. Warehouses too are coming up in a big way. To increase the throughput and use vertical space, battery forklifts are finding increased acceptance. Additionally, AC trucks give higher productivity and ask for lower maintenance, therefore their demand is high.

The forklift market in India is still very small as compared to the US & European market or even other Asian countries. The Chinese market is 20 times the Indian market as of today. With India getting increased acceptance as a manufacturing destination, the market is bound to grow. That is why all the global players have set up their shops in India as they want to be a part of the growth story. ■