

## Special Feature

BRIT TECHNOLOGY USER

# A. V. Processors

**S**terico, Maharashtra's first irradiation unit in the private sector-and the country's second, promoted by A V Processors Pvt. Ltd (AVPPL) was established in the year 2003 under technical collaboration with Board of Radiation and Isotope Technology (BRIT). Promoted by the father-son duo Mr. O. P Adukia and Mr. Rajiv Adukia who have vast technical, managerial and industrial capability, company has set up a fully automatic and continuous gamma irradiation facility for sterilisation of medical/surgical products and disinfestations of agro products using sealed radiation source (Cobalt -60). The plant is located at MIDC, Ambemath in Thane district (Maharashtra), is well connected by road and rail.



Mr. Rajiv Adukia, the Managing Director, completed his Masters in Management Studies in the year 1988, from the Birla Institute of Technology & Science, Pilani. Says Mr. Adukia, "with an investment of Rs. 50 lakh we started a manufacturing unit of various products mainly packaging and plastic articles. But we wound up this unit in 2005 as we were looking for a new venture. Fortunately for us we entered into an MOU with BRIT in October 2003. It took us two years to give a shape to our plant and we started the operations in end 2005. The initial consultancy, validation, supply and installation of the source was done completely by BRIT."

"We are basically into medical disposables, pet feed, spices & electrical components", says Mr. Rajiv Adukia. "Our employees numbering around 20, are basically engineers who have taken training at BRIT & AERB (Atomic Energy Regulatory

Board), right from Radiological Safety Officer, Plant Operators to Quality Control Officers." he adds.

Talking about the facility and process, Mr. Adukia said, "Sterico is a fully automatic and computerised plant. The product movement consists of an automatic conveyor system which carries the product boxes into the cell room through labyrinth. The products to be sterilised are packed in standard corrugated boxes, which are automatically loaded onto the hanging carriers which can take five such boxes at a time. Each carrier travels at a controlled speed on an overhead monorail, enters the cell room, passes each side of the source twice and returns back to the box transfer station. Each box goes in all the five positions in the carrier and when it comes out, it is 100% sterilised and ready for immediate despatch to the customer. State of the art dosimetry laboratory has been set up for testing and quality control."

"On a total investment of Rs. 5 crore, we are doing a turnover of Rs. 2<sup>3</sup> crore today" reveals Mr. Adukia who proudly adds, "Ours is a profitable company. The plant is designed for 1000 kCi of radiation source, which can process approx. 250,000 Nos. of standard size boxes per annum. The present loaded capacity is 400 kCi with an output of 1 lakh boxes. We will be increasing the source once the business grows. In fact, there is a good scope for all the players provided there is awareness of this technology in a much broader way. Ours is a multipurpose plant for medium and high dose products. It is a wet panoramic type of irradiator and has recently got ISO Certification for its quality management system. "We have 80 satisfied clients that include large MNC's like - Cipla, GSK, Glaxo, Siemens, HUL and Schnider Electric, to name a few."

According to Mr. Adukia, setting up an irradiation unit is not very easy venture. Though the investment at the initial stage is very high, one can still afford to get loan from the Technology Development Board. However, one has to undergo a lot of regulatory aspects and adhere to their stringent norms. The licences are not very easily available from The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board, Food & Drug Administration. But once the set up is done then there is no looking back! ■

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