

"Forms & Gears has a well equipped and one of the largest privately owned tool room facilities in the country."

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## CORPORATE

# Forms & Gears gets Toyota division order

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**F**orms & Gears, the Chennai-based manufacturer of hydraulic fixtures has secured an order from the machine tool division of Toyota Motor Corporation.

This division makes machining centres for the Japanese carmaker will also supply these machines to Kirloskar Oil Engines (KOEL) for their project at Kagal near Kolhapur, Maharashtra. It will be supplying 24 machines for which Forms & Gears would supply the fixtures. The Japanese company will supply the hydraulic cylinders for this project.

"They visited us and we are now doing a project for Marubeni for receiver gauges, also for machines destined for KOEL." These have to be very accurate and, according to Raji Varghese, is a key order for the company.

The company, which has a unit in the Guindy area of Chennai makes a product that helps significantly improve machining speeds. The use of such fixtures helps reduce clamping time which allows for much faster machining cycles. In hydraulic fixtures, clamping is done sequentially to operate the clamps in a specific order. Such fixtures provide much higher holding forces.

By using hydraulic fixtures, the likelihood of deformed parts does to wrong clamping is avoided. Moreover, the use of hydraulic fixtures improves part quality. Their use can be independently applied on fragile sections of a part. With such fixtures, the dependence on operators is reduced which helps enhance quality of the parts.

Varghese, who runs this

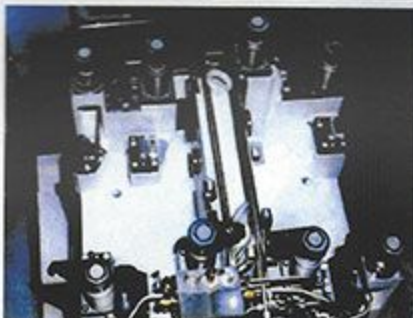
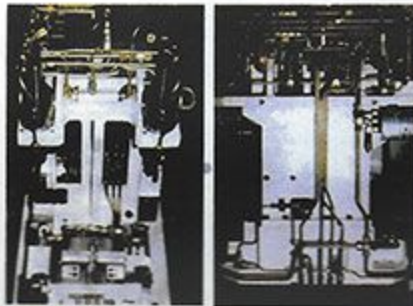
company said the boom in the auto sector with key players expanding their operations or enhancing volumes is a boost to his business. "Our biggest customers are automobile manufacturers as also machine tool makers," said Varghese.

The company, which has witnessed a 100 percent growth over the last three years, has Maruti Udyog, Tata Motors, Ashok Leyland, Makino, Delphi, Eaton, Caterpillar etc as its key clients. "We also have customers like Mazaki of Japan which buy fixtures from us. Among those using our fixtures are those companies that are into casting and exports. For instance we are servicing Jaya Hind Industries and Endurance for a project at Manesar. Besides this we are also supplying cylinder heads to John Deere," said Varghese.

### Phenomenal growth

Besides the local market, the company has been able to export hydraulic fixtures to auto component and machine tool manufacturers in the US and is keen to enhance this aspect of the business.

Forms & Gears recently established a new facility for which it has spent an estimated Rs two crore, funded by internal resources and loans. Varghese told *Auto Monitor* that the additional capacity would cater to the phenomenal growth the company has witnessed over the last three to four years. "We have put up our second state-of-the-art temperature, humidity and dust controlled inspection facility with a 1 meter x 1.5 meter CNC CMM in the new plant along with a new 1200 mm x 500 mm Mazak machining centre.



Pictured above are Fixtures on Maruti machines used for machining India cylinder blocks

The company already has three units at the Industrial Estate in Guindy, housing a well equipped and one of the largest privately owned tool room facilities in the country.

Outlining company's priorities for the current fiscal, Varghese said it is in talks with a couple of internationally renowned fixture builders in the US and Europe to

making fixtures for which the search for an overseas partner is important. This would help it target the export market. "Moreover, we offer the Indian customer the equivalent of an imported fixture at half the cost. All hydraulic fixtures are with imported hydraulic elements and we offer features like dual pressure for roughing and finishing, air seat sensing and pressure drop monitoring for safety," said Varghese.

At present, exports account for an estimated 15 percent of company's turnover, which it hopes to treble to 40-50 percent by 2010.

"There are a number of opportunities and we are in talks with a number of foreign companies in this regard. We are primarily looking at the European and US markets where we have a significant cost advantage. There are also a lot of opportunities in Asia in China, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia and companies from these countries are in touch with us," he added.

Varghese admits that there is a need to appoint an agent or now try to participate in shows in parts of Asia. When asked about the slowdown that is expected to impact the automotive market, Varghese said that since the company's business is project-based, a slowdown can have a potential impact.

Established 33 years ago by RT Varghese, the company is keen to leverage its expertise in the business in which it has been for over 35 years now as well as its pioneer work in this area. According to Varghese, the company is already one of India's largest manufacturers of machining centre fixtures in the country and among the leading two or three fixture builders in Asia. 