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## NextGen Summit 2023: Leadership must trickle down from boardroom to tool room for effective implementation of HSE

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The sixth session stressed on a culture that encourages fearless safety observation, incorporates digital technology in reporting systems, and creates HSE driven leadership at shop floor

By Rahul Koul

The chemical industry is one of the most important industries, not just for the production of consumer goods, but also for its impact on public health and environment. At the same time, there are risks including the exposure to toxic substances, chemical spills, and environmental pollution associated with it.

While in recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE) concerns in the chemical industry, there still are many gaps in the approach to address them.

The leading industry experts discussed the importance of incorporating a better culture of incident reporting and appropriate changes in the system at the fifth session, 'Health, Safety, and Environment: The Missing Link' of NextGen Chemical and Petrochemical Summit 2023 organized in Mumbai by the Indian Chemical News on July 13-14, 2023.

The session was moderated by Jashan Bhumkar, Director, Soujanya Color.

Outlining the need for a positive approach to HSE, Bhumkar cited how the chemical industry that was often in the past looked at as something dirty polluting factories, has now witnessed visible change in thinking. "The industry is now an equal partner of choice at a global scale. It has been possible due to technological advancements and stringent regulatory standards. Things are changing now with the focus on organizational culture in terms of safety, risk mitigation, customer interaction, and responsibility."

"In terms of achieving the net zero target by 2070, I think every corporation is aggressively working towards and we are no less and having said that I think chemical industries are contributing towards 6% global carbon emissions. Hence, there is a need to look at various aspects of how we can contribute. Since it's a hard to abate sector, the efforts that are being made might not suffice. Like any other industry we are struggling, but at the same time having to focus on these aspects right from the corporate level, that is strategy and how these things are getting integrated in terms of environmental aspects," said K K Sharma, Whole Time Director EHS, DCM Shriram.

"During the last six to seven years, a lot of emphasis has been put in terms of efforts on real safety as well as process safety management. That is something which is core to any chemical industry. So there are specific actions

that have been taken at various sites where everyone is involved in terms of making safety a part of the vision. We firmly believe that all accidents are preventable. So with that mindset, everyone is encouraged to look for hazards in terms of making safety observations fearlessly. That's the culture that is being created so that every small unsafe act, unsafe condition or near misses are reported. If you see something good happening, appreciate it and if you are seeing something which is wrong in terms of any unsafe activity, it has to be corrected there itself. That's why correction is something which is being emphasized so that we build the real safety culture whereby everyone cares about every other person. That's the philosophy we have been encouraging and following in all of our sites and it's a journey and there is a long way to go," added Sharma.

"Tata Group's name is synonymous with ethics and code of conduct for which it is known. It was our aspiration to be also known for the leadership in the safety and sustainability. And then we thought, how can we do this? Because it's not one or two decades but many decades we are there and till now we are not able to do that properly, we did not limit ourselves to building only the role models and went beyond that. A visible leadership that not just believes but also actually does what is said. So we said, we will build a fairer leader and it's not an easy job, let me tell you. It starts right from the top. If you're the Managing Director, people believe that what he's saying, he will walk the talk. But every day you don't see a Managing Director or your vice president also at the shop floor. That's where we focused on our middle management that is visible on the shop floor. They observe these people and are ascending, descending, doing something, saying something. If we develop these kinds of 50-60 hundred leaders, then our job is done," said Alok Chandra, Chief HSE, Tata Chemicals.

"Last year we started one intervention where every month we selected three of such executives who are either involved in any activity of a particular plant or their leading a bigger function. We made them join and work in the safety function for one month. It is a fully chalked out program where every week I am talking to them and every fortnight the managing director is talking to them. We have already completed four batches and the kind of change we are seeing in terms of culture and mindset shift is unbelievable. Apart from this we also need to focus on risk based approach and not just high hazard anticipation," added Chandra.

"The most important thing when it comes to sustainability, circular economy, EHS, ESG, is that these topics are now an essential part of discussions. Hubergroup is a 258-year old company and we have seen centuries and world wars. Headquartered in Germany, we have 5,000 employees in India which is our manufacturing base. Our plants are ETP certified and as per German standards as sustainability and safety. This comes to the core of the company and we fully understand sustainability. When it comes to the printing industry, it is associated with chemicals such as dyes and pigments but is a different industry altogether. Like any other industry, the printing ink industry too uses chemicals but we also use non-chemicals like gums, vegetable oils as a base. Let me say that a lot of people are using our products from morning to evening. We touch your lives multiple times in a day and it makes much sense for us to provide the sustainable products, the ones that can be repurposed, reused and recycled' said Suresh Kalra, Managing Director India & President Asia, Hubergroup.

"At Givaudan, we have a very high focus on sustainability. Our purpose is to create healthier lives. We are into flavor and fragrance and we influence your lives when you consume foods and use detergents. That makes us very much responsible. We have a bold ambition of being RE 100 which means that all our SCOPE 1 and SCOPE 2 will be 100% renewable sources of energy by 2025. We are already 90% by 2022. We are also looking at achieving net zero by 2045 and carbon positive by 2050. We have also set the target of cutting down our carbon emissions by 70% through science based design initiatives. We were one of the first to sign the agreement to this effect in 2019. We are also into the use of biomass and solar energy but in addition to this, we have an excellent program called, 'Sourcing

from Wood' which has 14,000 plus vendors with whom we have been working in a very strategic way. We have four different categorizations of these farmers and are trying to have sustainable sourcing and also reducing the SCOPE 3 emissions. We are also working with farmers and especially in Brazil, Guverana is an iconic botanical plant that helps in fighting tiredness and boosting the energy levels. We have worked closely with farmers to grow this crop," said Geetali Thakur, EHS Regional Director, Givaudan.

"We have learned a lot through the occurrence of accidents and injuries at our various sites. Over a period of time, we have started putting a good number of resources into safety. We believe that safety is the way you set the tone for the business and therefore, we are working with the vision of 'Safety for all and hunger for none'. We have a crop protection business, and we have pharma and consumer businesses where all our facilities have good safety infrastructure. We have a specific group called Process and Plant Safety because we are dealing with chemicals. We focus on process safety with highest priority. We spent around Rs 100 crore on the plant at our Vapi site on improving the processes. On the management side, we believe in behavioral safety. We talk about the incidents and encourage all employees to report them.," said Amish Kamat, Regional HSE Manager (APAC) - Safety &IH, Bayer.

"HSE culture has to go from boardroom to tool room as ultimately it is the person who drains acid, suffers injuries, and has grease on his hands. That person in the tool room is the best person to bring about HSE culture. The whole sustainability part depends on it. Putting up the right management system in terms of reporting the incidents is important. If the incident is reported in 30 seconds, it will make sense otherwise it loses essence. Once it starts happening, we will have an effective database. We run the UPL University but I tell the people that UPL itself is a university due to the levels of knowledge and databases that the company has acquired over the period of time. We are trying to implement artificial intelligence and machine learning for fast reporting of incidents. Right incident reporting and timely one besides the depth of incident analysis is critical. When it comes to accidents, we still blame it on the humans rather than looking at systems," said Nilay Vyas, Global Head Safety & Health, UPL.

"You don't measure leadership but feel it. So we have to build the right culture. The programs implemented in the last six months are fully supported by UPL management. Have a perfect documented system and have perfect implementation. In HSE, the potential hazard is taking new initiatives and forgetting old ones. It is a culture and we may not be there yet but the right steps in the right direction mean we will be there soon," added Vyas.

NextGen Chemical and Petrochemical Summit 2023 themed 'Innovation, Self-reliance and Sustainability' witnessed attendance by a huge number of stakeholders from the chemical and petrochemical industry across India.

The Summit was supported by the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Govt. of India and co-partnered by DCM Shriram. The Gold Partners of the event were Premier Tech, Ingenero, Rieco, ABB, PIP, Deepak Group, Dassault Systemes, Moglix and Siemens. Associate Partners were Tata Chemicals, Anupam Rasayan India, Sealmatic, Godavari Biorefineries, Huntsman, Tranter, Source.One, IPCO, and Aeroflex. The Lanyard Partner was Jakson Green.

Industry Association Partners were AMAI, Gujarat Chemical Association, CropLife India, Chemicals and Petrochemicals Manufacturers Association, India and, AgroChem Federation of India.