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EXPECTING BETTER PROSPECTS FROM OCTOBER

Emami Group, which recently ventured into cements, is expecting the growth of its new vertical to gather greater momentum especially in Orissa. Against this backdrop, **Orissa POST** caught up with Chief Executive Officer of Emami Cements Vivek Chawla to find out more about the company's strategies in the new market.

Excerpts from an interview he gave **Debasish Acharya**:

■ **The cements industry had witnessed a slowdown April to June. What is the current situation?**

There was a downturn as the demand for cement fell as fallout of new taxation laws and a slowdown in the real estate market, among other things. But it will change in September and we will see a rise in the graph from October onwards.

■ **What is your growth forecast for the industry?**

The industry is expected to see 6 per cent to 7 per cent growth nationally with 15 per cent 17 per cent in the Eastern Zone and 12 per cent to 15 per cent in the state. The

real effect of GST and RERA will be seen from October as incomplete projects will be restarted and it will enhance the demand-supply graph. Affordable housing scheme will also help in boosting the growth of the cement industry.

■ **What is Emami Cements' target for the coming years and how do you intend to achieve the growth?**

We are eyeing 15 per cent share both in the eastern zone as well as in the state, which will be a three-fold rise in our share, by next fiscal. Our new plant in Orissa, coming up at the cost of ₹600 crore, will become operational in March 2018 and, together with footprint

expansion from 1,000 retailers in the state to 2,000 by March 2018 and 3,000 by FY2018-19, will help us meet the target in the state. We also hope to achieve revenue target of ₹1,400 crore to ₹1,500 crore this fiscal and ₹2,800 crore by FY2018-19. The target will be met by selling 3.2 million tonnes of cement by March 2018.

■ **What is the extent of your presence in the eastern zone. Do you have any inorganic growth plan?**

We have presence in Chattisgarh, Bihar, Orissa, parts of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and Vidarbha, among other reaches in the zone.

We plan to extend operations to Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh and are working towards acquiring mines. In West Bengal we produce four million tonnes per annum and hope to raise it to six million tonnes per annum by end of this fiscal.

■ **What is the USP of Emami Cements?**

We have installed hi-end automated robotic laboratory at the Rista plant in Chattisgarh at an investment of ₹10 crore to ₹12 crore for monitoring product quality. Samples collected at various points by the robots will help us to maintain quality and to address issues immediately.

