



“Our Strategy Is To Create A Nationwide Charging Infrastructure In The Country”

Mr Manasvi Sharma - Head New Business Services, Tata Power

Tata Power is a name synonymous with the Indian Power sector. How do you plan to leverage this experienced legacy for the E-Mobility sector?

It is true, Tata Power (started as Tata Hydroelectric Power Supply Company in 1910) is synonymous with the Indian Power sector. The company is credited with several firsts including the first hydroelectric and thermal power plants, first cross-border hydro power project at Digapahru and all the way to the first 4000 MW Ultra Mega Power Project of India in Mundra, Gujarat in 2013.

22% of our generating capacity comes from renewable sources. Tata Power is also one of the oldest and largest producer of clean energy in India with several landmark projects across the country including the largest solar rooftop installation (Amritsar), largest solar rooftop installation at Brabourne Stadium (Mumbai) and largest solar carport at Cochin airport. In the next four to five years, we expect around 60-50% of our generation capacity to come from renewables.

We also expect to play a crucial role in helping Indian consumers to adopt clean energy including for their mobility requirements. We see a big opportunity here. The combined force of the need to secure the country's energy demands (by gradually reducing fossil fuel imports like coal, oil and gas) and the rising environmental concerns is opening up big opportunities for E-mobility in the country. Our strategy is to create a nationwide charging infrastructure in the country.

At present, we have 50 (22 + Mumbai & New Mumbai; 5-Delhi; 2-Hyderabad; 1-Vijaywada; 1-Vizag; 5-Bangalore; 1-Lucknow; 1-Nagpur) charging stations in 23 different cities including Mumbai, Delhi, and Hyderabad. These chargers overall can simultaneously charge around 60+ cars at these locations.

What has been your strategy for tapping the massive potential of the Charging Infrastructure segment?

It is important to understand the potential which e-mobility space holds in India. Today, less than half percent of newly launched vehicles (around 25 million) sold in India are electric. But, this is expected to change in the coming years.

As per the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) 2020 announced in 2013, the expectation was to achieve a sales target of 6-7 million EVs (including hybrid) year on year starting from 2020. Under the present government from an initial plan of going all green by 2020, potential EV penetration has been scaled down to a more realistic 15% of total new vehicle sales in the next five years. Given at these levels, the opportunities for those outside the automotive sector is immense.

A good network of charging stations for EVs addresses a very basic challenge -- range anxiety. Potential EV buyer worries about running out of battery and stuck between two charging stations that are not close-by. Currently, new vehicle buyers (gasoline) don't worry about running out of gas so much because there are over 61,000 petrol/diesel retail outlets in the country against around 500 EV charging stations.

So, our first strategy is to tie up with Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) like Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd and Indian Oil Corporation Ltd, Indraprastha Gas Ltd and more recently Mahanagar Gas Ltd. We will be working with them to establish and expand our charging network. The understanding is to collaborate in planning, development, and operation of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles (e-cars, e-rickshaws, e-bikes, e-buses, etc.) at suitable locations across India.

Further, oil retailers also have plans to double their network of fuel stations. All these are potential charging stations for electric vehicles.

What is your opinion on the recently announced FAME 2 policy directives from GOI? Do you feel this will accelerate the growth of EV sector in India?

The first version of FAME announced in 2015 had very little impact. But FAME II has been modified and is far more sharply focused to incentivise the demand for electric vehicles in the country. Under the FAME II policy, EVs have become cheaper by INR 20,000 to INR 2.5 lakh (April 1 onwards) followed by the government's go-ahead to Nitk Ayappa's proposal to give a purchase rebate as incentive to buyers.

Under the revised policy, the Union cabinet has approved an incentive of INR 10,000 per kWh for the purchase of e-vehicles directly linked to battery size. Over a period of next 2 years, the scheme plans to incentivise 10 lakh two wheelers, 5 lakh three wheelers, 5000+ four wheelers and 7000 buses. It also plans to setup 2700 Electric Vehicle charging

infrastructure across the country in metro and other large cities.

Under this scheme, close to Rs 1,500 crore for 2019-20, Rs 5,000 crore in 2020-21, and Rs 3,500 crore in 2021-22 have been allocated, of which, Rs 1,000 crore has been allocated for setting up charging stations for electric vehicles in India.

However, there are still a few challenges in FAME 2. For example, the recent clarification on the mandatory localisation of key components will make it harder for locally made vehicles that depend on imported components to qualify for the subsidy. Again, keeping private cars out of the scheme is a big impediment to incentivise a stronger adoption of electric vehicles in the country.

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