"We are investing significantly in our digital platform which will be a big differentiator"

– Sandeep Bangia, Tata Power

As part of its plans to help the electric vehicle (EV) migration in India, Tata Power, under the brand name EZ Charge, has installed over 400 fast and smart-charging points in 65 cities across the country for various usage environments in major metros, finds out Rajesh Rajgor, in an exclusive interview with Sandeep Bangia, Head (Electric Vehicles and Home Automation), Tata Power

Sandeep Bangia, Head (Electric Vehicles and Home Automation), Tata Power

Could you brief us about Tata Power's electric vehicle (EV) charging business and your journey until now in the India market?

We had installed our first electric vehicle charging station in 2017 at Vikhroli, Mumbai. Since then we have made significant progress in developing the EV ecosystem in India and today are unarguably the best and the largest EV charging network. We have aggressively expanded our EV charging network to over 400 charging points in over 65 cities. We are continuously expanding our network with plans to cover all the key towns and cities before the end of the year. We are currently focusing on highways and tourist spots apart from augmenting our network in main cities. This will ensure that EV owners can take their vehicles on long drives and excursions without any range anxieties.

Have you identified specific segments to start with or are you offering charging solutions across all segments?

We are present across all segments of the EV ecosystem – public charging, captive charging, home charging, workplace charging and charging for residential communities. We have also deployed all types of chargers including AC chargers of up to 7.4 kwh, fast DC chargers up to 60 kWh and even ultra-rapid chargers of up to 240 kWh chargers for e-buses. In fact, the modern electric buses by BEST in Mumbai are using our charging infrastructure. We are quite bullish on the demand for EVs and are investing in the charging infrastructure in preparation

for the impending demand.

Could you share details about your products and solutions in terms of where they are made, the sourcing of the technological know-how and why they are superior to those of the competitors?

We source our chargers from all the established suppliers who comply with our quality norms. We have an in-house charger test facility and we also check compatibility with our digital platform before deploying them. This combination of the width of our network, the charger hardware, domain expertise in power infrastructure and the cutting-edge digital platform – Tata Power EZ Charge – that we offer makes our proposition superior to the competitors. Add to that, a very responsive 24 x 7 multi-modal customer care – phone, online chat and in-app support and you have a package that is very compelling.

Have you tied up with OEMs for faster installation of EV stations?

We have tie-ups with EV makers like MG Motor India, Jaguar Land Rover India and Tata Motors for charging infrastructure and we work very closely with them to identify potential areas and cities to set up charging infrastructure. This works very well for both so that our charging infrastructure is already available in the geographies where they launch their vehicles. We also set up home charging for their customers who book EVs and before the customers' car is delivered. Given this scenario, fuel outlets owned by Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited, Indian Oil Corporation Limited and Indraprastha Gas Limited will also continue to expand its relationship with multiple stakeholders.

Could you elaborate on the types of chargers deployed across the country so far?

We have currently installed over 400 charging points of all denominations and connectors in 65 cities across the country for various usage environments in major metros such as New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Pune and Hyderabad. The

company is continuously expanding and investing substantially in its network of smart EV charging stations and aims to scale up to 700 charging stations by the end of the current financial year. This also includes public chargers, semi-public chargers, captive chargers, workplace chargers, residential society chargers, home chargers, ultra-high-capacity chargers for buses, etc. The exact locations of our public charging points are available on our state-of-the-art digital platform — the Tata Power EZ Charge app — which is available for download on both Android Play Store and iOS Store.

Given the market acceptance and potential of electric vehicles, what is Tata Power's reading of the Indian consumers towards electric vehicles and their acceptance?

Electric vehicles have picked up globally and we are seeing that almost all key automakers globally have committed to migrating from IC engines to full electric drivetrains in the next few years. This is largely driven by growing concerns worldwide about tailpipe emissions. This consciousness has in fact grown during the pandemic times. And those who drive an electric vehicle feel that EVs are better vehicles. Its linear acceleration makes it so much fun to drive with no emissions, no noise and hardly any maintenance hassles.

That's why EVs will continue to grow. The government is doing its bit by offering subsidies and incentives and is committed to make the transition to electric. However, for a greater push towards EVs, vehicles must be available at various price points. Similarly, awareness about charging and charging infrastructure will go a long way in mitigating range anxiety. For example, not many people realise that over 70% of the charging of EVs happens at home or at the workplace.

Could you highlight a few works that are under development and for which Tata Power EZ Charge has signed MOUs to set up commercial EV charging stations?

We have partnered with MG Motor to deploy 50 KW DC superfast chargers at select MG Motor dealership locations and offer end-to-end EV charging solutions to MG Motor dealerships spread across India. Apollo Gleneagles Hospital, Kolkata has signed up a PPA to commission the biggest carport of the Indian health sector. This will be the biggest carport in the state of West Bengal. With 335 Kwp capacity the project is expected to generate approximately 4.26 lakh units for the hospital and reduce 80,000 grams of carbon emission per annum.

Additionally, Prakriti E-Mobility, an app-based EV taxi fleet has tied up with the company to install state-of-the-art charging infrastructure. Tata Power is responsible for designing, procurement, installation and management of all charging infrastructure at select locations across Delhi NCR. These chargers along with the public chargers will be used by Prakriti E-Mobility's fleet of 'EVERA' cabs for charging their electric vehicles. In the first phase the company will install five chargers at Jasola and about 50 chargers near the New Delhi Airport, Gurgaon and North Delhi.

What are the megatrends, challenges and opportunities for you to lead the EV infrastructure in India?

We at Tata Power are trying to keep ahead of the curve and in a way encouraging the push towards electric mobility. We are deploying a widespread charging network across India and are present in over 65 cities. We are investing significantly in our digital platform which we believe will be a big differentiator, devoting a lot of effort towards customer care and improving the customer experience before, during and post charging. We are the largest network in India today and growing fast.

Many city transport bodies wanting to make the transition to electric buses require specialised project management expertise in electrical, civil and charging hardware. This is something which we excel at and are engaged in projects at Mumbai, Jaipur, Ahmedabad and other places to electrify bus fleets. There are of course challenges in any new business – challenges about awareness, about regulations and many others – but we see them as stepping stones with opportunities to learn and grow. ◆