

ARCHITECTS WORK IN STEEL, NOT SLOGANS

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Every stronger nation rests on a layer nobody photographs. India is celebrated as the pharmacy of the world, courted as an alternative in specialty chemicals, and ambitious about processed food and nutraceuticals. But none of those industries produce a single gram without process plants — the dryers, evaporators and water recovery systems that turn a liquid into a precisely specified powder, and turn effluent back into usable water. Somebody has to design, build and commission that layer. That is the work my colleagues and I have spent our careers on.

Shachi Engineering began in 1998 in a small outhouse in Pune, started by a technocrat couple with an unfashionable belief: that engineering should create value for everyone it touches — the customer, yes, but equally the employee, the associate and the community around the plant. Twenty-seven years on, that belief has become 500-plus projects in more than 10 countries, two manufacturing units at Pune and Saykha spanning 240,000 sq. ft., and a company that delivers spray dryers, spin flash dryers, agitated thin film dryers, multi-effect and MVR evaporators, beading plants and complete ETP and Zero Liquid Discharge systems from concept to commissioning.

Why does this matter to a stronger India? Because capability that is imported is capability that is borrowed. When an Indian API manufacturer or a food ingredients company must wait on a European supplier's lead times, spares and service engineers, its expansion timeline is not its own. Every plant we engineer and manufacture here shortens that dependency. This is the unglamorous arithmetic of self-reliance: not a slogan, but a delivery schedule met in Pirangut instead of Copenhagen.

There is a water dimension too, and it is becoming the binding constraint on Indian industry. In water-stressed industrial clusters, new capacity is increasingly permitted only if a plant returns what it takes. ZLD-readiness is therefore not a compliance formality — it is the licence to grow. We would rather design heat recovery, water reuse and energy efficiency into a plant from the first drawing

than retrofit it later under regulatory pressure. A plant that consumes less per kilogram of output is simply a better-engineered plant.

My own conviction as CEO is straightforward: alignment before ambition, clarity before speed, sustainability before short-term gains. In practice that has meant declining work we were not the right partner for, and investing years ahead of demand — a pilot laboratory in 2010 so customers could validate their process before committing capital, doubled Pune capacity in 2016, a technology collaboration for self-cleaning evaporators in 2017, a second unit at Saykha, Gujarat, in 2020. None of those paid back in the quarter they were approved. All of them are why customers still call us fifteen years later.

Today Shachi plants run in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kenya, South Africa and the Netherlands — Indian engineering competing on performance rather than price, in categories long assumed to belong to Europe. Multiply that by hundreds of mid-sized Indian engineering firms and you have something more durable than any single success story.

Our values are four words: purpose, courage, growth and care. Growth is the hardest, because the real kind is slow and compounds invisibly. A stronger India is not built only in boardrooms.

It is built in factory bays, where a plant starts up on schedule and then runs as designed for the next twenty years.

