



INDUSTRIAL VISIT REPORT 2023

Department of Management & Commerce, PSN
campus.

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Overview

As up-and-coming managers, it was and remains an important requisite, that students gain practical exposure to various areas of management that were explored in theory.

A good place for these young aspiring managers to learn to fly was in the manufacturing sector. Manufacturing is, after all, the birthplace of management, where many of today's leading philosophies of management and business enhancement have emerged from practices and techniques first discovered and implemented in or for this sector.

The industrial visit, to the manufacturing plants of **Caterpillar, Schwing Stetter, and Ashok Leyland**, around Chennai, and observing with great detail the manner of production of their respective products, was immensely beneficial. Students not only translated their theoretical backgrounds, but also simultaneously learned with comprehensive detail about operations, supply chains, logistics, financing, marketing and business development, sales, quality management, quality of management, business practices and environments, the effects of geopolitics, technology, legalities, and economics, organisation structures, strategy, systems, and the most important of all – its culture & its people.

Overall the visit to these industries resulted in explosive real-world learning and exposure for these nascent managers.

The students were accompanied on this visit by:

- Dr. K. Sayee Manohar (HoD, DMC)
- Dr. K. J. Srinivas (Assistant Professor, DMC)
- Sri Sai Prabhakar (Faculty, DHSS), and
- Sri Nagaraja Rao (Visiting Faculty, DMC)

Dr. Prasanna Sai and Sri S. R. Chandra Sekhar, State President, SSSSO, Chennai, made necessary arrangements at Chennai.

Day 0 (11 Sep 2023)

Our journey began from Sri Sathya Sai Senior Boys Hostel, Puttaparthi, at 2:30 pm onboard a few Tata Maxi Cabs and a mini-bus. We headed for the Sri Sathya Sai Prasanthi Nilayam railway station and reached the station at 3:05 PM. We boarded the MEMU to Bengaluru and set off to SBC, Bengaluru. at 3:30 PM. The train was delayed by about an hour and reached Bangalore at 8:00 PM. After quickly partaking of dinner in the eateries around the station and on the platforms, we assembled at the platform where the train stood at 9:30 PM and boarded the train. The train set off towards Chennai at around 10:45 PM.

Day 1: Caterpillar, Tiruvallur, Chennai

We reached Chennai at about 4:45 AM, whereupon we were received warmly by Sevadals (members of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Chennai, Tamil Nadu), who helped us board a private bus scheduled to take us towards our lodging quarters for the duration of the stay, Sri Anantha Padmanabhaswamy Kalyana Mandapam, arranged by the SSSSO, Chennai. We reached by 5:30 AM, after which, we quickly readied ourselves for the visit and partook of the sumptuous breakfast graciously organised and heartfully served by the Sevadals. We then began our journey towards the Caterpillar manufacturing facility situated in Thiruvallur.

We reached the factory at 9:45 AM along with a volunteer alumnus from SSSIHL, Sri. Upendra Sai Matsa, who served as a coordinator, facilitator, and guide, while also representing the Seva Organisation. At this juncture, we want to express our heartfelt appreciation towards Upendra sir, who delayed joining his new job by a week so that he would be free to escort us everywhere.

Once inside the main gates of the layout, we were instructed in the safety protocols, provided safety gear, and escorted to the company's educational facility where the company presented its operations, interests, expertise, and the organisation in general. The presentations were headlined by Ms. Sangeetha Chandran, and Ms. Prijitha, both young and enterprising leaders. After a brief Q&A session, a short talk on strategy and Caterpillar was given by Mr Chandra Shekar, Head of Strategy Management. He was followed by Mrs Lakshmi Umopathy, Plant Head, and Mr. Velu, Associate Head HR.

We then interacted with various leadership team members in a Q&A session focused primarily on business strategy and the decision-making process. A visit to the assembly facilities of the Excavators and Off-way Highway trucks, and Large Mining Trucks. Our next stop was the fabrication and axle manufacturing facilities, before proceeding to lunch.

Post lunch, we had a case-study competition based on the Lean Six Sigma project discussion, for possible future plans and areas of scope for Caterpillar in the coming years. In the competition that ensued, the master black belt coordinator was mightily impressed with all the ideas presented, even going as far as to remark that some of these ideas would be considered by the management of Caterpillar themselves. The two teams that won had creative sustainable-focussed ideas and displayed great skill in presentations, impressing all gathered there. We got another precious opportunity to interact with the leadership team, who diligently answered every question ranging from operations and systems to HR and culture, after we made our presentations.

Caterpillar has remained at the forefront of the market, setting trends and leading the entire competition, because of its incredible focus on People, Culture, Integrity, and Excellence. Among the innumerable lessons that stood out to make Caterpillar have a sustainable competitive advantage, their four key performance indicators stood out as effective day-to-day tools that inculcate their values and culture in employees. Their KPIs of People (including training,

development & safety), Velocity, Quality, and Cost, helped them reap sustained benefits. A key outcome of this visit was also the unwritten commitment Caterpillar made keeping the future prospects of all SSSIHL students in mind.

We then took the opportunity to thank every individual who made this visit possible and felicitated them with small tokens of our gratitude.



We took our leave from the plant at about 3:00 PM to proceed towards Sri Sathya Sai Nivas, Perumbur Samithi. Sri Sathya Sai Nivas possesses a unique history including that of its miraculous inception, construction, and inauguration, as well as the transformative effects it had in that region. Another unique attribute to Sri Sathya Sai Nivas is that the deed to that building and its land are held in our Bhagawan's name, making it even dearer to our hearts.



The moment we stepped off the bus, we were engulfed in an outpour of love from the members of the Perumbur Samithi. They provided numerous refreshments in the form of samosas, sweets, and soft drinks. We were then regaled with numerous stories by devotees and the Samithi members about Swami's glory in its multiple facets. After a brief video showcasing Swami's divine leelas in the Sathya Sai Nivas, a few short talks were given by alumni and a career counsellor, giving us much awareness of numerous opportunities that lay ahead which may benefit us. But the most touching display of affection that could never have been possible if not for Swami, was the gifts we received from the Samithi, including a rare photo of Swami and a personalised bottle for every student, and the priceless opportunity of visiting Swami's quarters in Sathya SaiNivas. We were speechless and could only express our gratitude to Swami by singing loudly His Bhajans in His home, seeking His blessings, and before returning to our residential quarters at about fifteen minutes to ten, where we had dinner, again arranged and served by members of the Seva organisation and we rested for the day.

Day 2: Schwing Stetter (India) Pvt. Ltd., Sriperumbudur

Our day began much like the previous day and we jettisoned off towards Schwing Stetter Global Manufacturing Hub, situated about forty kilometers off Kanchipuram. We reached the facility around 11:10 AM after traveling close to two and a half hours. Akin to Caterpillar, we were given security and safety equipment at the gates for clearing the background checks. We were then cordially received in Schwing Stetter's training and development centre, where refreshments were provided which proved to be of great succour in the sweltering heat.

The presentations were headlined by Ms. Sharmila, the HR Manager (Plant), and Mr. Prakash, the Safety Officer. We were given a brief about the company's history, scope of operations, competencies, alliances, objectives, the India division, that plant, their unique initiatives and achievements, and what drove their key success factors. A Q&A session followed with many questions posed by both students and faculty and the ever eager Ms. Sharmila answered them with great conviction and vigour. Due to lack of time, and not wanting to miss out on the plant visits, the Q&A session was deferred to post-lunch.

We were ably guided by Mr. Kumaresan, an engineer of the manufacturing facility, in the assembly plants for stationery and truck-mounted concrete pumps, horizontal and stationary batching plants, placing boom, concrete truck mixer, and for its strategic partner (XCMB), other excavators, cranes, drillers, loaders and more. The patience and calmness in addressing all our doubts and concerns were applaudable given the number of questions that were posed.

We proceeded to have lunch and visit the fabrication facility where a detailed process of how the components required for assembly were manufactured from raw materials to finished goods, the facility planning, quality management, etc. were on display.

An interesting observation was the lean transformation being undertaken by the organisation, which was currently only accomplished till the 2S stage. Another interesting observation (and a highlight feature of the plant) was the higher percentage of blue-collar female workers (~30%) and the HR policies that were responsible for cultivating human capital, driving innovation, building a safe space for employees to involved, and give suggestions, providing high levels of upskilling and even partnering with colleges to provide educational qualifications.

SWOT	Description
Strength	Global presence, technological innovation, quality and reliability, wide product range, customer support and service
Weakness	Dependency on the construction industry, market competition
Opportunity	Infrastructure development, green construction, digitalization, diversification
Threat	Economic downturns, regulatory changes, currency fluctuations, supply chain disruptions, competition

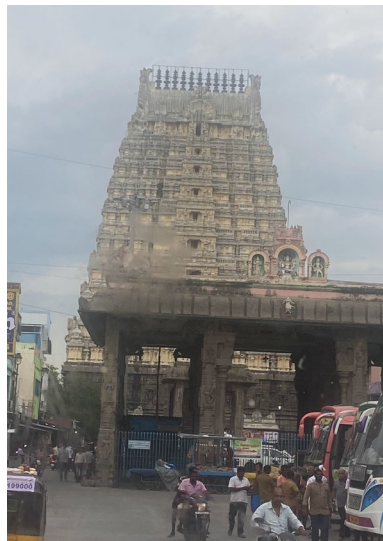
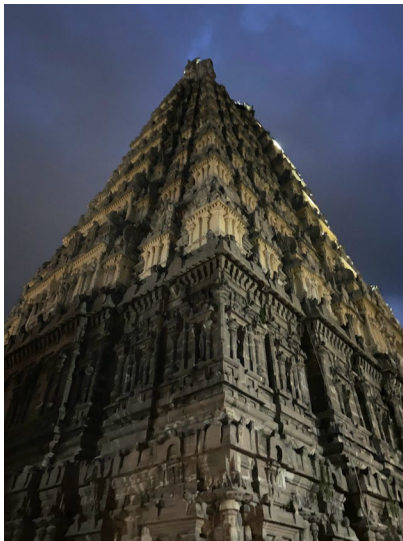


This was followed by an interactive session with Mr. Jayapal - HR Head (Plant), who shed more light on the company, its various objectives and strategic aims, the path forward, vision, mission, and more.

The most important takeaway of this visit was, above all, how gender equality, strategic activities, HR programmes, people-driven culture, people-centric culture, and high-performance-oriented workplaces can function effectively by transforming themselves into systems of high efficiency and effectiveness. Owing once again to the tight schedule, we had to cut short the profoundly enlightening interactive session and begin our journey back.

We then offered our deepest gratitude to every individual who made this visit possible and felicitated them with small tokens of our love and appreciation.

We made our way to Kanchipuram at about 5:30 PM and were hosted by the Kanchipuram Samithi, who generously bestowed our hungry stomachs with refreshments and secured our entry into the two temples we wished to visit – Ekambareshwarar and Kamatchi Amman. We were given VIP tours and access to the entire temples where we chanted the first Anuvakam of Rudram (Namakam) and Durga Suktam, and sang a few bhajans. If not for all the efforts and dedication of the Sevadals and Mr. Varadhan (the former TN State President of SSSSO), this temple visit would have been nigh impossible. With love equalling those parents give children, the Sevadals showered love on us and took care of us until we had to proceed back to conclude that day's proceedings.



We returned to the Mandapam by 10:00 PM where hot food awaited us, arranged and served by members of the Seva Organisation, before we crashed for the day.

Day 3: Ashok Leyland Limited, Ennore

Following a similar schedule to the days prior, we headed to Ashok Leyland at 9:00 AM and reached the facility by 10:00 AM. Here, we were cordially received by Ms. Sneha, HR, and Mr. Shanmugam Pillai, TQM. A presentation of the key features of the organisation's best-of-line business practices and philosophies was made that included Ashok Leyland's impressive innovation through the development of the Just-Do-It (JDIs) philosophy. Mr. Senthil, Head (Quality) then shared the quality processes and practices like Quality Gate System which ensures that only acceptable products move further on the production lines. This remarkable system not only assures quality but also enables ownership for every operator in this quality management system. Additionally, he presented Ashok Leyland's extension of TQM philosophy and practices into TQBE (Total Quality for Business Excellence), another innovation that ensured comprehensive business excellence and was also remarkably effective in saving billions of dollars in costs and cutting losses.

We were then delightfully entertained by Mr. C. Venkatesh, Head of Supply Chain Management, who held an invigorating and enthralling session on the two most critical parameters that rule every supply chain initiative – time and cost. We then proceeded to a delicious lunch provided to us by Ashok Leyland.

This was followed by a visit to their manufacturing facilities, showcasing in great detail how balancing the manufacturing process leads to a cycle time of 293 seconds for an engine to be produced, how the assembly of an Ashok Leyland truck happens with a cycle time of 7½ minutes, including complex man-machine based conveyor lines, the deep integration between different plants of Ashok Leyland and how one acts as a consumer and supplier not only to external partners but also to their sister plants.



Ashok Leyland held firmly that Safety, Quality, Delivery, Cost, People, and Maintenance (Daily) along with other Lean tools have given them a competitive edge over their competitors. We then proceeded back to the main education centre where presentations were made, and the learning was provided by our students to the members of Ashok Leyland present there.



Toward the end of the visit, we took the opportunity to thank every individual who made this visit possible and felicitated them with small tokens of our gratitude. Biding them adieu, we then drove to Sundaram.



At Sundaram, we were once again, showered with love, and were given a chance of a lifetime to chant Vedam, sing Bhajans, and obtain a chance to go to Swami's quarters. After which, we proceeded back to our Mandap, by 8:00 PM,

Day 4



We woke early that morning and went to Marina Beach to enshrine in our hearts the perfect, picturesque, and phenomenal sunrise over the turquoise-blue waters of the Bay of Bengal. After spending an hour or so, we journeyed back to prepare ourselves for the day. We quickly got ready and went to Express Avenue mall where we spent an hour before proceeding to Annalakshmi Hotel, where the State President of SSSSO, TN, hosted us for a delicious and breath-taking lunch which had nearly twenty different items to partake in.



With our stomachs filled, we set our sights on yet another historic and significant place for every Sai Bhakta - the Guindy Sai Baba temple that is visited by innumerable devotees and has several Leelas of Swami connected to its origin and existence. Imbibing the divine vibes, we offered a few bhajans and then began to retreat.



Later that evening we had a meeting with various Alumni for over two hours and got insights into what can be our possible course of action in the turbulence of markets and employability today. We then networked with them while having dinner. The Trust Convenor, SSSSO, Tamilnadu graciously gifted every one of us two beautiful portraits of Bhagawan, a 2024 diary, and a few knick-knacks – a courtesy reminiscent of the good old days when Swami showered these brothers with His Grace and Love.





In keeping with tradition and our desire to express our sincere gratitude to all our beloved caretakers – the sevadal mothers, sisters, fathers, and brothers who saw our every need and every requirement fulfilled, foregoing much of their own problems and struggles to solve ours, we presented them all with tokens of our love, appreciation, and gratitude.

Finally, we bid farewell to Chennai boarding the train back to Prashanthi Nilayam at 11:40 PM. The next morning, SSSSO, Karnataka graciously arranged for our breakfast to be delivered to us on the train in Bengaluru and we reached our hostel by 9:20 AM, the next day.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, members of the University Administration, Trust members of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, members of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, Tamilnadu, and the alumni of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, who have gone beyond what was necessary and made this visit not just possible, as comfortable and enjoyable as it could ever be.

Expressing Our Appreciation & Gratitude

