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In an exclusive interview Sandeep Sabharwal, CEO, SLCM, talks in detail about his company's operations and how this integrated player is bringing in efficiencies in the agri-warehouse management sector in India as well as outside.

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What are the various areas in which SLCM is operating?

Sohan Lal Commodity Management (SLCM) is an integrated player that provides one-stop solution to the end user with diversified portfolio of services ranging from Warehouse Management, Agriculture Financing and Collateral Management to Procurement. SLCM warehouse management is equipped with technology to offer storage and protection services for the entire range of agri-commodities. The company provides services to farmers, processors, millers, traders, Importer, exporters, commodity exchanges and the government.

Can you tell us in detail about the areas you operate in?

Firstly, let me talk about Commodity Warehousing. SLCM has defined & implemented systems and scientific processes which are making agriculture warehousing independent of infrastructure and agnostic to geographical location irrespective of the crop. With the help of our proprietary technology "AGRI REACH" (patent pending) we are able to cut post-harvest losses from 10% to 0.5%. Our processes and systems enable all warehouses that we manage to provide real time data about quality and quantity of the commodity stored of our valued clients.

Now about Agri-Financing. Our NBFC arm, Kissandhan, provides customized financing solutions against storage receipts of agri commodities in India irrespective of the balance sheet or net worth of the borrower. The company is a RBI regulated non-deposit taking, non-banking finance company (NBFC) that has already financed about INR 1358.22 crores of loans till 31st March 2018.

Thirdly, we are into Collateral Management. SLCM is currently working with multiple banks as their Collateral Manager for Warehouse Receipt Financing. The company provides best-in-class audit and security services as part of collateral management services to the banks & other financial institutions.

And lastly we have a procurement division which has extensive experience of procurement /disposal of agri-commodities for over a decade across India and aims to help associates to procure from mandis and directly from farmers across the country. The WOS has access to more than 950 mandis out of the active 1100 mandis in India.

What is the human resource / training philosophy of SLCM?

SLCM believes in the philosophy that "If you expect your employees to have a heart for your business, you must have a heart for your employees." We have empowered our employees and given them freedom to work and take appropriate decisions for timely delivery and best-in-class customer service and the management continuously supports them with guidance & support from their reporting managers. Our whole focus is on the following: to create robust leadership at all levels, to create an effective talent pool which would enable us to acquire the right fit at the right time and cost, to create and utilize an able and motivated workforce to accomplish the basic organizational goals, to strengthen and appreciate the human assets continuously by providing training and development programs, and to provide favourable atmosphere for maintaining stability of employment.

Most of the SLCM warehouses are in Tier 2 and Tier 3 towns. What kind of skill training you provide to local youth / employees working at SLCM warehouses?

We provide various skill trainings to our employees working at SLCM warehouses.

Firstly, SLCM provides fumigation services for preventive and curative purposes and for this we train our employees on a regular basis. Some of the fumigation services SLCM have in place - Bulk/ Bagged stored grain Fumigation, Insecticide – Malathion /Deltamethrin Fumigation, Phosphine Fumigation, and Cocoon Fumigation etc.

Secondly, we provide proper fire training to all our warehouse employees/managers to tackle situations if the fire catches up in any of the SLCM warehouses.

Thirdly, we provide insect pest control training for flying insects at Warehouse and live insects in Commodity stored.

Then comes Quality Testing training. SLCM is recognized for its best-in-class Auditing and Quality Testing coupled with technology enabled warehousing network. We undertake quality testing of commodities to ensure higher efficiency and security of the commodities. Our Central Laboratory is equipped with best-in-class equipment to analyze the moisture, humidity, temperature, oil content and uric acid in different commodities.

Lastly, we also provide Sampling training. It is a process that we use to check that a food is safe and that it does not contain harmful contaminants, or that it contains only permitted additives at acceptable levels, or that it contains the right levels of key ingredients and its label declarations are correct, or to know the levels of nutrients present.

Do you undertake training programs for farmers as well to handle their produce efficiently? If yes, what are the areas of training?

SLCM Group organizes Rozgar Camps in rural areas across India wherein farmers and their younger generations are imparted training on ways to increase the yield per hectare and other related information without any charge. In addition to free training, as per their choice, SLCM offers on-site jobs pan India to enhance their quality of life. With the idea of making them self-sufficient, the group either help them to increase their income levels by increasing the yield or give them opportunity to enter into the corporate world by placing them in SLCM as Warehouse Managers or Supervisors.

Who are your training partners and how many youth you have empowered with skills training till date?

Under the aegis of our CSR activities we have empowered innumerable numbers of youth with skills training.

In association with the SOS foundation we have supported for the education of orphans and abandoned children living in SOS Villages to improve their health, nutrition, food security & livelihood status. The Group supported for the expenses of 24 children from SOS Children's Village-Bawana, Delhi for their education, extracurricular activities & livelihood needs. Our support has helped children in Holistic Development, improving their Academic Performance and building up their self-esteem.

In association with Moser Baer Trust the Group conducted non-formal Education Classes, Adult Literacy Programme & Support Classes for drop out children & married women to bridge gap in the education system in Gautam Budh Nagar- Greater Noida, UP. Support classes were given to children to bring them to mainstream schools & adults were made literate as part of the program in partnership with MBT.

In 2015, with the thought to generate employment opportunities in the society, the Group initiated vocational training courses in Computer Application, Beauty Culture, Handicrafts, Skill Development Programme in Tagore Garden, Delhi, through partnership with UVCT. About 70 people enrolled for Computer Education classes, 60 girls enrolled for Beauty Culture course, 30 people were enrolled for Handicrafts & 20 people were enrolled for Life Skills Development Programme & got placements in Corporate Houses further.

In association with Sai Sanskar Foundation, the Group also supported for computer teachers to provide computer literacy among youth.

What kind of benefit SLCM has derived by providing skill enhancement training to its employees / local youth?

Skill development trainings are provided at SLCM premises to assist the company to have productive and quality standards outputs in the work. Training improves efficiency and productivity of employees. Well trained employees show both quantity and quality performance. There is less wastage of time, money and resources when employees are properly trained.

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