

ESSAR STEEL

Times of India – Ahmedabad
July 3, 2001

Interview with Director (operations) John C Parker

Hazira-based Essar Steels has developed its own township called Nand Niketan just near the works. It is one of the best maintained colonies among all industrial townships in the country. Director (operations) John C Parker who has been at the helm of affairs for the last two years as resident chief executive of the company strongly believes that there should be a conducive environment for employees to remain energetic.

A European by birth, but having lived in India for 22 Years, he forwards a philosophical approach to the concept of an industrial township. No wonder Nand Niketan is a place with a perfect ambience and plans are afoot to add to it in terms of serenity and natural calmness.

Parker forwards his impression about life in Hazira industrial belt and also in the Essar township. Excerpts:

What would be your rating of the Essar township at Hazira, in terms of basic infrastructure?

The Essar colony 'Nand Nike-tan' would in my opinion be termed as a very clean village with the best of both the worlds. With a fair degree of certainty, the township could be rated as among the best in the country. Spread over 143 acres, it is full of greenery and gardens. There are 66 bungalows and around 450 houses with all modern provisions. The cool sea breeze from the just nearby Arabian sea keeps the temperature moderate in the colony round the year. More houses are under construction and in coming years we want to give residential facilities to over 800 employees, out of total strength of 1,400 employees in the plant. There are coil club with catering facilities, library, swimming pool, billiards, horse riding, tennis club; skating rink, health club with gym, play fields for cricket, volleyball and foot-ball. Nand Niketan has one shopping complex to cater to the needs of the families residing there. Post-office, bank, medical shop are among other regular outlets in the complex. A dispensary is also there. We have one kennel club also in the colony. The school has 800 students on its roll, from the company and surrounding industries as well. In brief, we have tried to create an atmosphere with the best of the facilities.

Would professionals from outside be attracted to your township given the existing amenities?

We have good facilities but we want to improve the sporting opportunities. A cricket pitch of international standard is being developed here. I strongly believe that sports helps to feel rejuvenated. Steel making, as an industry, is one of the toughest jobs today. Maintaining good health would be basic requisite here. In the colony, we do not face traffic problems and the work-place is just a five minutes drive, which is definitely a luxury. The basic infrastructure is definitely attractive for the professionals from any part of the world here.

Also, staying together has helped develop a team spirit and the resultant bonding helps the industry in many more ways, just not the productivity alone. There are problems in the surrounding areas pertaining to social and environmental aspects but these need to be addressed at macro level, certainly not in isolation.

Our constant endeavour is to provide the best basic facilities to our employees. Those who leave our organisations are often encouraged to give their opinions in exit interviews, so that further improvement could be incorporated in the townships. We give emphasis to the care factor, as everyone should feel cared for in real sense.

How do you view the Essar town-ship five years from now?

Trees planted here would be in full glory then, more sports facilities would be there along with a standard cricket pitch. Besides, a part of the colony is being left just as wild to help the wildlife develop in natural surroundings. We are keen and committed to better living standards in the colony and with the development taking place in Hazira complex, this would be one of the best sites in the country.