

## 'Biologics will boost the growth of isolators'

*Expanding its product portfolio and tapping emerging markets has been a forte for Fabtech Technologies. As the company ventures in the new business of isolators, **Aasif Khan**, Managing Director, Fabtech Technologies, reveals the strategy and reasons for tapping this market, to **Arshiya Khan***

### **What is the rationale behind getting into manufacturing isolators?**

After 'domesticating' modular panels, which in the early 2000's was considered a product of European domain, we thought isolators for us would be a natural extension. Isolators, though was very critical in application, design, etc but the reception we got was tremendous, which enabled early success. We had mistakes of earlier contenders as lessons, and we moved cautiously. We have 100 percent success record so far.



R&D spend, increase in cytotoxic drugs manufacturing in India, the onslaught of biotech etc. all make good commercial sense to be in this segment. The takeoff of the biotech segment will boost the growth of isolator market too. We decided to take the initial steps towards developing the isolation technology around three years back.

### **Any technical collaborations/joint ventures involved in this project?**

In the initial phase technical assistance was provided to us by Dr Douglas Thorogood on the design and validation front. (Dr Douglas Thorogood is UK based and a name in the isolation technology in the world). We have refrained from any joint ventures or collaborations in order to avoid market restrictions. It's the same strategy that we adopted for partitions, which helped us penetrate the European and US market.

### **What were the challenges faced while manufacturing isolators?**

Containment solutions are tricky and considered to be the 'domain' of the West till date. Our turnkey project, HVAC design expertise, strong R&D, equipment integration capabilities coupled with validation strength and exposure to process equipment of any kind and origin brings the containment/isolation system design easily to us.

Besides, Fabtech has earned a name in the industry as one of the best in sheet metal fabrication. Our facility is very well equipped with CNC controlled punching, bending and a highly experienced team of fabricators, technicians and engineers. A few novel ideas on manufacturing systems have enabled us to overcome a lot of manufacturing issues.

### **What has been your strategy for growth, considering the fact that you have a diverse customer portfolio?**

Core designing and detailing has been our strength, which is reflected by the fact that till date we have successfully installed and validated around 21 projects comprising of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API) manufacturing, oral solid dosage production, injectables and customised application. All the projects were completed smoothly at a 100 percent success record.

Coupled with this strategy we have a very high quality in house testing, actual validation of every system prior to dispatch and better understanding of guidelines and standards, close interaction with our customers to understand their needs in order to provide them with optimum solution, has led us a long way. This is indicative by the fact that almost 80

percent of our business is repeat.

**Any projects/business at hand?**

We are working with Panacea Biotech for providing them with a vial suite for their R&D facility. We have provided isolators over process equipments manufactured by Indian suppliers and we are in process of doing validation of the system. Besides, we are first in India to clear the leak test for all the isolators as per ISO and PDA guidelines. It's a great achievement for us considering the fact that we conceived the idea of isolation technology just three years back.

**What is your strategy for future growth?**

We are planning to expand our base by setting up a new factory dedicated for isolators and BSL labs with ISO, CE and UL certifications. This will enable us to enter the developed market with isolators for wider applications such as nuclear and electronics.

Our parallel effort will be to make isolators affordable for common applications. What we did with partitions, we shall do with isolators to make them affordable across the board. Our effort will be to provide world class solution to address the challenges faced by the pharma industry and we shall continue to explore new technologies to meet these challenges.

**How do you forecast the market to grow?**

Biologics is a rapidly emerging high growth segment. According to various estimates, it is expected to grow at a Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 25 percent over the next five years, to reach \$6.2 billion by 2014. As this grows, the demand for isolators and panels will also grow. u