



MY VISION

By Gaurav Nandi

NEW GENERATION DRIVING WOMEN'S ENTRY INTO RECYCLING

India's recycling industry is becoming more technology-driven, formalised and commercially sophisticated, but women remain underrepresented across its operational and technical functions. **GRP Ltd Executive Director Hemal Gandhi** believes a new generation, increasingly exposed to sustainability and circular-economy thinking, could begin changing that equation. Recently appointed as Chairperson of Material Recycling Association of India's Women in Recycling Committee, Gandhi is pushing for greater participation, capability building and visibility as the sector moves beyond conventional waste processing towards advanced resource recovery and sustainable-material manufacturing.



A new generation of professionals exposed to sustainability and circular-economy principles will drive greater participation of women in India's recycling industry, according to GRP Ltd Executive Director Hemal Gandhi, who was recently appointed Chairperson of the Women in Recycling Committee at the Material Recycling Association of India (MRAI).

Gandhi acknowledged that women's representation across the recycling industry remains limited, particularly outside conventional support functions. However, she sees an opportunity for this to change as second-generation members of recycling businesses enter the sector and younger professionals increasingly encounter sustainability and circularity through universities and education.

"A lot of the second generation has come into the business," Gandhi told *Tyre Trends*, adding that the newer generation is more receptive to entering recycling because it increasingly understands the industry's broader environmental purpose.

For Gandhi, the immediate priorities for increasing women's involvement are participation, capability building and visibility.

She wants participation to extend beyond corporate and leadership positions into technology, operations, engineering, research and development, entrepreneurship and commercial functions.

Hemal Gandhi, Executive Director, GRP Ltd



RECLAIM
RUBBER

PYROVA
ENERGY

CUSTOM
DIEFORMS

ENGINEERING
PLASTICS

REPUURPOSED
POLYOLEFINS



"I'd like to encourage greater participation of women across the recycling value chain," Gandhi said.

She added that stronger platforms for knowledge sharing and mentoring are needed, with mentor circles among the mechanisms being considered to engage a wider audience.

Visibility represents the third element as she wants greater recognition of women already contributing to recycling while strengthening connections between established industry leaders and the next generation.

The broader objective, she said, is to make recycling a more inclusive,

professional and future-oriented industry and ensure women have a meaningful role in determining its next phase of growth.

"Women bring extraordinary attention to detail, discipline, resilience and an ability to see both the task and the people around it. But I don't want women to be valued only for these qualities. I want them at the table, making the big decisions," noted a confident Gandhi.

GRP's own experience illustrates some of the barriers. Gandhi said women joining the company's Sholapur operations were initially concentrated in support functions including administration and human resources.

“We are pros at multi-tasking and know how to get the job done. We’ve successfully represented plenty of industries before and now it’s recycling’s turn to take centre stage.”

Changing that required what she described as a 'mindset shift' within GRP itself. The company has since expanded their presence into manufacturing.

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Women's representation at GRP varies across locations based on the job requirement and talent availability. The head office has the largest women participation of 28.57 percent. The reclaim rubber and Pyrova business combined contribute to about 13.30 percent with substantial women participation on shopfloor at all shifts.

The plants in Solapur and Ankleshwar show 19.32 percent and 17.81 percent, respectively, which are far higher than the industry average of 10–11 percent.

The focus is to create opportunities of women participation in the plastics business as well.

BROADENING BASE

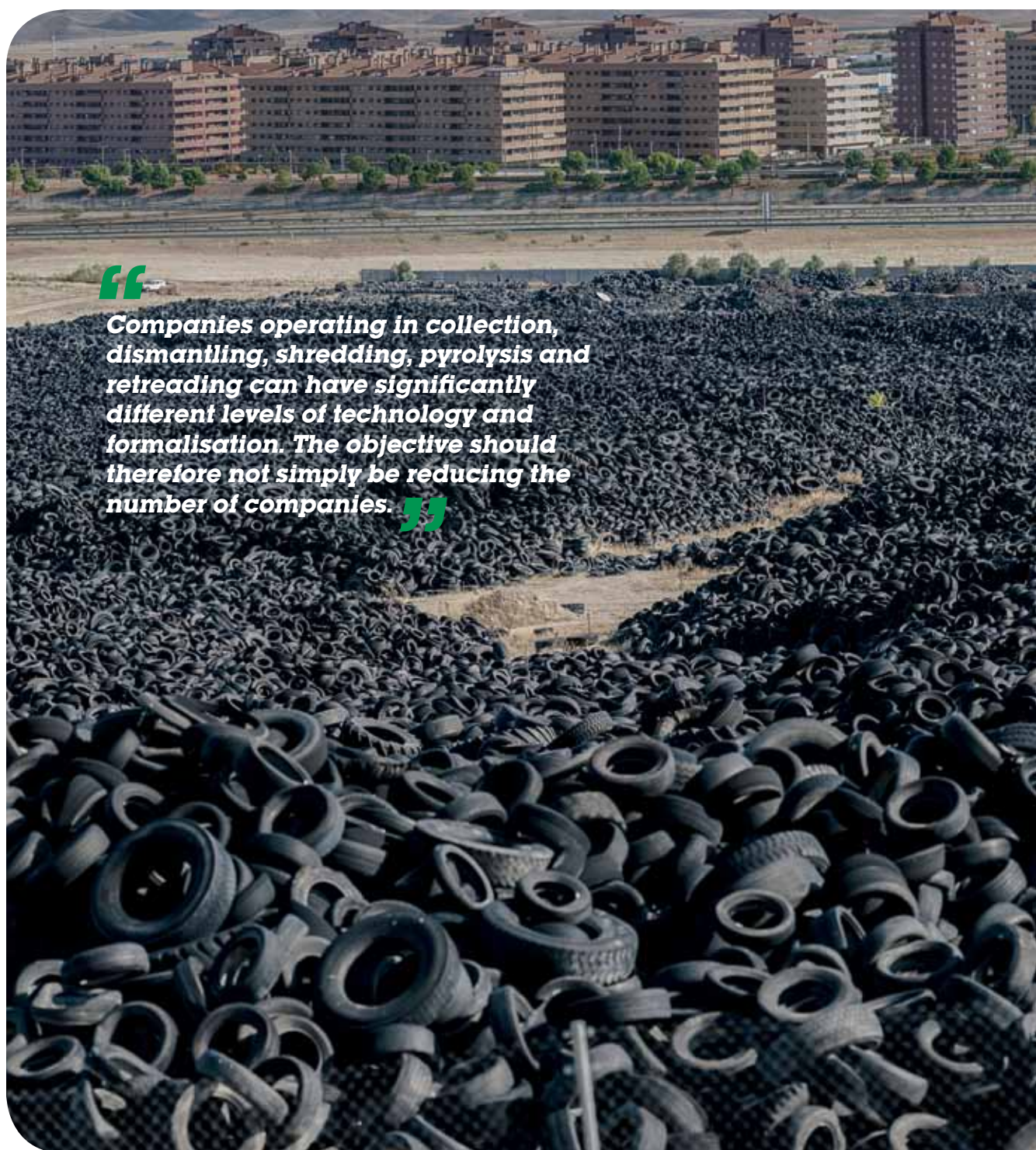
The push for broader participation comes as India's tyre-recycling ecosystem itself undergoes significant change.

Gandhi said tyre recycling now has strong representation within MRAI with participation increasing across

the value chain. The ecosystem has expanded beyond conventional scrap processing to include collection, aggregation, mechanical recycling, crumb rubber, reclaim rubber, pyrolysis, devulcanisation, retreading technologies and downstream users.

MRAI's tyre-focused

sessions and programmes have also seen increased participation, according to Gandhi. She sees the association's role extending beyond industry representation to providing a platform where stakeholders can engage on policy, standards, technology and development of end markets.



“Companies operating in collection, dismantling, shredding, pyrolysis and retreading can have significantly different levels of technology and formalisation. The objective should therefore not simply be reducing the number of companies.”

The next opportunity, she said, is to deepen representation across the tyre-recycling value chain.

Gandhi described India's tyre-recycling industry as being at an inflection point with Extended Producer Responsibility emerging as a significant catalyst.

The waste-tyre framework has brought greater attention to end-of-life tyres, encouraged formal recycling channels and provided recyclers with a more structured position within the tyre ecosystem.

More companies entering the sector demonstrate growing

interest, but Gandhi cautioned that regulation and creation of recycling capacity represent only the beginning.

"The next phase needs to concentrate on quality, traceability, responsible processing and end markets," she said, adding, "Industry should not measure

success only by how many tonnes of tyres are processed."

Instead, the sector needs to examine how much material value is recovered from every tyre, the quality of those recovered materials and whether they ultimately enter higher-value applications.

She described EPR as a game changer that has established the framework, while the next challenge is developing a more transparent, technology-driven and circular system around it.

COLLABORATION OVER CONSOLIDATION

India's tyre-recycling industry has historically been fragmented, though Gandhi believes it is gradually becoming more organised as regulations, technology and market requirements become clearer.

She drew a distinction between consolidation and collaboration.

"Companies operating in collection, dismantling, shredding, pyrolysis and retreading can have significantly different levels of technology and formalisation. The objective should therefore not simply be reducing the number of companies," she argued.

Instead, India needs a more organised ecosystem with common expectations around compliance, traceability, quality, technology and responsible processing.

More clearly defined standards and EPR requirements will increasingly differentiate companies investing in quality systems and sustainable operations, she said.

Comparing India with more established recycling economies,



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The opportunity is to combine India's scale, manufacturing capabilities and entrepreneurial base with global best practices.”

Gandhi said the country has several advantages including a large domestic tyre market, substantial availability of end-of-life tyres, rubber-processing capabilities and an increasingly structured policy framework.

There is, however, no single international recycling model India can simply replicate because individual markets have developed around different collection systems, regulations and economics.

The common global direction is towards higher-value material recovery.

Products such as reclaim rubber and recovered carbon black are increasingly being developed as industrial raw materials rather than merely waste-derived outputs.

India is moving in the same direction, Gandhi said, with domestic recyclers already producing such materials and supplying to international markets.

“The opportunity is to combine India's scale, manufacturing capabilities and entrepreneurial base with global best practices,” she noted.

EXPANDING CAPACITY

GRP, meanwhile, is positioning its recycling operations around recovering greater value from waste materials and developing applications

capable of substituting virgin resources.

The company currently operates across five strategic locations and eight manufacturing units with installed capacity of approximately 122,000 tonnes per annum, according to Gandhi.

Its next step into end-of-life tyre recovery is being pursued through Pyrova Energy.

At Sholapur, GRP has commissioned a 15,000-tonne-per-annum continuous tyre pyrolysis reactor alongside an integrated crumb-rubber facility. The next phase includes expanding pyrolysis capacity to 45,000 tonnes per annum and developing recovered carbon black capacity.

The broader objective is to recover the different components of an end-of-life tyre while progressively improving the quality and value of each material stream.

Gandhi also highlighted GRP's wider sustainability performance. She said the company reduced Scope 4 emissions by 55 percent, while the share of its energy requirements met through renewable sources increased to 48 percent from 37 percent in the previous year.

GRP has also received an EcoVadis Gold rating and published a comprehensive sustainability report covering initiatives across the organisation.

It has also been recognised as a 2026 Avtar & Seramount 'Best Company for ESG', acknowledging its commitment to responsible business, transparency and accountability.

The direction, Gandhi said, is to recover more from every tyre, improve material quality and create additional applications for those recovered materials.

GAINING GROUND

Interest in recycled and renewable materials is increasing, although Gandhi said recycled content varies significantly depending on the material, application and performance requirements.

For reclaim rubber, she cited Rubber Board data showing domestic consumption of almost 167,500 tonnes in 2024-25, including about 67,000 tonnes consumed by automotive tyre manufacturers.

GRP supplies reclaim rubber to major tyre manufacturers globally, Gandhi said, adding that eight of the world's top 10 tyre manufacturers are its customers.

She noted that recyclers and tyre companies need to work together from the product-development stage, developing materials and testing capabilities for specific applications and establishing appropriate quality and performance parameters.

Sustainability targets will translate into meaningful virgin-material substitution only when recycled alternatives meet requirements around quality, safety, consistency and economics, she added.

Despite India's sizeable tyre-recycling ecosystem, Gandhi said a significant proportion of the industry continues to serve relatively lower-value applications.

“The next opportunity is to retain more of the material value contained within an end-of-life tyre by developing markets for high-quality reclaim rubber, recovered carbon black, pyrolysis products and engineered tyre-derived materials,” she noted.

Achieving that transition will require recyclers and downstream industries to collaborate on qualification, testing and application development.

Gandhi also argued that comparisons between virgin and recycled materials should move beyond price.

“Cost needs to be considered alongside performance, consistency, carbon footprint and supply security. Recyclers, meanwhile, will need to invest in process control, research and development and testing to improve performance, while scale, automation and energy efficiency will be critical to improving costs,” she contended.

NEXT PHASE

Greater standardisation and quality benchmarks will be among the most important enablers of the industry's next stage, Gandhi said.

Tyre manufacturers and other industrial customers need confidence that recycled material purchased today will meet the same critical parameters when supplied months later.

This places increasing importance on testing protocols, traceability and credible certification.