

# EQUIPMENT TIMES

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## TRACKING GREEN and TECH TRENDS IN MINING



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The Tata Motors tippers and tipper-trucks has by far the largest portfolio of M&HCV tippers catering to a wide range of sectors and deliver maximum value to customers operating in varied applications.

### How do you assess the growth prospects of the mining sector as a whole, and how does the demand-supply scenario of mining trucks look like?

The mining and the construction sector grew rapidly in FY19 due to the upsurge in the irrigation, power, cement and steel sectors. Higher investments in construction, infrastructure and road construction projects were fuelling tipper demand. The growth in the requirement of stone, coal, ores and minerals in the past few years as well as clearance for mining activities also contributed to this surge. All of these factors combined led to demand for high-productive, high-performance tippers and tipper-trucks in the M&HCV segment.

FY20 and the start of FY21 saw a decline due to several headwinds like the economic slowdown, liquidity crisis and introduction of increased axle load norms. This further followed with the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent nationwide lockdown that impacted the operations significantly. Since the unlock phase has been announced, there have been signs of early revival of the M&HCV segment for the tippers and tipper-trucks. While the construction and infrastructure projects have started gaining pace, the newer projects in the irrigation, water resources and coal, iron ore and minerals sector have also been a major catalyst in the rise in demand of tippers and tipper-trucks.

### During this pandemic, what are the innovative solution you have launched to service your customers?

Tata Motors took the lead in spontaneously deploying a number of measures and innovative solutions to help our customers as well as the drivers during the pandemic. During the nationwide lockdown a dedicated 24x7 helpline was set-up for truck drivers and transporters across the country and addressed more than 10,000 requests pertaining to driver assistance with food, water and medical help wherever required in addition to the vehicle on-road assistance. Over 900 emergency response teams were created and located in key transport hubs and corridors and these teams were manned by 4,000 trained and experienced technicians selected from Tata Motors extensive network of 2600+

workshops nationwide and supported by 21 well-stocked warehouses with spare parts quickly accessible for fast turnaround of vehicles. The truck drivers are an important cog in the wheel for delivering goods and through our unique initiatives, we wanted to ensure that the trucks are always up and running to ensure a smooth flow. To enhance the repairs and servicing support, workshops were made operational, taking all precautions like social distancing, sanitisation etc. Tata Motors also extended warranty and all the benefits under the Tata Suraksha annual maintenance contracts for all its commercial vehicle customers during the lockdown phase of the pandemic.

Tata Motors Finance, a subsidiary of Tata Motors, too announced various support measures for its valued customers during this national lockdown and pandemic situation. The fleet owners have been impacted by the lockdown, due to the non-availability of manpower and low fleet utilisation which has overall affected their cash flow. Tata Motors Finance undertook a wide array of measures for the fleet owners, including loans and easy payment options, and have been vital in subsidising the financial burden of fleet owners in these difficult and unprecedented times.

### How IoT, telematics and other such technologies is reshaping the trucking industry, especially fleet management and service and maintenance areas? Also tell us the solutions offered in this space?

With the increasing level of electronics in the BS6 vehicles, there are a number of digital features integrated into the vehicles that play an important role in the smooth functioning of the vehicles and its maintenance. It helps in improving the cost efficiency, better fleet utilisation through trip assignments, monitoring the driver behaviours, providing insights on driving habits etc. which with proper training and feedback can help in preventing accidents. The total cost of ownership (TCO) for a customer can be significantly reduced through the connected technologies enabling better upkeep of vehicles, lower downtime and faster responses to breakdowns in addition to improving the operating efficiency of the fleet owners. Going forward, the technology

will drive efficiencies and enhance the profitability for the customers.

Tata Motors has been a pioneer in bringing connected vehicle technology to commercial vehicles in India more than 7 years ago, and with over 2,00,000 Tata Motors M&HCV vehicles plying with factory-fitted with telematics units. Tata Motors recently introduced the Fleet Edge – the latest telematics solution for optimum fleet management as a standard feature on all M&HCV trucks and tippers.

Tata Motors is taking the connected vehicle solutions to the next level with the introduction of Fleet Edge that has the capability of processing large amount of data generated by the Telematics Control Unit (TCU) and offers real-time insights for track and trace, vehicle health, driving behaviour, real-time fuel efficiency and fuel loss alert. Customers will also be able to track the due date of the important vehicle documents. These insights will be available to customers through a user-friendly interface on Tata Motors Fleet Edge portal and will help customers manage their fleet even more efficiently. Fleet Edge is also accessible on smartphones via an app, on real time basis.

**Could you brief us on the unique features of your range of trucks offered for mining sector for optimising production and uptime?**

The Tata Motors tippers and tipper-trucks has by far the largest portfolio of M&HCV tippers catering to a wide range of sectors and deliver maximum value to customers operating in varied applications. Tata Motors M&HCV tippers and tipper-trucks ranges from 19 tonnes MCV tipper to the country's largest, 47.5 tonnes multi-axle tipper-truck to match the need of every customer. In mining applications, Tata Motors tippers offer higher pulling power, higher load carrying capability, superior gradeability, better manoeuvrability, all-weather all-terrain suitability with lowest total cost of ownership; features which are extremely imperative for mining applications. Technologically advanced features like Hub Reduction Technology (HRT), Hill start Assist (HSA), Engine Brake, iCGT/ NGT Brake further enhance the tipper capabilities in mining applications.

For surface transport applications,



Tata Motors tipper trucks offer versatile functionality and higher fuel efficiency ensuring the lowest total cost of ownership. Tata Motors recently announced the launch of Signa 4825. TK, the largest tipper truck in India, which allows more load per trip and offers enhanced performance and delivers higher productivity and faster turnarounds. Tata Motors' BS6 range of Construck vehicles not only adhere to the strict emission norms, but are upgraded to reduce the total cost of ownership and increase the customer's revenue potential.

This segment of customers are also looking for onsite services with assured uptime and extended warranty. In order to support the customers, Tata Motors has also come up with new value added services in the form of the uptime guarantee for tippers with onsite support along with our Platinum AMC contracts as well as extended warranty as the customers' requirement. This ensures total peace of mind for our customers as they focus on growing their business while Tata Motors will take care of the maintenance and uptime of their vehicles.

**Also tell us the initiatives taken to up to skill and comfort of the drivers?**

Tata Motors has launched the Saarthi Aaram Kendra, an initiative which offer facilities like restrooms, restaurant, secured parking with CCTV camera, self-cooking, launderette, bathing facility, barber shop and clean



drinking water amongst other things. There are currently 5 such centres in the major transport hubs across India. Tata Motors also provided food and medical supplies at these Kendras during the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and the following lockdown. These centres form an integral part of the truck drivers' journey as it can be utilised by truckers to de-stress after long and tiring journeys and thus improve their overall efficiency.

On the skilling front, Tata Motors actively organises training sessions for drivers and technicians that not only enhance the driving skills, but also pay special attention to the safety of the drivers and operators. These training sessions have been highly appreciated by the drivers and customers.

Tata Motors runs unique initiative under the Sampurna Seva 2.0 umbrella, the Tata Samarth. We have been offering the Samarth package to all drivers and owner drivers of all our commercial vehicles sold from April 2019 onwards; including M&HCV, I&LCV, Buses and SCV models. This program continues with the BS6 vehicles being sold by us. The drivers enrolled under 'Surakshit Samarth' are protected with accidental death or disability cover of up to Rs 10,00,000/- per year, per vehicle for drivers and owner drivers. In the view of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the policy covers the cost for Covid-19 testing for symptomatic drivers and also provides medical expense support of up to Rs.

50,000/- incurred for the treatment, if tested positive. In addition, we also have 'Shiksha Samarth' and 'Sampatti Samarth' that enables the drivers to derive benefits towards education of their children and also educate them on financial planning.

### **How do you foresee the growth prospects and how geared up is your company to meet the challenges in the post COVID era?**

There are some early green shoots that we see in the M&HCV industry especially in tipper and tipper-truck segments where we have seen the growth in industry volumes month-on-month as the lockdown is being lifted in phases. There has been an uptick in the demand for vehicles in both construction and mining segments. With the monsoon season drawing to an end, we are likely to see a further pickup in these sectors as the pace of work will pick up and as more projects are kicked off, the demand for vehicles is also likely to go up in the coming months.

Tata Motors has taken every step to reduce the adverse effects of the pandemic and the slowdown in the economy as whole. On the manufacturing front, we have begun a stage-wise restart process from mid-May 2020 and have been steadily ramping up production at all our plants. From the product front, we have recently introduced our entire range of upgraded vehicles. Tata Motors has upgraded every vehicle from bumper to bumper, while also introducing technological and performance changes that generate higher revenue and profits through higher fluid efficiency, excellent driving comfort and world-class connectivity features. The 'Power of 6' philosophy, which guided the design and development of this range institutes significant advances across the key areas relevant for each segment; like lower TCO, enhanced comfort, safety and performance, amongst other features.

Customised Value Added Services (VAS) such as Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC), Fleet Management Solutions (FMS), Uptime Guarantee and extended warranty are being offered to customers based on their unique requirements. Leasing options are available to ensure financial stability and sustainability. 