

Renewable • 5 Min Read

Tulsi Tanti: The Wind Man of India and his enduring legacy in renewable energy

As we remember Tulsi Tanti, let us pay tribute to him by using his vision as our guiding light to make Renewable Energy a significant contributor to global energy transition to create a better world for our future generations.



Girish Tanti • ETEnergyWorld
Updated On Oct 16, 2023 at 04:44 PM IST

Read By:
17703 Industry Professionals



As we remember the legendary Shri Tulsi Tanti on the first anniversary of his departure to his heavenly abode, we reflect upon the monumental contributions he made to India's renewable energy landscape, his remarkable entrepreneurial spirit, and his indomitable commitment to combating climate change. Tulsi Bhai was aptly called 'The Wind Man of India' and by many, 'The Father of Renewable Energy in India.' But, when he embarked on his journey into the realm of wind energy, the industry was in its infancy.

The Early Beginnings

Back in early 1990s the wind energy sector was an emerging concept, and myriad challenges loomed large. Issues such as policy frameworks, technology accessibility, manufacturing capabilities, project execution, and access to finance were either non-existent or in nascent stages of development. However, it was Tulsi Bhai's unparalleled passion and commitment that elevated him to the de facto leader of the sector, even without an official or formal position. Experts, stakeholders, policymakers, and veterans of the industry rallied around him.

Ashish



People Connect and Humility

Tulsi Bhai possessed an unmatched ability to connect with people through his endearing humility. His boundless love for people, irrespective of their station in life, was truly remarkable. He had a penchant for taking people along with him on his mission. Whether it was a cabinet minister or the smallest vendor in the value chain, Tulsi Bhai engaged with them with empathy on a human level. This quality became one of his most valuable assets. He not only rallied support but also united all stakeholders towards building the sector for the greater good of the nation.

He made it his mission to bring all industry stakeholders and the government onto a common platform to unlock the true potential of Indian renewable energy. His passion for nation-building and renewable energy drove him to spend countless hours persuading government and industry leaders to champion wind energy. Early on, he successfully convinced prominent Indian conglomerates such as Bajaj, Tata, and various public sector undertakings (PSUs) to invest in wind energy projects. This influx of the private sector into wind energy marked a pivotal moment in the sector's rise during the 1990s.

SOLAR POWER CONGRESS 2024

EVENT

Solar Power Congress 2024

At a time when the world is grappling with the adverse impacts of climate change and seeking...

Register Now

Wed, 06 Mar 2024

Hyatt Regency...

Leadership by Ownership

Tulsi Bhai was a natural leader with an innate ability to take ownership of solving larger societal and national issues. With unwavering dedication and a strong sense of ownership, he founded Suzlon in 1995 and shouldered the responsibility of developing and growing the wind energy sector, even when the odds were stacked against him.

Within five years, by 2000, wind energy installations had skyrocketed to 12 GW, an astonishing increase. By 2010, India had cumulative wind energy installations of over 13 GW. It was these foundational efforts that compelled the government to introduce the Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) regime, propelling the sector even further.

Ashish



Tulsi Bhai was an ardent believer in the power of technology. He firmly believed that gaining access to world-class technology was crucial for India's success in wind energy. Under his leadership, the scale of wind energy projects in India shifted dramatically, with the introduction of MW-scale wind turbines in a market accustomed to sub-MW turbines.

Nation Building

With every step Shri Tulsi Tanti took at advancing Suzlon, he ensured that the nation advanced five steps ahead. His vision was clear—nation above all, sector above self. Shri Tulsi Tanti also had a burning desire to showcase India's capabilities to the world. He achieved this by successfully taking Indian wind turbines global, installing over 6 GW across 17 countries on six continents. This made it one of the largest exports of technology and finished capital goods from India to developed markets within that timeframe.

Yet, he understood that technology's full potential could only be harnessed when supported by a thriving domestic supply chain and manufacturing base. His deep faith in India's engineering and manufacturing prowess led him to collaborate with global vendors like LM and Hansen to set up operations in India. This was his version of Atmanirbhar Bharat even before the term was coined.

Many may have thought he was setting up the sector for his competitors, but Tulsi Bhai saw no one as a competitor. In his eyes, everyone was working together to build a larger and stronger sector for the country. When he realized that blade testing was a bottleneck for India's wind energy growth, he established a state-of-the-art blade testing facility in line with global standards.

When solar energy began to gain traction in India, Tulsi Bhai wholeheartedly championed it without a moment's hesitation. His vision was crystal clear—anything beneficial for the nation had his support. He emphasized, "This is not the time for competition; it is the time for collaboration. Any green energy is welcome in creating a more sustainable world."

Keeping his Vision Alive

Today, the world has validated his relentless efforts and concerns as it recognizes the "Climate Emergency" as the No. 1 crisis facing humanity, with Renewable Energy as the most viable solution. Countries worldwide have set visionary net-zero goals, ambitious renewable energy targets, and robust energy transition roadmaps. India stands at the forefront of this global energy transition with impressive 44 GW in 2023.

To maintain the cost efficiency of Indian wind energy, it is imperative to establish a robust domestic supply chain, not only to meet domestic demand but also to tap into global markets. Unlike the solar sector, which only recently received significant incentives for domestic manufacturing, the wind sector owes much of its domestic supply chain to pioneers like Tulsi Bhai.

As we remember Shri Tulsi Tanti, we carry a part of him within us. His influence on those who worked or interacted with him is profound. Just as he led India's wind energy development from 42 MW in 1995 to 44 GW today, his spirit will continue to guide us on our journey to achieve 100 GW by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2070.

As I remember Shri Tulsi Tanti, my brother, mentor and a visionary let us pay tribute to him by using his vision as our guiding light to make Renewable Energy a significant contributor to global energy transition to create a better world for our future generations. His legacy lives on in all of us, inspiring us to build a more sustainable and prosperous future for our nation and the world.

[This piece was written by Girish R Tanti, Vice-Chairman, Suzlon Energy]