

Man who's made riches from rags

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DARSHAN SAHSI'S is a rags to riches story, literally. In 10 years, the 45-year-old "king of rags" has succeeded in transforming a sick unit in Vancouver into a company with an annual turnover of Rs 75 crore.

Second only to Germany's SOEX group that deals in textile waste collection, sorting and recycling, Sahsi's CANAM International (P) Ltd has ensured he is the "undisputed king of rags".

But the journey to riches for this brick-kiln owner at Doraha's Rajgarh village has been all but a cakewalk. He left for Vancouver in 1991 with the dream to make it big and an empty pocket. "I had to do some odd jobs in Canada like working in a shipping company and then as a truck driver. In 1994, when I was a driver, I learnt about a company called CANAMM. It was a sick unit. I bought

Talking business

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS keep some of the clothes donated by people and sell the rest to companies that have thrift stores all over North America. Companies like CANAM International buy the discarded clothes and sell 20 per cent as wipers or dusters, export 10 per cent usable clothes to India, send 40 per cent "top variety clothes" to African countries and send 10 per cent synthetic clothes to Panipat for recycling.

one-third of its shares and slowly made things work. Today, it's the second largest company in the business of rags," Sahsi, who is on a business trip to Punjab, told *Hindustan Times* here yesterday.

He recalled he had to drop out of college to support his father in farming in the '80s. "I started the brick-kiln business, but always wanted



Darshan Sahsi

to go to Canada. From childhood I had this urge to make it big. Our relatives were educated and well placed and I wanted to achieve something in life too," he said.

Perhaps growing up in a town near an enterprising city like Ludhiana spurred him on. "People have seen their dreams come true in this city. Their success inspired me," he said.

Apart from the company in Vancouver, Sahsi owns a plant in Kandla, the port town of Gujarat, which has an annual turnover of Rs 30 crore. "I wanted to start a plant in Punjab too, but haven't got a response from the state government yet," he said.

"The Kandla unit was set up in 2001 and has 500 workers, including nearly 100 Punjabis. In Canada too, most of my employees are from Punjab," he said, adding he has started a hotel in Victoria, British Columbia, along with three Indian friends.

Does he still dream? Of course and they seem to stem from memories of his village. He dreams Rajgarh will be a model village, equipped with basic amenities, one day and he hopes each child in the village will be educated.

Finally, the secret of his success: "The ability to take risks, hard work, perseverance and good employees."