



IN CONVERSATION

New DPP to boost indigenous manufacturing | Puneet Kaura, MD & CEO, Samtel Avionics Ltd.

4 WEEKS AGO by **H SIDDIQUI**



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Make in India' campaign – launched some time back – is designed to improve and strengthen manufacturing capabilities in India and also act as a strong mandate to foreign players to develop manufacturing units in India.

Moreover, the SMEs are also looking at a greater ease of operation and larger gamut of opportunities arising out of this initiative.

Samtel Avionics is one such key player in the Indian defence industry, which is looking at this initiative with a lot of optimism. It is one of India's fastest growing private defence companies, and is instrumental in putting India on the global avionics map through its focus on indigenous manufacturing and global partnerships.

Puneet Kaura, Managing Director & CEO, Samtel Avionics Ltd. tells SMEpost correspondent H Siddiqui how India is poised to become a global powerhouse in the field of defence manufacturing.

Q: Can you give us a background on your company?

A: Samtel Avionics is a key Indian player in high-technology products for avionics and military

applications, rugged displays, cockpit displays and equipment for military and commercial platforms.

We have a JV with HAL, which was created to address the avionics requirements for all Indian Air Force star platforms. Through this JV we have successfully undertaken the indigenous designing, qualification and serial production of multifunction displays for SU30 MKI, and have till date inducted approx. 130 ships-sets (910 units) on SU30 MKI manufactured by HAL.

We also have a JV with Thales, which is intended to locally develop, customize, manufacture, sell and maintain indigenous Helmet-Mounted Sight and Display Systems, Infra Red Search and Track (IRST), and modern Avionics Systems for the Indian and export defence markets.

This JV is currently manufacturing multifunction displays for Mirage 2000 upgrade. SA has been granted the MSME status by the Indian government, which entitles its partners to get Offset multiplier of 1.5 as per current procedure.

Q: Please let us know about your products that you have supplied to Indian Armed Forces.

A: Besides, Su30 MKI displays, we have also received the PO for supply of MFD for LCH from HAL (MCSRDC). After the successful integration on LCH, we have the opportunity and potential to integrate the same MFD on ALH, thus replacing the imported MFDs.

Samtel has also supplied 3ATI units to BEL for their Tarang programme. These units are meant for Radar and Missile warning receiver systems which will be integrated on many platforms such as Su-30 MKI, MIG 29, Jaguar, Tejas, IL-76, MI-25 etc.

Samtel has supplied 19" Rugged displays to BEL for the Battlefield Surveillance System (BSS) for Indian Army. These displays were required inside the command and control shelters to display a variety of information.

Another order that we have received is for Integrated Standby Instrument Systems (ISIS) for HTT-40. Samtel will also be supplying wearable and handheld displays in sizes 2.8" and 7" to BEL for the Indian Army.

Q: With growing international interest in India, how do you see Samtel expanding its international footprint?

A: Samtel is already a part of the global supply chain for leading defence and aerospace companies, and is in various kinds of partnerships and contracts with at least 5 of the Top 10 A&D companies in the world.

We are the sole source for Honeywell worldwide for avionics equipment for their General Aviation range in the US, and are partnering with General Dynamics Canada for co-production and co-marketing of products for military/ ground market.

SA is also a part of the global supply chain for Curtiss-Wright Controls Defense Solutions (CWCDs), where we are collaborating with them for a new generation of intelligent, rugged displays for the defence and aerospace markets.

The current market scenario points at international companies seeking much more cost-competitive supply partners to accommodate their shrinking budgets. The eyes of the entire world are now on countries like India, and partners like Samtel which offer world-class quality at competitive costs.

Also, with big ticket defence purchases by India on the cards, the global firms are looking at competent players like Samtel Avionics to fulfil their offset obligations.

The revised Defence Production Policy is intended to support Indian Industry to build their in-house capabilities in order to meet the future defence requirements. In order to absorb these offset requirements, we are definitely one of the strongest contenders since we have the capability to deliver high-quality products and in a short time period.

Q: What are your views on the suggested changes in the DPP?

A: As another step in the 'Make in India' journey, the proposed changes are an evidence that the government has a firm focus on developing the indigenous manufacturers, especially the MSMEs.

We welcome the move to introduce the IDDM category in the DPP as it will back companies like us who have proven competencies in indigenous design, development and manufacturing.

Furthermore, the announcement of funding by the government for R&D purposes will help build a technology base in the country.

