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Samtel walkthrough tells the Make in India story



MD & CEO Samtel Avionics Puneet Kaura

By Sangeeta Saxena

New Delhi. 21 November, 2017. A journey that started with a B&W picture tube plant in 1973 at Ghaziabad carried on with Color TV picture tubes in technical collaboration with Mitsubishi Electric Corporation of Japan is at the moment advancing towards its pinnacle with Aerospace and Defence business identified as the future path of growth for the Group.



Managing Editor ADU Brig.VK Atray at the Samtel facility at Greater NOIDA

Samtel Avionics is a key Indian player in high-technology products for avionics and military applications in both domestic and international markets. Its products and services include Multi-Functional Displays (MFDs), Smart Multi-Functional Displays (SMFDs), Full Colour Displays for commercial aircraft, Head up Displays, Helmet Mounted Sight Displays and rugged military displays for Land, Naval and Airborne platforms.

Take a walk through its new facility in Greater NOIDA in the Indian National Capital Region(NCR) and one thing is evident that the diversification by the Indian defence major is the result of its investment in R&D. Samtel Avionics spends 12% of its annual turnover on R&D.



From design, development, manufacture, testing, qualification, repair & maintenance to obsolescence management of avionics products and equipment, Samtel in its Greater NOIDA has its hands in all these pies. Its products and services include Multi-Function Displays, Smart Multi-Function Displays, Displays for commercial aircraft, Head Up Displays, Helmet Mounted Sight Displays, Automated Test Equipment, Multifunction Indicators: 3ATI & 4ATI, Optronics, Rugged displays for Land, Naval and Airborne platforms, Built-to-print/Built-to-Specs manufacturing, MRO services, and Obsolescence Management.

In 2004 when Make in India was concept not much known, Samtel signed the contract with DARE (DRDO) for technology development of Multifunction Displays (MFDs) for Sukhoi 30 MKI aircraft. At this juncture, it was envisaged by HAL and MoD to create centre of excellence in form of JV to nurture this home grown technology. HAL-Samtel JV was incorporated in 2007 and a business plan was formulated to design, develop and manufacture MFDs for HAL's existing and future platforms. Basic IPR for MFD technology resides with Samtel and has been extended to the JVC for serial production of MFDs for Su-30.

Samtel HAL Display Systems Ltd. (SHDS) is a joint venture between Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Samtel Avionics, in the facility and was created to address the avionics requirements including Test Benches and Systems for all HAL star platforms – both fixed and rotary wing. The Samtel-HAL JV already enjoys the unique distinction of being the first public-private

partnership in defence avionics space in India to indigenously design, qualify and serial produce multifunction displays which are currently flying on Su-30 MKI. Multifunction Displays manufactured by Samtel – through its JV with HAL.



Samtel Thales Avionics is a Joint Venture between Samtel Avionics and Thales which develops, customizes, manufactures, sells and maintains Helmet Mounted Sight & Display (HMSD), Optronics and other Avionics systems for the Indian market. Samtel Thales Avionics is the partner to Indian customers delivering avionics programmes from design to integrated life-time support. Samtel Thales Avionics Limited (STAL) will now operate from a new 900 square-meter facility. Since its official inception in December 2010, this joint venture is dedicated to offset services including the design, development, obsolescence management, engineering, manufacturing and maintenance of Helmet Mounted Sight & Display (HMSD) and other Avionics Systems for the Indian market.

The current facility incorporates in addition to office spaces an industrial shop floor including a clean room (ISO8), climatic chamber, shaker, and modular remote controlled avionics benches. Samtel Thales Avionics (STAL) shareholders:74% Samtel Avionics, 26% Thales. The Samtel Thales production facility is now ready in Delhi/NCR (Greater Noida), and will create offsets in the avionics and optronics fields as well as redesign and the treatment of obsolete materials, either for the Thales Group or others with similar offset obligations in India. Samtel Thales Avionics JV has recently been granted defence licence by DIPP, aimed at boosting defence manufacturing in the country. The upgraded Mirage 2000 fighter aircraft is being installed with India-made multi-function displays under an Indo-French partnership, as part of a program to enhance the operational life of multi-role fighters by around 20 years.





Editor ADU Sangeeta Saxena in a walk through of the Samtel facility

Through PM Modi's Make in India campaign, the government is also stressing upon Indian companies to have local, indigenous firms scale up their operations for the international market, it is of real significance that Samtel is already doing that for last few years now. Just as an example, with Honeywell, Samtel is the sole source for Honeywell worldwide for avionics equipment for their General Aviation range in the US, and these displays have been in serial production for many years with the supplies going regularly to Honeywell for integration. Besides this, Samtel is already under various levels and kinds of partnerships with at least 5 of the top 10 global players in the Aerospace and Defence industry, and are already supplying to the likes of Honeywell for more than last 5 years. There will be very few completely Indian firms/ MSMEs in India which can lay claim to be in the stage that Samtel is now.

Samtel avionics is also a part of the global supply chain for British giant 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. This will establish Samtel as a Tier II supplier to helicopter manufacturers such as Bell, Eurocopter, Augusta Westland and Sikorsky. The company has signed a 7-year contract with them, which entails the manufacture of around 5000-7000 displays in next five to seven years. These displays embedded in helicopters will help homeland security and paramilitary forces across the globe to conduct various missions, including surveillance and combat operations.





Samtel is also partner to General Dynamics Canada for co-production and co-marketing of products for military/ ground market. As one of the recent achievements of this partnership, Samtel Avionics has received the PO by CVRDE for Arjun Main Battle Tank's (Mk II) Commander Sight Displays. These displays would be integrated with Arjun MBT Mk II Tanks and Futuristic Main Battle tanks.

Samtel has 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. Another order received recently is for Integrated Standby Instrument Systems (ISIS) for HTT-40.



Puneet Kaura, MD & CEO, Samtel Avionics said, "There is a lot of optimism among the Indian defence players – especially the private defence manufacturers, with the launch of the 'Make in India' programme. The defence industry in India has a continuing focus on self-reliance, and it

appears that under the new Modi government, there will be a push for reforms that encourage the private sector to make further inroads into the defence domain."

Home grown companies are riding the Make in India wave and Samtel is

leading the bandwagon. Its growth reflects in the newly constructed , complete in itself and replete with all needs. The Indian major is matching steps with Prime Minister's indigenisation drive though making in India has been their forte for decades. And slowly and steadily the climb to the top has been a giant leap for Samtel.