

Prince Joseph

Chief Information Officer, SFO Technologies, India

I believe that the speech by Honourable Chief Minister and Honourable Finance Minister has laid the background for a digital platform for Kerala. What sparks our interest and catches the signals on our antenna is things like the explicit mention in the State's Budget about Digital Platforms and trying to pave the way for a whole new set of job creations in this area.

Enabled by the understanding of what happened through the pandemic and the '(WFH) work from home', '(WFA)' work from anywhere kind of culture, there is a readiness now for the new normal. This means a great commitment for ensuring that the K-FON project goes through seamlessly, and the socially ambitious plans such as provision of laptops and internet connectivity across the state to all the families that need it. There is a real drive and momentum in this space.

How do we keep that production line running? That disruption actually forced us to start innovating, to start thinking about how to improve, to think about how to reduce the dependency on some of these risks that we encountered, which will affect our bottom line.

We are now looking very seriously at the industry 4.0 solutions. This is the time to get hyper-connected. So internally we are a vertically integrated manufacturing company in all sense of the word, for products and for process. And now, we want to expand on that, spread out and become horizontally integrated, linking our supply chain with higher integration and data sharing with our suppliers and our customers. In fact, our approach went through a couple of iterations and we finalised at the moment on seven streams, where we actually need to focus on for our core business.

We have heard of Foxcon and Keltron and SFO and they have all had different journeys in the past two and a half decades. The way ahead requires a new set of thinking, capability, skill set, and strategy. There is a need to migrate from a legacy mindset into a growth

mindset. What is needed for the future and by our next set of customers is to demonstrate industry 4.0 capabilities.

On exactly what can be reused, optimised, one example is a better view on inventory, across locations, sites, divisions and production stages and utilising this knowledge on material availability to gain benefits. There was a study and analysis that we did and, we came up with a solution that to a good degree of accuracy projected what output we can produce based on the material at hand irrespective of demand. So, how much can we potentially convert at any given point of time.

So a lot of that is gone into Integrations of data systems and tuning of processes. So I was listening to Madam Hemalatha and the plans at Keltron and I was also thinking, there are some battles. There are some lessons. There are however some important steps that we can probably work on at the moment. My focus has always been about trying to ensure that the operations are geared towards our customers' needs and most of our target customers are overseas or export oriented.

Another critical element, I think nobody touched on till now is on the cyber security. One of the areas where we need to have a heavy focus is on cyber security as we are stepping more into OT, which is becoming automated and integrated to the IT layers. You can't do that without having segregation and a good layer of cyber security coming in all these elements. So the investment suddenly on that front has also garnered more weightage.

The helpful fact is that investment in IT and IT projects or technology projects which is going to be enabling new lean modern production operations is not hampered; there is recognition of that from all stakeholders. There's an awareness and an appreciation that, it is necessary for us to maintain even the position that we have today. And only then can we even imagine or expect to have future growth.

So, I look forward to listening to more of the expert panels. I went through the names and I thought this is an incredible array of experts from across the globe who is weighing in with their inputs. I probably don't fit in this elite academically brilliant panel. So I'm really humbled and these are the thoughts that I just wanted to share and I'm happy to take any questions or participate in the future discussions. Thank you.