# ArihantCapital

# Q2FY25 Result update 6<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2024

# **Sterlite Technologies Ltd**

#### BharatNet, BEAD and Data Centre will be the opportunity.

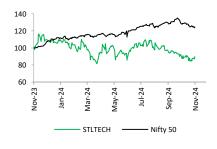
# **CMP: INR 122**

# Rating: BUY

#### Target Price: INR 160

Stock Info		
BSE		532374
NSE		STLTECH
Bloomberg		SOTL:IN
Reuters		STTE.NS
Sector		Cables
Face Value (INR)		2
Equity Capital (INR mn)		975
Mkt Cap (INR mn)		59,484
52w H/L (INR)		163 / 110
Avg Yearly Volume (in 000')		2,970
Shareholding Patte (As on Sep, 2024)	rn %	
Promoters		44.17
Public & Others		55.83
Stock Performance (%)	3m	6m 12m
STLTECH	-7.4	-9.0 -10.2
NIFTY	-3.7	7.9 24.7

#### **STLTECH vs Nifty**



Abhishek Jain abhishek.jain@arihantcapital.com 022-422548871

Balasubramanian A bala@arihantcapital.com 022-67114780 **Sterlite Technologies Ltd** reported numbers, Q2FY25 revenue de-grew by 5.4% YoY (+16% QoQ) to INR 14,130mn, above our estimates of INR 13,938mn. Gross Profit stood at INR 6,750mn (-17.2% YoY/+9% QoQ); below our estimates of INR 7,568mn. Gross margins contracted by 678 bps YoY (down by 305bps QoQ) to 47.8% vs 54.6% in Q2FY24. The raw material cost in terms of sales stood at 52.2% vs 45.4% in Q2FY24. EBITDA stood at INR 1,450mn (-31.9% YoY/+74.7% QoQ), above our estimates of INR 1,408mn. EBITDA margin contracted by 400bps YoY (up by 345 bps QoQ) to 10.3% vs 14.3% in Q2FY24. PAT stood at INR -130mn vs INR 260mn in Q2FY24; above our estimates of INR -110mn. PAT margin stood at -0.9% vs 1.7% in Q2FY24.

#### **Key Highlights**

**Optical Networking business improved on QoQ basis:** Optical networking business revenue stood at INR 10,270mn (-5.3% YoY/+26.8% QoQ); volumes were lower on YoY basis and improved YoY basis. EBIT Stood at INR 1,330mn (-37.0% YoY/+51.1% QoQ). EBIT margin contracted by 651 bps YoY (up by 209 bps QoQ) to 13% vs 19.5% in Q2FY24. EBITDA margins are expected to improve once utilization improves from 50% to 75%-80% going forward. The optical connectivity attach rate stood at 22% in Q2FY25. The company continuously working on new product development and commercialization in the optical connect space. BharatNet Phase III opportunity sizes are Capex – INR 650bn, Opex – INR 400-450bn. The cable and cable connectivity opportunity size is INR 40-50bn. The company has participated in 16 packages and tenders are expected to be complete by Q3FY25E.

**Global services de-merger is expected by Q3FY25E/Q4FY25E:** Global service business revenue stood at INR 3,560mn (-5.1% YoY/+0.3% QoQ); EBIT Stood at INR 240mn (+14.3% YoY/-4.0% QoQ). EBIT margin improved by 114 bps YoY (down by 30 bps QoQ) to 6.7% vs 5.6% in Q2FY24. In the global services business demerger, RD/company registrar and final NCLT approval is in progress. NCLT approval is expected in Dec-24/Jan-25 and allotment of shares is expected in Feb/Mar-25.

**Digital and Technology solutions moving towards profitability:** Digital and technology solutions revenue stood at INR 640mn (-17.9% YoY/-9.9% QoQ); EBIT Stood at INR -150mn vs INR -170mn in Q2FY24. STL digital order book stood at INR 3,660mn as of Q2FY25. In the STL digital business, despite the challenging environment, the company has witnessed deal flows from the US and India.

**Order book leads to business visibility over the medium term:** The order book stood at INR 86.3bn (-18% YoY/-12.7% QoQ) as of Q2FY25. Around INR 16.33bn is expected to be executed in H2FY25E and the remaining will be executable beyond FY26E.

**Outlook & Valuation:** Sterlite Technologies profitability has been impacted due to lower volumes led by inventory piled up with global operators and expected to clear in 1-2 quarters. We believe, BharatNet and BEAD program would lead to business opportunities. BharatNet Phase III tender announcement are expected in Q3FY25E and the company is expected to get significant orders. The interconnect attach rates stood at 22% in Q2FY25 and an increase in attach rates would improve the margins. The selective order intake and execution will improve the global service business and the digital business is expected to be profitable going forward. We believe BharatNet Phase III, BEAD program, telecom capex for 5G, and the upcoming 6G would provide business visibility. We upgrading to a "BUY" (earlier "ACCUMULATE") rating at a Target Price of INR 160 per share based on DCF; an upside of 30.8%.

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#### **Q2FY25** Results

#### Income statement summary

Particular (INR mn)	Q2FY24	Q1FY25	Q2FY25	YoY (%)	QoQ (%)
Revenue	14,940	12,180	14,130	-5.4%	16.0%
Net Raw Materials	6,790	5,990	7,380	8.7%	23.2%
Gross Profit	8,150	6,190	6,750	-17.2%	9.0%
Gross Margin (%)	54.6%	50.8%	47.8%	-678 bps	-305 bps
Employee Cost	2,430	2,030	1,970	-18.9%	-3.0%
Other Expenses	3,590	3,330	3,330	-7.2%	0.0%
EBITDA	2,130	830	1,450	-31.9%	74.7%
EBITDA Margin (%)	14.3%	6.8%	10.3%	-400 bps	+345 bps
Depreciation	850	820	830		
Interest expense	950	710	840		
Other income	30.0	90.0	60.0		
Share of profits associate & JV	20	-	-		
Profit before tax	380	(610)	(160)		
Taxes	120	(130)	(30)		
РАТ	260	(480)	(130)	-150.0%	-72.9%
PAT Margin (%)	1.7%	-3.9%	-0.9%	-266 bps	+302 bps
EPS (INR)	0.7	(1.0)	(0.3)		

Source: Company Reports, Arihant Capital Research

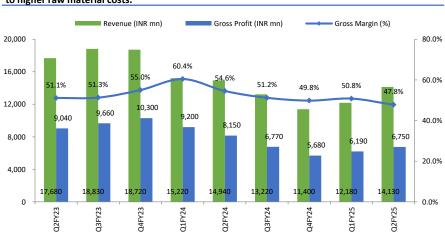


Exhibit 1: Gross margins contracted by 678 bps YoY (down by 305 bps QoQ) to 47.8% in Q2FY25 due to higher raw material costs.

Source: Company Reports, Arihant Capital Research

Exhibit 2: EBITDA margin contracted by 400 bps YoY (up by 345 bps QoQ) to 10.3% in Q2FY25. EBITDA margin majorly impacted by RM costs, however employee cost and other expenses slightly reduced in-terms of sales.



Source: Company Reports, Arihant Capital Research

# **Q2FY25** Concall Highlights

#### **BharatNet Phase III**

- In BharatNet Phase III, the company has participated in 16 packages. The company has participated directly in some of the packages and with partners in some of the packages.
- BharatNet Phase III opportunity sizes are Capex INR 650bn and Opex INR 400-450bn. The cable and cable connectivity opportunity size is INR 40-50bn.

#### **Data Center**

- Global peer's data center revenue share is around 30%-40% in the optical business. The company is targeting 25% of revenue share over the medium term.
- North American data center capacity is expected to grow 10% CAGR over the period of FY24-29E. Europe data center capacity is expected to grow 8.5% CAGR over the period of FY24-29E. The data center will be the key opportunity.

#### **Market share**

Global (ex-china) market share 8% in Q2FY25 compared to 6% in H1CY24.

# **Optical connectivity attach rate**

 The optical connectivity attach rate stood at 22% in Q2FY25. The company continuously working on new product development and commercialization in the optical connect space.

# Order book

 The order book stood at INR 86.3bn as of Q2FY25. Around INR 16.33bn is expected to be executed in H2FY25E and the remaining will be executable beyond FY26E.

#### Margins

 EBITDA margins are expected to improve once utilization improves from 50% to 75%-80% going forward.

#### Inventory

 In the US, inventory levels are coming down and it takes another 1-2 quarters to normalize.

#### **De-merger**

 RD/company registrar and final NCLT approval is in progress. NCLT approval is expected in Dec-24/Jan-25 and allotment of shares is expected in Feb/Mar-25.

#### STL digital

- STL digital order book stood at INR 3.36bn.
- In the STL digital business, despite the challenging environment, the company has witnessed deal flows from the US and India.

# **Q2FY25** Concall Highlights

#### **Telangana project**

 Telangana project is completed by 69%. The project is impacted due to the right of way in a forest area in Telangana, which requires necessary approvals from the state and central government. The fund involvement in the project is around INR 7bn.

#### Interest cost

 The increase in interest cost was due to necessary approval from the bank for demerger and expenses charged from the bank for giving NOC. The interest cost is expected INR 750—800mn on a quarterly basis.

# **Europe market**

- There is no impact on the supply chain perspective due to Europe's antidumping duty and higher profitability is coming from Europe.
- The company expects strong growth in Germany and Poland over the next 3-5 years.

#### North America

- North America and India are projected to grow faster over the period of FY24-28E.
- North America is expected to grow 12% to 15% on an annual basis.

## **Other highlights**

- The US Govt funding for broadband infra is around \$97bn which includes the BEAD program of \$42.5bn.
- BharatNet Phase III opportunity size is around 1.39L cr and 65k cr RFP is in progress.
- The company has 730 patents which are filed and granted. 10 new patents filed in Q2FY25.
- The company has launched AI-related products in IMC 2024.
- The company is well positioned to tap large opportunities in BharatNet Phase III and NHAI nationwide fibre network.

# Q2FY25 Result Update

# **Sterlite Technologies Ltd**

Outlook & Valuation: Sterlite Technologies profitability has been impacted due to lower volumes led by inventory piled up with global operators and expected to clear in 1-2 quarters. We believe, BharatNet and BEAD program would lead to business opportunities. BharatNet Phase III tender announcement are expected in Q3FY25E and the company is expected to get significant orders. The interconnect attach rates stood at 22% in Q2FY25 and an increase in attach rates would improve the margins. The selective order intake and execution will improve the global service business and the digital business is expected to be profitable going forward. We believe BharatNet Phase III, BEAD program, telecom capex for 5G, and the upcoming 6G would provide business visibility. We upgrading to a "BUY" (earlier "ACCUMULATE") rating at a Target Price of INR 160 per share based on DCF; an upside of 30.8%.

#### **DCF** Valuation

Valuation Assumptions		Valuation Data		WACC	
g (World Economic Growth)	3.5%	Total Debt (long term borrowings) (2024)	10,510	We	85.0%
Rf	7.1%	Cash & Cash Equivalents (2024)	4,030	Wd	15.0%
Rm	12%	Number of Diluted Shares (2024)	488	Ke	12.5%
Beta	1.1	Tax Rate (2025)	15%	Kd	8.2%
СМР	122	Interest Expense Rate (2025)	9.6%		
		MV of Equity	59,484	WACC	11.8%
		Total Debt	10,510		
		Total Capital	69,994		

				FCFF &	Target Pr	ice						
FCFF & Target Price	Explicit Forecast Period				Linear Decline Phase			Т	erminal Yr			
Particular (INR mn)	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036
EBIT * (1-Tax Rate)	1,142	2,646	4,208	5,895	7,193	8,121	9,042	9,926	10,740	11,452	12,032	12,454
Dep	3,441	3,625	3,811	3,939	3,984	4,028	5,178	5,684	6,150	6,559	6,891	7,132
Purchase of Assets	(3,073)	(3,104)	(3,135)	(2,157)	(749)	(741)	(825)	(906)	(980)	(1,045)	(1,098)	(1,137)
Changes in Working Capital	(1,803)	(1,893)	(2,881)	(3,746)	(3,047)	(3,289)	(3,165)	(3,474)	(3,759)	(4,008)	(4,211)	(4,359)
FCFF	(294)	1,273	2,003	3,932	7,381	8,119	10,230	11,230	12,151	12,957	13,614	14,090
Terminal Value											1,68,863	
Total Cash Flow	(294)	1,273	2,003	3,932	7,381	8,119	10,230	11,230	12,151	12,957	1,82,477	
Enterprise Value (EV)		84,2	260									
Less: Debt		10,	510									
Add: Cash		4,0	030									
Equity Value		77,	780									
Equity Value per share (INR)		:	160									
% Returns		30.	8%									
Rating		B	JY									

#### **Sensitivity Analysis**

		Terminal Growth (%)									
	160	2.5%	2.8%	3.0%	3.3%	3.5%	3.8%	4.0%	4.3%	4.5%	
	10.8%	174	178	183	188	193	199	206	212	220	
	11.0%	166	171	175	180	185	190	196	202	209	
	11.3%	160	164	168	172	177	182	187	193	199	
(%)	11.5%	153	157	161	165	169	174	179	184	189	
ပ္ပ	11.8%	147	151	154	158	162	166	171	176	181	
WACC	12.0%	142	145	148	152	155	159	163	168	173	
	12.3%	137	139	143	146	149	153	157	161	165	
	12.5%	132	134	137	140	143	147	150	154	158	
	12.8%	127	129	132	135	138	141	144	148	151	

Source: Company reports, Arihant Capital Research

#### **Financial Statements**

Income statement summary							
Y/e 31 Mar (INR mn)	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
Revenue	48,252	57,543	69,250	54,780	53,282	61,893	70,495
Net Raw Materials	23,949	28,646	32,990	24,990	26,268	29,895	33,485
Employee Cost	6,474	8,707	9,120	9,520	8,578	9,532	10,504
Other Expenses	9,722	14,842	18,240	14,570	13,652	15,730	17,744
EBITDA	8,107	5,348	8,900	5,700	4,784	6,738	8,762
EBITDA Margin (%)	16.8%	9.3%	12.9%	10.4%	9.0%	10.9%	12.4%
Depreciation	(2,853)	(3,255)	(3,090)	(3,350)	(3,441)	(3,625)	(3,811)
Interest expense	(2,030)	(2,414)	(3,110)	(3,690)	(3 <i>,</i> 050)	(2,634)	(2,526)
Other income	430	593	410	570	440	511	582
Profit before tax	3,802	482	3,150	(730)	(1,267)	989	3,006
Taxes	(1,113)	(147)	(840)	90	190	(249)	(758)
PAT	2,690	334	2,310	(640)	(1,077)	740	2,249
PAT Margin (%)	5.6%	0.6%	3.3%	-1.2%	-2.0%	1.2%	3.2%
Other Comprehensive income	415	107	(140)	290	-	-	-
Net profit	3,105	441	2,170	(350)	(1,077)	740	2,249
EPS (INR)	6.8	0.8	5.8	(1.6)	(2.2)	1.5	4.6

Source: Company Reports, Arihant Capital Research

Balance sheet summary							
Y/e 31 Mar (INR mn)	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
Equity capital	793	796	800	800	975	975	975
Reserves	19,081	18,771	20,110	19,430	28,176	28,768	30,567
Net worth	19,874	19,567	20,910	20,230	29,151	29,743	31,542
Minority Interest	981	857	40	-	-	-	-
Provisions	110	253	660	390	146	170	193
Debt	35,279	37,857	41,030	35,820	27,720	27,160	25,460
Other non-current liabilities	1,567	1,303	980	770	799	928	1,057
Total Liabilities	57,811	59,837	63,620	57,210	57,817	58,001	58,253
Fixed assets	27,828	28,554	28,540	28,390	28,069	27,518	26,811
Capital Work In Progress	2,272	1,424	1,290	620	573	604	635
Other Intangible assets	991	1,866	1,670	1,420	1,420	1,420	1,420
Goodwill	2,921	2,960	2,250	2,280	2,280	2,280	2,280
Investments	1,319	1,096	1,070	960	799	928	1,057
Other non current assets	569	1,695	1,740	3,200	1,225	1,424	1,410
Net working capital	17,251	15,849	20,410	14,600	16,403	18,296	21,177
Inventories	6,264	9,202	8 <i>,</i> 320	8,220	7,916	8,600	8,991
Sundry debtors	14,514	17,065	18,220	15,980	15,036	16,618	18,734
Loans & Advances	148	45	30	10	53	62	70
Other current assets	19,240	17,151	18,870	16,490	15,328	16,957	18,541
Sundry creditors	(19,437)	(24,200)	(21,520)	(21,780)	(19,266)	(21,156)	(21,987)
Other current liabilities & Prov	(3,479)	(3,413)	(3,510)	(4,320)	(2,664)	(2 <i>,</i> 785)	(3,172)
Cash	2,484	5,296	5,070	4,030	5,714	3,984	1,771
Other Financial Assets	2,177	1,096	1,580	1,710	1,332	1,547	1,692
Total Assets	57,811	59,837	63,620	57,210	57,817	58,001	58,253

Source: Company Reports, Arihant Capital Research

Du-Pont Analysis							
Y/e 31 Mar	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
Tax burden (x)	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.7
Interest burden (x)	0.7	0.2	0.5	(0.3)	(0.9)	0.3	0.6
EBIT margin (x)	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
Asset turnover (x)	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.9
Financial leverage (x)	3.5	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.1	2.5	2.5
RoE (%)	13.8%	1.7%	11.4%	-3.1%	-4.4%	2.5%	7.3%

Source: Company Reports, Arihant Capital Research

# **Financial Statements**

Cashflow summary							
Y/e 31 Mar (INR mn)	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
Profit before tax	3,802	482	3,150	(730)	(1,267)	989	3,006
Depreciation	2,853	3,255	3,090	3,350	3,441	3,625	3,811
Tax paid	(1,113)	(147)	(840)	90	190	(249)	(758)
Working capital $\Delta$	(2,034)	1,401	(4,561)	5,810	(1,803)	(1,893)	(2,881)
Change in Goodwill	(1,703)	(40)	710	(30)	-	-	-
Operating cashflow	1,805	4,951	1,550	8,490	561	2,472	3,179
Capital expenditure	(3,222)	(3,133)	(2,942)	(2,530)	(3,073)	(3,104)	(3,135)
Free cash flow	(1,417)	1,818	(1,392)	5,960	(2,512)	(633)	44
Equity raised	(687)	29	(1 <i>,</i> 584)	330	9,998	(0)	-
Investments	(167)	223	26	110	161	(129)	(129)
Others	1,062	(920)	(333)	(1,340)	2,352	(413)	(131)
Debt financing/disposal	2,246	2,578	3,173	(5,210)	(8,100)	(560)	(1,700)
Dividends paid	(1,378)	(794)	(200)	(410)	-	(148)	(450)
Other items	378	(121)	84	(480)	(215)	153	153
Net ∆ in cash	38	2,812	(226)	(1,040)	1,684	(1,730)	(2,213)
<b>Opening Cash Flow</b>	2,445	2,484	5,296	5,070	4,030	5,714	3,984
Closing Cash Flow	2,484	5,296	5,070	4,030	5,714	3,984	1,771

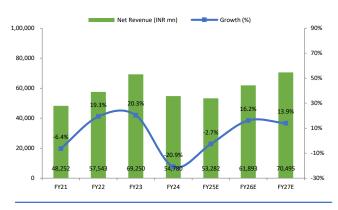
Source: Company Reports, Arihant Capital Research

Ratio analysis							
Y/e 31 Mar	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25E	FY26E	FY278
Growth matrix (%)							
Revenue growth	-6.4%	19.3%	20.3%	-20.9%	-2.7%	16.2%	13.9%
Op profit growth	-24.2%	-34.0%	66.4%	-36.0%	-16.1%	40.8%	30.0%
Profitability ratios (%)							
OPM	16.8%	9.3%	12.9%	10.4%	9.0%	10.9%	12.4%
Net profit margin	5.6%	0.6%	3.3%	-1.2%	-2.0%	1.2%	3.2%
RoCE	7.5%	3.3%	7.6%	2.7%	4.8%	7.2%	9.7%
RoNW	13.8%	1.7%	11.4%	-4.4%	2.5%	7.3%	11.7%
RoA	4.7%	0.6%	3.6%	-1.9%	1.3%	3.9%	6.3%
Per share ratios (INR)							
EPS	7.8	1.1	5.4	(0.9)	(2.2)	1.5	4.6
Dividend per share	3.5	2.0	0.5	1.0	-	0.3	0.9
Cash EPS	14.0	9.0	13.5	6.8	4.8	9.0	12.4
Book value per share	50.1	49.2	52.3	50.6	59.8	61.0	64.7
Valuation ratios (x)							
P/E	15.6	110.0	22.5	-	-	80.4	26.5
P/CEPS	8.7	13.5	9.0	18.0	25.2	13.6	9.8
P/B	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.4	2.0	2.0	1.9
EV/EBITDA	9.9	15.0	9.4	14.0	16.9	12.1	9.4
Payout (%)							
Dividend payout	51.2%	237.5%	8.7%	-64.1%	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%
Tax payout	29.3%	30.6%	26.7%	12.3%	15.0%	25.2%	25.29
Liquidity ratios							
Debtor days	114	100	93	114	106	93	9
Inventory days	82	99	97	121	112	101	90
Creditor days	153	153	138	161	154	134	123
WC Days	43	46	52	74	64	60	6
Leverage ratios (x)							
Interest coverage	2.6	0.9	1.9	0.6	0.4	1.2	2.0
Net debt / equity	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6	0.8	0.8	0.8
Net debt / op. profit	4.0	6.1	4.0	5.6	4.6	3.4	2.7

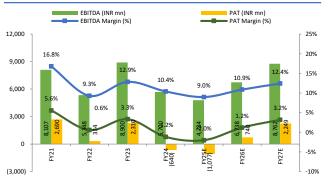
Source: Company Reports, Arihant Capital Research

# **Story in Charts**

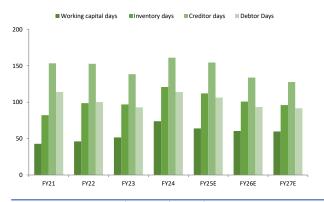
Exhibit 3: Inventory levels is expected to clear in next 1-2 quarters and demand will be normalize. BharatNet and BEAD would be a key triggers.



#### Exhibit 5: Growth in EBITDA & PAT levels

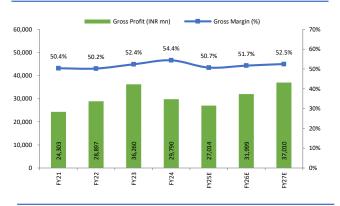


#### Exhibit 7: Working capital days to be improve

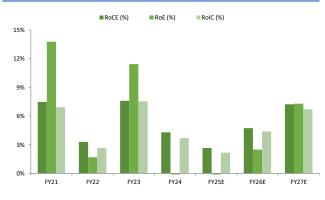


Source: Company reports, Arihant Capital Research

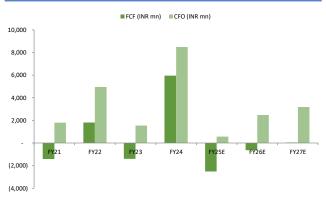
# Exhibit 4: Softening of RM costs will lead to improvement in gross margins.



#### Exhibit 6: Return ratios to be improve



## Exhibit 8: Cash flows to be improve



#### **Story in Charts**

Exhibit 9: Working capital in-terms of sales is expected to maintain going forward.

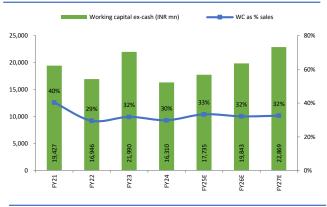


Exhibit 11: The inventory build-up in North America is expected to liquidate in 1-2 quarters. Post that, Optical networking business is expected to pick-up.

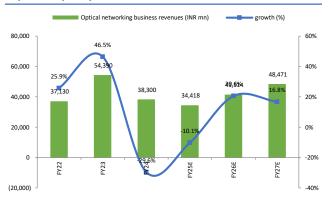
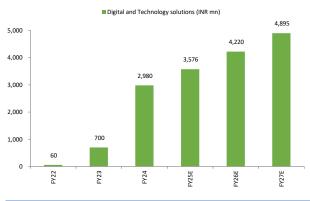


Exhibit 13: Digital and Technology solutions has strong order book of INR 3.36bn shows potential revenue visibility.



Source: Company reports, Arihant Capital Research

Exhibit 10: Interest cost as % of EBIT is expected to reduce going forward.

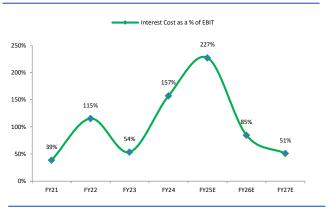
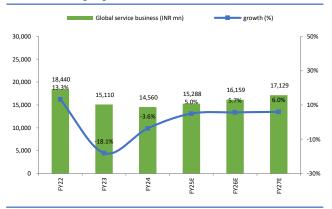


Exhibit 12: Selective order intake and execution will improve global service business going forward.



# Exhibit 14: R&D expenses are expected to be 3.3%-3.4% of sales going forward.



#### **Story in Charts**

# Exhibit 15: The order book stood at 86.3bn (-18% YoY/-12.7% QoQ) as of Q2FY25.

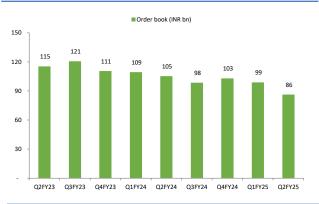
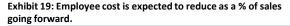
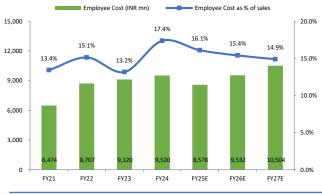


Exhibit 17: Global services margins are expected around 8%-10% going forward.







Source: Company reports, Arihant Capital Research

Exhibit 16: Optical networking margins were impacted due to lower utilization and volumes on YoY basis and improved on QoQ basis. The profitability is expected to back at 75%-80% capacity utilization.

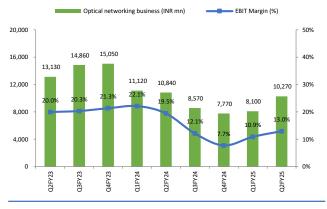
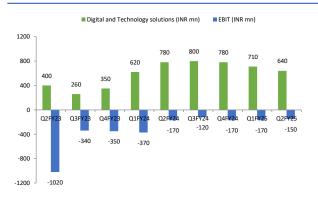


Exhibit 18: Digital and Technology services moving towards profitability.



#### Exhibit 20: The company has reduced to INR 21.69bn would improve balance sheet and reduce interest cost going forward.



**Q2FY25** Result Update

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Stock Rating Scale	Absolute Return
	Absolute Return
BUY	>20%
ACCUMULATE	12% to 20%
HOLD	5% to 12%

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