

AMOGHVARTA

ISSN : 2583-3189



India's Journey towards Aatm Nirbhar Bharat (Self-reliant India) Challenges and Opportunities

ORIGINAL ARTICLE



Authors

Dr. Balendra Shukla

Supervisor

Assistant Professor

Head Department of Economics

Ekta Vishwakarma

Research Scholar

Department of Economics

Nehru Gram Bharati University

Jamunipur, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, INDIA

Abstract

The concept of a Self-Reliant India, or Atmanirbhar Bharat, has gained significant traction in recent years as the nation strives to reduce dependency on foreign resources and foster economic independence. This article explores the multifaceted approach India is adopting to achieve self-reliance, focusing on key areas such as manufacturing, innovation, infrastructure development, and sustainable growth. It examines Government initiatives like the Make in India campaign, the promotion of local industries, and the enhancement of digital infrastructure. The article also discusses the challenges and opportunities associated with this ambitious vision, highlighting the role of public-private partnerships, skill development, and technological advancements. Ultimately, the pursuit of a self-reliant India aims not only to strengthen the nation's economy but also to position it as a global leader in innovation and sustainability.

Key Words

India, Journey, Aatm Nirbhar Bharat, Challenge, Opportunity.

Introduction

India's journey towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) is a significant and transformative initiative aimed at positioning the country as a global economic powerhouse. The concept of Aatmanirbhar Bharat was introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in May 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, as a response to the challenges posed by the global crisis and to reduce the country's dependency on foreign goods and services. The vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat is built on five key pillars: economy, infrastructure, system, vibrant demography, and demand. The goal is to make India a self-sustaining and resilient nation, capable of not only fulfilling its own needs but also contributing to the global supply chain. To achieve this, the Indian Government has introduced a series of reforms and initiatives across various sectors, including manufacturing, agriculture, defense, healthcare, and technology.

The key objectives of the 'Self-reliant India' (Aatm Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan) mission are as follows:

- Develop India into a global supply chain hub.

June to August 2024 www.amoghvarta.com

A Double-blind, Peer-reviewed & Referred, Quarterly, Multidisciplinary and Bilingual Research Journal

Impact Factor
SJIF (2023): 5.062

239

- Build the Government's trust in the private sector capabilities and prospects.
- Establish 'good force multipliers' for Indian manufacturers.
- Enter the global markets to export goods including agriculture, textiles, clothing, and jewellery.
- Determine adequacy of each sector (e.g., defence, agriculture, healthcare, infrastructure, etc.), with the help of FY22 budget, to achieve self-reliance.
- Digital India and 09 Pillars of Growth Areas.
 - ◆ Broadband Highways.
 - ◆ Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity.
 - ◆ Public Internet Access Programme.
 - ◆ e-Governance: Reforming Government through Technology.
 - ◆ e-Kranti - Electronic Delivery of Services.
 - ◆ Information for All.
 - ◆ Electronics Manufacturing.
 - ◆ IT for Jobs.
 - ◆ Early Harvest Programmes.



Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan: Challenges

The *Aatma Nirbhar Bharat* (Self-Reliant India) initiative launched by the Indian Government aims to make India self-sufficient by promoting local manufacturing, reducing dependence on imports, and boosting exports. However, several challenges hinder the realization of this vision:

1. **Infrastructure Gaps:** Insufficient infrastructure in terms of logistics, transportation, and power supply limits the efficiency and competitiveness of domestic industries.
2. **Skill Development:** A significant portion of the workforce lacks the necessary skills for advanced manufacturing and high-tech industries. This skill gap hampers productivity and innovation.
3. **Access to Finance:** Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often face difficulties in accessing credit and financial resources, which restricts their ability to expand operations and invest in new technologies.
4. **Global Supply Chain Dependence:** India's manufacturing sector is heavily reliant on imports for raw materials and components, particularly in sectors like electronics and pharmaceuticals. This dependence can be difficult to overcome in the short term.
5. **Regulatory Hurdles:** Complex and often inconsistent regulatory frameworks can create barriers to business operations, especially for new and smaller enterprises.
6. **Innovation and R&D:** India lags in research and development, which is critical for developing new technologies and products. The low investment in R&D restricts the growth of high-value industries.
7. **Market Access and Export Challenges:** Domestic manufacturers face challenges in accessing global markets due to trade barriers, quality standards, and competitive pricing from other countries.
8. **Environmental and Sustainability Issues:** Balancing industrial growth with environmental sustainability is a challenge.

Benefits of Self-reliant India (Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan)

The *Aatma Nirbhar Bharat* (Self-Reliant India) initiative offers numerous benefits that can positively impact various aspects of the country's economy, society, and global standing:

1. **Economic Growth:** By boosting local manufacturing and reducing import dependence, the initiative can stimulate domestic industries, leading to higher GDP growth. This also creates a multiplier effect across various sectors of the economy.
2. **Employment Generation:** Increased focus on domestic production can create millions of new jobs across industries, particularly in manufacturing, agriculture, and services sectors. This can help reduce unemployment and underemployment.
3. **Reduced Trade Deficit:** By producing goods domestically that were previously imported, India can reduce its trade deficit, leading to a more balanced trade environment and stronger currency reserves.
4. **Improved Infrastructure:** Investments in infrastructure to support self-reliance—such as transportation, logistics, and energy will have long-term benefits for the overall economy, improving efficiency and connectivity.
5. **Technological Advancement:** Encouraging innovation and R&D within the country can lead to the development of new technologies and intellectual property, enhancing India's global competitiveness in high-tech sectors.
6. **Enhanced Global Standing:** As India becomes more self-reliant, it can strengthen its position in international trade negotiations and reduce vulnerability to global supply chain disruptions, leading to greater resilience in times of crisis.
7. **Support for SMEs:** The initiative provides support to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which are crucial for job creation and innovation. Empowering SMEs can lead to more inclusive growth across various regions of the country.
8. **Sustainable Development:** Emphasizing local production with a focus on sustainability can lead to the adoption of greener technologies and practices, contributing to environmental conservation and compliance with global climate goals.
9. **Consumer Benefits:** Increased domestic production can lead to more affordable goods and services, benefiting consumers with lower prices and more options. It also encourages the growth of local brands and products.
10. **National Security:** Reducing dependence on imports, especially in critical sectors like defense, pharmaceuticals, and technology, enhances national security by ensuring that essential goods and services are available even in times of global crises.
11. **Empowerment of Rural Economy:** Initiatives focused on local production can stimulate the rural economy by promoting agro-based industries, handicrafts, and cottage industries, thereby reducing rural-urban migration.
12. **Cultural and Social Impact:** Promoting local products and industries can help preserve and revitalize traditional crafts, skills, and industries, fostering a sense of pride and ownership among citizens.

The *Aatma Nirbhar Bharat* initiative, if effectively implemented, can lead to a more resilient, equitable, and prosperous India, positioning the country as a major global player in the 21st century.

Overall Progress

The *Aatma Nirbhar Bharat* initiative has made considerable progress across various sectors. While challenges remain, the initiative has catalyzed significant economic activities, attracted investments, and fostered a sense of self-reliance in the country. Continued efforts in these areas are expected to further strengthen India's position on the global stage.

Under the Self-reliant India (Aatm Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan), the Government implemented the following schemes:

Under the *Aatma Nirbhar Bharat* (Self-Reliant India) initiative, the Indian Government has implemented a variety of schemes across different sectors to promote self-sufficiency, economic growth, and resilience. Here are some of the key schemes launched under this initiative:

1. **Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme**

- **Objective:** To boost domestic manufacturing in key sectors by providing financial incentives to companies based on their incremental sales.
- **Sectors Covered:** Mobile manufacturing and specified electronic components, pharmaceuticals, automotive components, textiles, food processing, solar PV modules, and more.
- **Impact:** This scheme aims to attract investments, increase production capacity, and create employment opportunities in India

2. **Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)**

- **Objective:** To provide collateral-free loans to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to help them recover from the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Coverage:** The scheme offers 100% credit guarantee coverage to banks and non-banking financial institutions on the loans disbursed to MSMEs.
- **Impact:** It has helped businesses maintain liquidity and continue operations during challenging times.

3. **PM SVANIDHI (Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi)**

- **Objective:** To provide affordable working capital loans to street vendors to help them resume their livelihoods that were affected by the pandemic.
- **Features:** The scheme offers a loan of up to ¹ 10,000 with a low-interest rate and encourages digital transactions through incentives.
- **Impact:** Over 30 lakh street vendors have benefited from this scheme, aiding their economic recovery.

4. **Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan**

- **Objective:** To provide employment opportunities to migrant workers who returned to their home states due to the COVID-19 lockdown.
- **Coverage:** The scheme was launched in 116 districts across six states, focusing on creating infrastructure and public assets.
- **Impact:** It provided immediate employment to millions of migrant workers and accelerated rural infrastructure development.

5. **Agriculture Infrastructure Fund**

- **Objective:** To provide a medium-to-long-term debt financing facility for investment in viable projects for post-harvest management infrastructure and community farming assets.
- **Features:** Farmers, PACS, FPOs, agri-entrepreneurs, and startups can avail loans at subsidized interest rates under this scheme.
- **Impact:** It aims to improve the efficiency of the agricultural sector, reduce wastage, and increase farmers' income.

6. **One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC)**

- **Objective:** To enable migrant workers and their families to access the Public Distribution System (PDS) from any fair price shop across the country.
- **Features:** The scheme allows beneficiaries to get their entitled food grains from any part of the country, ensuring food security.

- **Impact:** The scheme has been a major step towards ensuring food security and social welfare, especially for migrant populations.
7. **PM Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)**
- **Objective:** To provide income support to farmers by transferring ₹ 6,000 per year directly into their bank accounts in three equal installments.
- **Coverage:** Small and marginal farmers across the country are eligible for this scheme.
- **Impact:** It has helped improve the financial stability of farmers, especially in rural areas.
8. **Atal Beemit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana**
- **Objective:** To provide financial support to employees who have lost their jobs due to the pandemic.
- **Coverage:** The scheme offers unemployment benefits to insured workers under the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC).
- **Impact:** It has provided relief to workers facing financial hardships due to job loss.
9. **Ujjwala Yojana 2.0**
- **Objective:** To provide free LPG connections to poor households to promote clean cooking fuel.
- **Expansion:** Under the Aatma Nirbhar Bharat initiative, the scheme was expanded to cover more beneficiaries, especially migrant workers.
- **Impact:** It has helped reduce indoor air pollution and improved the health of women in rural areas.
10. **PM Awas Yojana (Urban and Rural)**
- **Objective:** To provide affordable housing to all, with a focus on the economically weaker sections.
- **Coverage:** The scheme targets urban and rural areas, offering subsidies on home loans for constructing or buying houses.
- **Impact:** It has significantly contributed to increasing home ownership among the poor and boosting the construction sector.
11. **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**
- **Objective:** To overhaul the Indian education system and make it more inclusive, equitable, and aligned with the needs of the 21st century.
- **Features:** The NEP emphasizes skill development, digital education, and holistic learning.
- **Impact:** The policy aims to prepare a more skilled and knowledgeable workforce, which is crucial for the success of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat.
12. **Startup India Initiative**
- **Objective:** To foster entrepreneurship and innovation in India by providing a conducive environment for startups.
- **Features:** The initiative offers tax exemptions, simplified regulations, and funding support to startups.
- **Impact:** It has led to the creation of thousands of startups, contributing to job creation and innovation in the economy.

These schemes represent a broad and comprehensive effort by the Indian Government to build a self-reliant India by strengthening various sectors of the economy, creating jobs, and improving the overall standard of living.

Conclusion

The concept of a “self-reliant India” (or “Atmanirbhar Bharat”) revolves around reducing dependency on external sources and fostering domestic production, innovation, and self-sufficiency. In conclusion, achieving

a self-reliant India involves:

1. **Economic Independence:** By bolstering domestic industries, India aims to reduce its reliance on imports and build a more resilient economy. This includes investing in manufacturing, technology, and infrastructure.
2. **Innovation and Technology:** Encouraging homegrown innovation and technology development is crucial. This involves supporting research and development, nurturing startups, and advancing digital capabilities.
3. **Skill Development:** Enhancing the skills of the workforce through education and vocational training ensures that the population can contribute effectively to various sectors and adapt to changing economic demands.
4. **Sustainable Growth:** Promoting sustainable practices and green technologies helps balance economic growth with environmental responsibility, ensuring long-term viability.
5. **Policy Support:** Effective Government policies, such as incentives for domestic production and strategic investments in key sectors, play a critical role in fostering self-reliance.

Overall, the journey towards a self-reliant India is a multifaceted endeavour requiring coordinated efforts from the Government, businesses, and citizens to build a more self-sustaining and resilient nation.

References

1. Bhagwati, Jagdish & Sen Amartya (2012) *Indian economic policy*, Amitendu Palit, Singapore, July 2013.
2. Economic Survey of India: Annual publication by the Ministry of Finance providing detailed economic data and analysis, (2020)
3. Kalam, A.P.J. Abdul and Rajan, Y.S. (2002) "*India 2020: A Vision for the New Millennium*", Penguin Books Ltd., India.
4. Make in India: Government initiative and associated reports promoting domestic manufacturing., 2014.
5. National Policy on Electronics: Document outlining goals and strategies for boosting the domestic electronics industry, 2018.
6. Sharma, A.; & Gupta, V. (2020) Studies from institutions such as the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) or the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), Economic Impacts of Agricultural Reforms in India, *National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER)*, New Delhi: NCAER Press.
7. Union Budget Speeches: Address by the finance minister outlining fiscal policies, including those related to self-reliance, (Union Budget Speech 2021-22.)

---==00==---