



Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan : A Sound Foundation of Future India or A Cosmetic Gimmick

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ABSTRACT

Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan or Self-reliant India campaign is the vision of new India envisaged by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. Atmanirbhar Bharat, means a 'self-reliant India' or 'self-sufficient India. It is a plan which will make India more efficient, more competitive and more resilient, and becoming self-sustaining and self-generating. It was launched by the PM in the wake of the Covid pandemic to manage the economic disruption in the country. The objective of the Atmanirbhar Bharat program is to make the country and its people self-reliant in all senses and independent by all means with the help of a full-fledged economic stimulus package of INR 20 lakh crores - equivalent to 10% of India's GDP. Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan refers to the measures taken by the central government to make India self-sufficient in areas like infrastructure, services, etc. He further outlined five pillars of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat - Economy, Infrastructure, System, Vibrant Demography and Demand. The government took several bold reforms such as Supply Chain Reforms for Agriculture, Rational Tax Systems, Simple & Clear Laws, Capable Human Resource and Strong Financial System.

Keywords : Union Budget-2023, MSMEs, Atma Nirbhar Bharat, Self-reliant India Campaign, Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana, Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)-2.0, Time-bound development, Global knowledge superpower etc.

Introduction :

Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan or Self-reliant India Campaign is a special economic relief package of Rs. 20 lakh crores announced by Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi. He announced this campaign on 12th May 2020 during the coronavirus crisis. The objective of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan is to make India self-reliant by strengthening the economic system of the country and to give a new direction to the development journey of the country. The package of atmanirbhar bharat amounts to almost 10% of India's GDP. Here we discuss about the relevance of the ideational foundation of this concept:



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- Mahatma Gandhi's call for Swadeshi galvanised our nation. Likewise, Atmanirbhar Bharat is Swadeshi tailored to India in 2022.
 - Within the country it is important that the conflicting aspirations and expectations of States are managed and harmonised to present a united, confident and self-reliant India. For example, the aspirations of the Dravidian model of development and other regional-specific aspirations should synchronise with the holistic concept of Atmanirbhar Bharat.
 - National identity is essential for modern states, especially when states are built around liberal democratic political values and the shared experiences of diverse communities.
 - Former Tamil Nadu Chief Ministers C.N. Annadurai and M. Karunanidhi ensured that their politics were regionally distinct while staying uncompromisingly nationalistic.
 - In 1967 Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, Dravidian icon Periyar supported the Congress party and not the DMK, while C. Rajagopalachari supported the DMK.

What is Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan ?

Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan Scheme was Launched on 12th May 2020 Announced by Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi Financial Outlay Rs. 20 lakh crores (10% of GDP). Here are some key points with the help of them Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan Scheme may be described properly :

- The Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan was formally announced by the current Indian Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi to help the nation in recovering from the Coronavirus pandemic-induced economic shock by making it self-reliant.
- The Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme was announced on 12th May 2020 with the objective of turning a crisis into an opportunity.
- The scheme aims to cut down on dependence on imports and focus on indigenous quality products to make India self-reliant.
- The scheme does not put forward a self-centered or isolated or closed system. But it envisions the culture and tradition of India which talks about self-reliance and the soul as “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”.
- “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” is a Sanskrit language phrase taken from Maha Upanishad. It means the whole world is one family.
- This scheme to build a self-reliant India is based on five important pillars – Economy, Infrastructure, Our System, Demography, and Demand.



□ After the announcement of this scheme, Finance Minister of India Nirmala Sitharaman announced five separate tranches of economic relief packages for the growth of different sectors.

Why is the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan needed? The Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan is needed because of the following significant points discussed below:

□ To improve the share of the domestic manufacturing sector in the Gross Value Added (GVA). In the last decade, despite the growth of the GDP of India, the manufacturing sector remains stagnant.

□ To reduce the over-dependence on imports from foreign countries and decrease the fiscal deficit by increasing exports.

□ The atmanirbhar bharat Abhiyan is needed to promote local and indigenous products from different parts of the country.

□ There are many policies that are as old as 100 years. Through this atmanirbhar bharat scheme, the Government of India will take several bold reforms related to Supply Chain for Agriculture, Rational Tax Systems, Simple, Clear, and rational Laws, Human Resource Management, and a Strong Financial System.

□ During the announcement of this scheme, PM Modi mentioned the Sanskrit phrase “Eshah Panthah” which means “self-sufficient India”. It means self-reliance is the only way out for India. This phrase is mentioned in Mundaka Upanishad.

How does the world influence the domestic aspects of a nation?

□ The pandemic has shown us that whether it is the stressed economy or human rights, rural development or climate change, defence or foreign policy, we need to re-imagine the way forward for India and its relationship with the world.

□ The ripple effects of the war in Ukraine on our economy and democracy make it imperative for us to continuously engage with the world around us.

□ As Rabindranath Tagore said, it is not possible to remain behind “narrow domestic walls”.



Objectives of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan: The objectives of the atmanirbhar bharat scheme are as follows :

- To strengthen the local and regional manufacturers and service providers.
- To improve the standard of living of citizens by focusing on the trade deficit and the balance of payment.
- To make the country and its citizens self-reliant in all the senses.
- To transform India into a global supply chain hub.
- To revive every sector of the economy with a rise in fiscal stimulus.
- To emphasize on self-reliance with a focus on land, labour, liquidity, reforms and laws.
- To provide economic stimulus packages equivalent to 10% of the Indian GDP.
- To incentivise small businesses and farmers who faced losses from COVID-19 by providing them special incentives and funds

Pillars of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan: Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan Package is built on Five focus Pillars. The 5 pillars of atmanirbhar bharat are given below:

- Economy:** It contemplates not an Incremental change but a quantum leap so that we can convert the current adversity into an advantage and opportunity.
- Infrastructure:** It can be an image of modern India, the identity of New India.
- Systems:** It is driven by 21st-century cutting-edge technology rather than old rules.
- Democracy:** A vibrant and healthy democracy that provides the energy required to make India self-sufficient.
- Demand:** Under this, the strength of our demand and supply chain is utilized intelligently.

Focus Areas of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan: Here are some key focus areas of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan:

- ✓ Agriculture;
- ✓ MSME;
- ✓ Migrants;
- ✓ Health;
- ✓ Education;
- ✓ Defence;



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- ✓ Space;
 - ✓ Banking Credit;
 - ✓ Food Security;
 - ✓ Mining;
 - ✓ Reforms;

Features of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan : The important key features of Atmanirbhar Bharat mission that aims to make a self-reliant, self-sufficient India are given below :

- **Job Creation:** An increase in funding for MGNREGA of Rs 40,000 crore encourages job creation and eliminates the labour problem. The government also announced the Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana for the formalization of Jobs.
- **Increasing expenditure on the health sector:** Increased funding for public health initiatives by capacity building and other health reforms to prepare Indians for pandemics in the future. Rs. 900 crore will be given to the Department of Biotechnology to research and develop the vaccine of COVID-19.
- **Reforms in Education :** Under the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan in India, there is a push towards technology-driven quality education with equity through various government portals like SWAYAM PRABHA DTH channels, PM eVIDYA, etc.
- **Ease of doing Business :** The focus on improving the business in the country through easing out the rules IBC-related initiatives for the stressed enterprises. Relaxation was provided in General Financial Rules to support the construction and real estate sector.
- **Financial Support to Industries:** Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan Public Sector Enterprise Policy for an Independent India was announced. The Government announced Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) 2.0 for the 26 stressed sectors which were identified by Kamath Committee.
- **Boost to Agriculture:** Additional Emergency Working Capital for farmers through NABARD was provided with the aid of □ 30,000 crores. It will benefit about three crore farmers in the country. The Government has also developed an Rs.10,000 crores scheme to formalize Micro Food Enterprises (MFE).
- **Support to States:** The Central Government has raised the borrowing limits of State Governments from 3% to 5% for the years 2020-21 for better finance availability.



Phases of Atmanirbhar Bharat : The phases of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan are given below:

1. Businesses including MSMEs;
2. Poor, including migrants and farmers;
3. Agriculture;
4. New Horizons of Growth;
5. Government Reforms and Enablers;

How should be the model of self-reliant India?

- Contributor rather than a consumer-** Atmanirbharta model for a rising India should be based on civilizational pride, experience and a self-belief that will help India be a contributor to the world rather than only a consumer.
- Tailoring to suit the needs-** No one-size-fits-all Western model can work for a country as diverse as India, as evidenced by the catastrophic financial crisis of 2008.
- Defence, human rights, climate change, agriculture, the rural-urban divide, economy, governance and federalism are all addressed in the five pillars of Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- Human-centric model-** Social capital, family and communities are now at the centre of a developmental model.
- Atmanirbhar Bharat is a human-centric way forward based on our own civilizational ethos and values.
- It envisages a self-reliant India working for Vasudaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family).

What are the Concerns Raised for Atma Nirbhar Bharat?

- **Curtail International Trade and Investment:** Certain aspects of the programme have the potential to curtail international trade and investment, such as increased tariffs, non-tariff restrictions on imports, and import substitution.
 - ✓ Non-tariff Barrier is a trade restriction, such as a quota, embargo or sanction, that countries use to further their political and economic goals.
 - ✓ Countries can use non tariff barriers in place of, or in conjunction with, standard tariff barriers (like Custom Duty).
- **Policy Issues:** Difficulties in India's intellectual property enforcement regime, gaps in pharma sector regulations, drug price controls, and norms related to data localisation and governance.



✓ Data localisation (i.e. storing data within the boundaries of the country) may restrict the ability of local companies to compete in the global marketplace by limiting access to the global supply chain.

✓ This isolation may result in reduced investment and access to capital and customers.

▪ **In Space Sector:** To open the space sector to private investors was a significant step but there was, however, a ‘lack of clarity’ about several aspects related to the procedures.

✓ Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe) provides a level playing field for private companies to use Indian space infrastructure.

▪ **In Defence Sector:** The import embargo on the 101 items of defence equipment is planned to be implemented over a period of four years until 2024.

✓ Also changes in the defence acquisition procedure (DAP) - 2020 are expected to ensure that no item in this list is imported beyond the cut-off date.

✓ This may impact foreign investment in India.

What Steps Can Be Taken?

▪ **Build a Strategy for the Future:** A long term approach that considers regional supply chains and location decision-making is needed to succeed.

▪ **India Should Become Increasingly Open to Free and Fair Trade:** India should attract investors due to its strengths rather than by using tariffs as a tool to push international businesses to invest and make in India.

▪ **Focus on Developing and Supporting Innovators:** Focus on STEM, digital, creative and critical thinking skills that will build leaders and workers who can innovate and solve problems.

✓ India should also develop an innovator-friendly intellectual property policy and enforcement regime.

▪ **Digital and Data:** With digital and data services increasingly important in global trade, there is an opportunity for India to fully integrate with other major democratic markets.

✓ India should continue to harness and actively invest in the opportunities that Artificial Intelligence, digital technology and data present to achieve its growth potential.

▪ **Put Sustainability at the Centre of India’s Trade and Investment Strategy:** If shaped properly, trading arrangements can help support the poor and protect the environment.

✓ Countries and trade blocs are cognisant of this fact and are increasingly integrating sustainability and human rights into their trade agreements and strategies.



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- **Enhancing Demand:** The economic package for the country emerging out of the lockdown requires a stimulus enhancing demand across the economy.
 - ✓ The best way for this is to spend on greenfield infrastructure.
 - ✓ Infrastructure spending uniquely creates structures that raise productivity and extends spending power to the section of the population most affected by the lockdown, namely daily wage labourers.
 - **Mobilising Finances:** For financing of the stimulus package, India's foreign reserves stand at an all-time high which could be strategically used to finance its needs.
 - ✓ The rest may have to come from privatisation, taxation, loans and more international aid.
 - **Indigenisation of Defence Sector:**
 - ✓ On the lines of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan, Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) under Ministry of Defense indigenized 72 items i.e. manufacturing of these items will take place in India only.
 - ✓ There will not take place any of these items. It will give a boost to domestic enterprises.
 - **Holistic Reforms:** Any stimulus package will fail to reflect the trickle-down effect, until and unless it is backed by reforms in various sectors.
 - ✓ Thus, the Atma nirbhar plan also encompasses the unfinished agenda of holistic reforms which may include reforms in Civil services, Education, Skill and Labour Market, etc.

Conclusion :

The Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan approach appears to deliver a strong supply-side push by increasing the availability of low-cost finance and helping agriculture, business and creation of large scale employment opportunities for both the skilled and unskilled workforce. The increased funding for MNREGA will aid in the productive employment of returning migrants for creating a stronger manufacturing base. Self-reliance will be successful when we work at multiple levels - at a national level, industry level, and at an individual level. For the time being, demand-side stimulation via deficit financing is not being explored. However, there is no denying that demand stimulation is desperately needed right now. Demand for industrial products and services must be developed, and people's purchasing power must be boosted. Likewise, income support for migratory workers and the disadvantaged in cities is a pressing issue. We hope that Atmanirbhar Bharat does not just become a slogan but rather it should help India to stand up confidently in the



world. It should not make our country isolated stand behind “narrow domestic walls” but should definitely help in improving global economy.

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