

Atma Nirbhar Bharat-Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract: With the unpredicted times of COVID, the Indian economy faces challenges from different sources. India has been facing problems due to shut down in the economic activities for more than a year. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's address to nation on 12th May 2020 when he announced an economic stimulus package for Rs 20-lakh-crore, towards building a Atmanirbhar Bharat, or a self-reliant India, with the aim of making the country independent against the tough competition in the global supply chain and to help in empowering the poor, labourers, migrants who have been adversely affected by COVID. The primary objective of this study is to interpret Atmanirbhar Bharat abhiyan and discuss it in terms of opportunities and challenges and also discuss measures to be adopted in terms to overcome the challenges. The data for the study is extracted from online sources, various research papers published in different journals, articles, News in reputed newspapers and Government departmental announcements.

Key Words: Atmanirbhar Bharat, COVID, Opportunities, Challenges, Measures adopted

INTRODUCTION

COVID has spread across the globe, exposing limitations of healthcare systems, inefficiency of social protection frameworks and lack of economic flexibility. Indian Governments has also taken drastic measures like imposing country-wide lockdowns and closing borders to arrest further spread of the pandemic. These strategies have caused slowdown in economic activity and trade, disrupting global supply chains. All the contact-dependent services which include hospitality, tourism, amusement activities, and related businesses are facing hard times. The crisis has disturbed the cyclic flow of funds in various economies in India.

During this critical time various monetary measures are announced by RBI, the central bank of India, and financial stimulus package by the Government of India. The Government of India came up with a new initiative called Atmanirbhar Bharat and announced a stimulus package with legal and social reforms. The concept of Atmanirbhar Bharat is

brought up during the times of economic slowdown with the purpose to make Indian Economy stronger and to promote local products in India as well as all over the world. This concept was announced by India's honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi aims to reduce unemployment, insolvency, poverty and to increase India's per capita GDP. The mission of this Abhiyan was explained by our Prime Minister as not being self-centric but being self sufficient so that it can bring happiness, co-operation and peace of the world.

The Finance Minister, Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman, through five press conferences, announced the detailed measures under the economic package. This package is inclusive of Rs. 1.7 Lakh crore of free food grains to the poor and cash to poor women and old people, as well as liquidity measures and interest rate cuts by Reserve Bank of India which entirely amounts to Rs. 8.01 lakh crore. The First Tranche of Rs. 5,94,550 crore package focusing mainly on Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector, Provident Fund relief, Non Banking Financial Companies(NBFC), Tax Deducted at Source /Tax Collected at Source rates, Distribution Companies (DISCOMs), Real estate companies and others. The Second Tranche of Rs. 3,10,000 crore package aiming to cater farmers and migrant workers. The Third Tranche of Rs. 1,50,000 crore package focusing on agriculture, dairy and its related sectors, The Fourth and Fifth Tranches of Rs. 48,100 crore catering reforms for coal, minerals, air space management, defense production, DISCOMs in Union Territories and atomic energy. In order to make this plan successful, land, labor, liquidity and laws all have been specifically considered under this package. The package will be used for cottage industry, home industry, small-scale industry, MSME, laborers, farmers, middle-class people and those Indian industries which are working to boost our economy dedicatedly.

The Five pillars of Atmanirbhar Bharat focus on:

- *Economy*– an economy that brings Quantum Jump rather than Incremental change.
- *Infrastructure*– represents the modern India.

- *System*– Technology-driven systems fulfill the needs of the 21st century
- *Demography*–Vibrant Demography of the largest democracy.
- *Demand*–Full utilisation of the power of demand & supply

The 4 Es of Education, Employability, Employment and Entrepreneurship are very important in building an Atmanirbhar Bharat¹.

Talking about the vision for this Abhiyan the Prime Minister urged in his speech to all Indians to come up with detailed study of every sector and to think big. He added Intent, Inclusion, Investment, Infrastructure and Innovation are very important for India in responding to high growth trajectory. In his vision he not only aims to promote local products but also suggested everyone to improve quality, modernization of supply chain and providing best products. Indian PM also said "Be Vocal for Local."

Aatmanirbhar Bharat campaign does not mean only making reductions in imports, but to develop capacity of India and its creativity using the skills at optimum level. It has lots of opportunities for various Indian communities but many times questions are raised on the challenges ahead, but there are millions of measures are available for such challenges.

Opportunities in Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan

- Atmanirbhar Bharat focus on making India self-reliant and self-sufficient in all aspects, by reducing our dependence on imports from other nations by increasing our capacity to produce most of the items locally. By nourishing local manufacturers, supply chain and with diversification in services and products the Atma nirbhar bharat can be made a successful mission.
- It is important to note that the Abhiyan does not suggest to cut off relations from global platform and trade only with local products, the fundamental concept is to become not only self-sufficient but also to promote local businesses and feel proud about what valuable assets we possess this is going to be one of the biggest reforms worldwide.
- The Concept of Aatmanirbhar Bharat was mainly in the situation that the things which were imported before the COVID, shall be now manufactured in india not only for consumption but also for the export. Pharmaceutical is an

example where India contributes 60% to the global vaccine production in the world and from zero production of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) before March 2020, India today has created a capacity of producing 2 lakh PPE kits daily, which is growing steadily today we export PPEs.

- India has demonstrated how it rises up to challenges and uncovers opportunities therein, as manifested in the re-purposing of various automobile sector industries to collaborate in the making of life-saving ventilators¹⁰.
- Atmanirbhar Bharat sows the seeds for a new course of long-term development and serves as the turn on which India can emerge as a hub for manufacturing and investments. In order to achieve this vision, India needs to focus on holistic and sustainable development¹⁰.
- Atmanirbhar Bharat opens the opportunities to rural area people they can start up their business by implementation of the concept like Gobar bank. It will encourage the profession of the cattle-rearing⁸. It helps people in rural areas to meet their needs and will create new opportunities for employment among the rural youth to both males and females which is the need for time. Atma Nibhar Bharat explores the income generation opportunities through innovations including the communities or population in rural India.
- Atma nirbhar Bharat promotes a start-ups by which students will start to become more inclined towards becoming entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs may create entirely new markets and industries that become engines of future growth processes. Entrepreneurship can help battle youth unemployment in India.
- Atma Nirbhar Bharat would integrate India with the world as the concept envisages an opportunity to paint green the economic sectors that have the maximum impact on sustainable development. Both sustenance and sustainability have to be the cornerstones of economic development in future¹².
- The measures announced for the agricultural and allied sectors are particularly transformative. These reforms are steps towards achieving the goal of a self-sustainable rural economy.
- The MGNREGA combination of INR 40,000 crore may help in alleviating the distress of migrants when they return to their villages. The

creation of jobs in this sector would encourage consumerism and the demand would pick up which is good for the economy.

- Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan has given the importance of MSMEs for the revival of the Indian economy. The campaign has earmarked INR 3.0 lakh crore collateral-free loan facilities for MSMEs under the package. The MSME sector is the second-largest employment generating sector in India.
- In Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan special attention is given to the development of the renewable energy sector, through various incentive schemes, it promotes Green Consumerism and promise to incentivise solar photovoltaic manufacturing and advanced battery storage.
- The e-Vidya program for multi-mode access to remotely connected students to online education through the Greener-Digital platform provides uniform learning to whole nation. This program would enable schools and universities to stream courses online.
- Public expenditure on health care services will be increased by investing in grass-root health institutions and ramping up health and wellness centre across the nation.
- One of the core features of the Atmanirbhar Bharat revival package is its focus on increasing the efficacy of coal use. Coal gets INR 500 billion to develop infrastructure. The Government of India has pitched coal gasification as an environment-friendly move³.
- The main object of this plan was to give an interim relief in form of reduction in liquidity crunch arise to poor people, by transferring the cash in their account and second one was to give reforms of long term nature in various growth critical sectors so that they can be globally competitive and attractive with facing competition at the global Level⁶.
- Boosting the self-reliance of domestic defense industries, the import of 101 items has been stopped and the limit of foreign direct investment (FDI) has been increased from 49% to 74%¹². It will provide boost to the production, employment and reducing the huge import bill.
- We must concentrate on setting up manufacturing industries in the near future. This may save valuable foreign exchange and generate employment in the country. In this

context, the “Atmanirbhar” concept is an admirable plan⁴.

Challenges in Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan

- Now a day technology, industrial automation, robotics and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are changing way of industrial work and making many of the jobs unneeded. India’s job market is undergoing these changes and there is need for fresh thinking to address current and emerging challenges.
- The key challenge before the Atmanirbhar Bharat is the high dropouts at various stages of education. There is need to improve quality of school education.
- Indian MSMEs and other companies have often faced unfair competition from foreign companies. MSMEs face problems of marketing and liquidity².
- For the large scale migration of different companies into India we need to improve our rankings. We have done well considering that India was ranked a paltry 142 in 2014 and upgraded to 63 in 2020, but it is just not enough. We need to place within the top 50 to attract investment.
- The rate of registration charges of property is high and our labour laws need to be modernized.
- Atmanirbhar Bharat falls short of substantively addressing two bigger crises facing India: air pollution and climate change. The conversion of coal into synthesis gas emits substantial amounts of carbon dioxide (CO₂), with the degree varying according to process. The capture-and-use method of coal gasification shown to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45 % compared to the conventional process. The method India plans to employ has not been announced³.
- Sometimes there is delay in getting permission from government officials due to inefficiency of government employees so that many important research projects not get permission on time and vision of atmanirbhar bharat is not fulfilled⁹.
- The Economic packages as required for the country during the Lockdown period enhancing demand throughout the country⁶.
- The main challenge faced by companies is in supply chains, which increased delay in the service, the effect on logistics, and also cause the effect on imports. The significant challenges

of the supply chain are disruptions in imports, delays, affected logistics, reaching to customers, and fewer returns on investment. It discourages production, manufacturing of goods, and services in the economy⁷.

- In a lot of industries, India is dependent to an extent on countries like China for production and supply chain. The need of the hour is to be self-reliant in these areas.

Measures to be adopted

- Higher education system in India has big role to play in development of the economy. Focus of higher education needs to change from providing employability enhancements, to prepare learners into thinking, problem-solving and decision-making individuals. We have to integrate professional practice during studies and provide opportunities to further enhance professional development. The working population would need to re-skill themselves to new jobs emerging from technology innovations.
- It is important to teach young people to be an entrepreneur, to equip fresh graduates to start and run their own enterprises, to be job creators rather than job seekers. This is an important step towards Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- The vision of 5-pillared growth to self-reliance, in the longest possible run, is incomplete without being sustainable in approach. The sustained growth is possible only with balanced ecology.
- Setting up Infectious disease hospital blocks and setting up integrated public health labs in all districts and block levels to manage future pandemics, if any. Encouraging research by National Institutional platform for one health by Indian Council of Medical Research
- Indian MSMEs and other companies have often faced unfair competition from foreign companies. Therefore, Global tenders will be disallowed in Government procurement tenders upto Rs 200 crores. This will be a step towards Self-Reliant India. E-market linkage for MSMEs to be promoted to act as a replacement for trade fairs and exhibitions².
- The approach is to be kept flexible so that many scholars, teachers, professors, retired or working professionals and many villages, schools or colleges come up and take up this venture of transforming India to new heights.

The youth of India should be motivated to come up and participate. It should reach to everyone including illiterate persons as they may have capability of innovation.

- There are barriers and the difficulties in translating acquired skills in applications towards income development. As new norms are to be set up in unknown areas, the results could not be predicted but require constant review and course corrections, in such cases the participatory action research could be useful¹³.
- We must focus on reducing the rate of registration charges of property, which is uncompetitively high and our outdated labour laws need to be modernized, which exercise seems to be finally seeing the light of day with many state governments taking the lead. The Karnataka governments is displaying a commendable level of interest in introducing these reforms by not waiting for the Bill to be passed and are planning to issue an ordinance to implement it immediately.
- The journey has begun; what we need is an economic blueprint that will ensure we reach our destination. This blueprint would need to address domestic growth and put in place measures that will make India attractive for foreign investments.
- Development of infrastructure will facilitate economy and vice versa. Enhancement of infrastructure is essential for facilitating the education at all levels. Properly framed systems can create appropriate educational interventions which lead to an employment and put employability to best possible use. The most effective way for this is often to spend on greenfield infrastructure.
- Atmanirbhar's concept is especially important to revive the supply chain in COVID times. The most important solution is a better use of automation and technology, the use of optimization, the use of better transportation, better customer service, sustainability, use of local manufacturing and better use of analytics. If these solutions are systematically implemented, then all the problems faced by supply chains of companies across will be solved⁷.

CONCLUSION

Even though various measures have been announced as Atmanirbhar Bharat and have been implemented,

there is a lot of scope to build India Atmanirbhar. This mission is equipped to fight the downfall of the economy by contributing to job creation, education to continue skill development and Digital health mission and one health program to be self-reliant socially. India with its young population has good opportunity to attain status of Atmanirbhar Bharat in a short span of time. This needs focused and sustained effort to reform education system, which creates not only employment but employability and entrepreneurial skills through thinking, problem-solving and decision-making individuals. The Atma Nirbhar Bharat abhiyan motivates us to work further. Learning and training are necessary to bring about the whole transformation of India through the youth. Government should invest in developing the education system so that future employees are technology-driven and are ready for the industry. The government should invest in infrastructural development. We must maintain a balance between being global and able to provide locally. Atmanirbhar Bharat campaign is essential to recover the economy from COVID 19 pandemics, this has some challenges but by adopting some measures India will definitely gain major power status in the near future.

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