

## ATMA NIRBHAR INDIA (SELF RELIANT INDIA)

There has been a huge push to the Self-reliant India initiatives by the Indian Government post Covid19 pandemic, very aggressively.

One gets curious to know why this push after a long wait post Indian Independence. Possibly the answer lies in the past, dating back to many centuries. Even before BC. I browsed through various write ups on Self-reliant India as a part of my research on MSMEs, which is christened as the back bone of India economy. I was amazed with the achievements of our ancient Indians in the field of metal, silk, medicine, astronomy et. all. Here is a small write up on the glorious past of India and the present initiatives to take us back to the glory with the self-reliant India initiatives.

Historians say that the history and culture of India is dynamic and goes back to the beginning of human civilization. It begins with the mystical culture of the Indus Valley and encompasses the southernmost part of the Country. The Indian civilization is an amalgam of culture, tradition, harmony and self-reliance.

Indians have been the fore runners of metallurgy. The numerous statues, metal carvings at temples, palaces and other historical land marks made of alloy of different metals are indications of the advancement of Indians in metal sciences. The Historians say that way back in 4th century BC itself India as a developed nation. There has been endless write ups on the prosperous India which had “zero” imports in those days.

Mr. Macaulay who travelled all over India during his times confesses that the essence of India is “no one is unemployed, poor or no thieves”. So rich the country is, even gold is lying like grains in the houses of peoples of India and it is very difficult to enslave them. Best way to enslave them is to divide the on communal lines and inculcate western education.

India had such a great agricultural economy since the India soli was so fertile naturally, without any chemical manure. The India produce was sold in international market. Traders used to get gold and silver as consideration for the grains imported from India. Till the beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century India was an export oriented nation with almost nil imports.

Indian hand crafts were so unique that international community would fall for it. The production and precision was so good that India was able to export even way back 3000 years ago. If you say that the Indians taught the world “how to wear clothes” would be of no exaggeration. French historian Tavornis points out that the weaving of Indian clothes is so fine that it also shows the inside body and the weight of the clothes was negligible. It is found repeatedly in the history that Indians used to keep 13-14 metres of cloth in a ring.

Coming to the educational system- Indians were very advanced in technology and science and were way ahead of times. Apart from learning the Vedas, Upanishads, the children were taught on astronomy, metallurgy and war craft, military science and whole lot of other disciplines. Indians only identified that the earth revolved around its axis, revolving around the sun, the distance between sun and moon, eclipse and knowledge of mathematics, etc. Indians had learned thousands of years ago from all over the world.

THE steel technology was developed here before the 18th century when the world was not even aware of it. According to metal expert Franklin, India’s steel was many times better than Europe and Sweden. The London Royal Society’s Dr. Sankol had said that surgery equipment were made from Indian steel all over the world. India’s iron, steel, brick and construction industries have topped the world.

The civilization and history of India are great and known all over the world. India ruled the world markets from the Indus civilization, Gupta period to the 17th century.

The self-reliance started petering out after the entry of the British in to India. Even before that, the Moguls started squandering from India. In the later part of 18<sup>th</sup> century the mistake and injustice committed by our invaders were felt by the citizens of India. The movement from self-reliance to foreign reliance was felt and persevered for over 300 years by Indians during Moghul and British rule.

Mahatma Gandhi is christened as the architect of Swadeshi movement piloted the Salt Satyagraha and Shun foreign goods movements. However well before that happenings many other stalwarts sprung in to action since 1820. The “Proto Swadeshi between 1820-1857” the early phase 1857-1890” “the emergent phase 1890-1903” and “mass political phase 1903-1947” can be a sort of calendar of Atma Nirbhar.

In the post-independence period we had the “policy phase of 1947-1992” and the “recession phase of 1992-2016” when we were eclipsed by globalisation and revival phase since 2016.

Thanks to British rule and English education, a sizeable section of educated Indians acquired a global world view via books and visits overseas. They realized that India was one of the major civilizations in the world and the geographic spread of Hinduism, a major religion in its own right, was far bigger in the past. This shared perception led to a nationwide awakening to restore past greatness. After Independence, these people sought to regain the lost glory and in the current government now comprise the core of self-reliance is getting the importance.

Post 2014, Atmanirbhar Bharat is espoused as the priority initiative for all round growth.

Atma in Sanskrit means “I consciousness”. In a way, uttering “aham brahmasmi” is the proclamation of being Atmanirbhar. But this ideation is at the level of an individual, while Atmanirbhar Bharat is about making of a nation.

Post the relaxation of pandemic engineered curfew, the India Prime Minister Shri.Narendra Modi, launched the Self-reliant India (Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan) mission to promote Indian goods in the global supply chain markets and help the country achieve self-reliance. The mission was announced with a government allocated funds worth Rs. 20 lakh crore (US\$ 268.74 billion), which amounts to approximately 10% of India’s GDP, as a stimulus package to help recover the economy by promoting “Local for Global”, “Make in India for the World” and “Vocal for Local”.

The key objectives of the ‘Self-reliant India’ mission are as follows:

- \* Develop India into a global supply chain hub.
- \* 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 such as defence, agriculture, healthcare, infrastructure, etc. to achieve self-reliance.

The government introduced “Production-linked incentive (PLI)” scheme across 13 sectors in 2021-22 at Rs. 1.97 lakh crore (US\$ 27.02 billion), for the next five years and Rs. 40,951 crore (US\$ 5.45 billion)

for PLI in electronics manufacturing schemes. The scheme attracted even foreign enterprises such as Amazon and Apple to invest in India.

There are many other schemes covering host of sectors under the ANA initiatives.

Pradhan Mantri Atmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana (PMANSY), to strengthen 'National Health Mission' and develop capacities of primary, secondary & tertiary care and healthcare systems & institutions to detect and cure new and emerging diseases.

Infrastructure up gradation in rail and power delivery has been given a new push. The objective is to enable seamless movement of good across India so that Indian manufactures will be competitive and cost effective.

Fresh look in to development of Women entrepreneurship under the Department of Science & Technology's 'Science & Technology for Women' scheme was launched to empower women by training them in skills to set up their own microenterprises and become self-reliant.

The Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy 2020 (DPEPP 2020) highlights a framework to achieve a turnover of Rs. 1 lakh 75 thousand crore (US\$ 25 billion), including exports of Rs. 35 thousand crore (US\$ 5 billion), in the aerospace and defence goods and services by 2025. The government increased FDI limit to 74% in defence manufacturing, placed 'import embargo' on 101 military items and introduced the Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy 2020.

Ministry of Food Processing Industries has launched the 'PM Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME)' scheme to provide financial, technical and business support to upgrade the existing micro food processing enterprises.

The key achievements of the Self-reliant India is in reducing dependence on imports of air conditioners, as between October 2020 and November 2020, India reported 65% reduction in imports of split ACs or air conditioners; this bodes well for the government's 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' policy of self-reliance.

Within 60 days of the mission's launch, India's domestic producers were able to generate an indigenous supply chain of personal protective equipment (PPE) kits, demonstrating the country's self-sufficiency in PPE kits.

In January 2020, the country launched the world's largest vaccination drive with two 'Made in India' vaccines—Covaxin and Covishield—and demonstrated its determination to become self-reliant. Domestic supplies of vaccination coverage crossed 150 million. International supplies has crossed 65.5 million indigenous COVID-19 vaccines to >90 countries.

The recent government reforms, such as allowing private companies to operate in key industries, introducing agriculture initiatives & labour reforms and enabling commercial coal mining, serve as strong pillars to aid development of India's economy and present huge opportunities for the country to become self-reliant. Strong budgetary push for the manufacturing sector, MSMEs, along with supportive PLI reforms, will boost the domestic manufacturing companies and attract foreign companies to invest in the country; thereby, foster India's path to achieve self-reliance. Opportunities in micro, small, agricultural, and medium sectors were to be enhanced. It has been assumed that the same will bring substantial growth in power, coal, defence, aviation and mining. The schemes formulated are giant-steps towards the one nation one market and help India emerge as the food factory of the world also.

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