



# SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY IN PANDEMIC: AATMA NIRBHAR BHARAT

स्वदेशी अपनाएंगे भारत को आत्मनिर्भर बनायेंगे ।

**T**he plan, Aatmanirbhar intends to encourage and promote people to become self-reliant in almost every sector only then we will be able to fulfil our needs. In fact, dependence was never there in our culture. The vision of Self-reliant India is not new but from the classical point of view since ancient times as we have given priority to karma over luck. As Lord Krishna says in the 48<sup>th</sup> verse of the second chapter of the Bhagvat Geeta:

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन । मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते संगोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥

The purport of the above shloka means that *Keep on performing your duties without expecting any reward in return, leading a selfless life - this is what it is all about.* India as a whole, believes in karma and we are highly recognized in the world for our scriptures, ancient knowledge, wisdom, trade, natural resources and agriculture but we still need to organize ourselves in few sectors. While talking about self-reliance, we must not forget the Swadeshi movement led by Mahatma Gandhi way back in 1905, meaning thereby that the concept of aatmanirbharta is not new to us. During the Swadeshi movement, Mahatma Gandhi ji promoted Khadi while also wishing for our country to become self-reliant. Despite the loss of millions of lives and a big jolt to our nation as an aftermath of partition, our country withstood all the ups and downs and we, the people of India managed to retain our cultural integrity. Science and technological development came to be seen as an important tool for economic development in Independent India.

The present Government under the leadership of Narendra Modi, the first prime minister to have been born after India's independence in 1947 and the second prime minister not belonging to the Indian National Congress to have won two consecutive majorities in the Lok Sabha. His major reforms have given a lot of support to the Aatma Nirbhar Bharat. After 2014, Prime Minister Modi made a huge contribution in the field of self-reliant India. Several schemes were passed by him in this area, including, Make in India, launched on 25 September 2014, with a major objective to focus on job creation and skill enhancement in twenty-five sectors of the economy. When it comes to the development of all basic amenities in more than 500 cities with a population of more than one lakh, the Digital India scheme was brought for this so that people could connect with each other and do their business. Not only this, to give loans to small businessmen so that they can increase their business, the government has come up with the Mudra Yojna, so that today anyone can start their business for which they do not need to depend on anyone. After independence of the country, we were progressing in every field, but still, in some villages, most of the people were deprived of bank services, to connect all those people with banking services, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana was brought. In order to promote new enterprises, initiatives like Startup India inspired people so that they could be self-dependent as well as make the country self-dependent. Under the Ujjwala scheme, LPG connections were made available to BPL families at subsidized rates for every house to have gas cylinders. Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, emphasis was laid on every girl of the country to read, write and move forward. The goal of this scheme was to make girls socially and economically self-reliant through education. Along with this, Smart Cities Scheme was brought so that from 2015 to 2020, 100 selected cities of the country could be developed as Smart Cities. Initiatives like Gramoday Se Bharat Uday changed the look of India's villages today to emphasize on the development of villages for the progress of the country. Today every house has facilities like electricity, water, internet, toilets (under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan), etc. There was also a lot of emphasis on cleanliness, in which the water of the Ganga has been cleaned with the initiative like Namami Gange and also children are being made aware of cleanliness through Bal Swachta Mission. High quality generic medicines are made available at cheap prices by Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Kendra.

Today, India and the rest of the world are facing an incredibly challenging problem in the form of a corona pandemic. But now, the whole world is watching India's ability to face the issue of COVID-19, offering a quote



to turn the challenge into an opportunity. It caused devastation and tragedy for the world, it had created a difficult situation in India, it took some time but the situation was under control. Amidst the challenges, the promptness with which the Air Force and the Navy brought relief in all areas, won everyone's heart. Galloping Oxygen Express trains in the midst of the pandemic gave courage to all of us that there is a need to fight with courage, not to lose. Our Prime Minister stated, "Winners in disasters never give up; they fight hard and triumph over the circumstance." When we were all feeling down during the COVID-19 era, Our PM provided us with a glimmer of optimism. Newly constructed oxygen plants have been established in several states, demonstrating the government's commitment to everyone's safety. The construction and smooth functioning of the COVID Care Centre in the midst of enormous conditions provide optimism that the preparations to fight it are complete even if the enemy is invisible. When the second wave of COVID 19 caused a ruckus in the country, all the countries of the globe, viewing India as their family, offered their helping hand to India. There are two methods for preventing corona. Follow the Corona protocol and be vaccinated; the government has made it a priority to provide free vaccination to all citizens, and tremendous progress has been achieved in this regard. An increasing number of COVID testing and vaccination facilities and upgraded hospitals have offered security in the battle against the pandemic. In the midst of this calamity, the initiative of free rationing and free foodgrains has put a smile on the faces of people from all across India, ensuring that everyone has food to eat. The efforts made by the Indian government have persuaded citizens that "we are safe, and you are safe."

In the words of the Buddha, "No one saves us but ourselves. No one can and no one may. We must walk the path and for any nation, self-reliance is a critical milestone." "Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan" has taught people to believe in themselves; today people have a strong desire to spread all over the world the mantra of "Local to Vocal" and in this era of Corona crisis, every countryman is bringing a smile to his face and happiness to his life by making dreams come true. Land, labour, liquidity, and law have all been taken care of – to make true the dream of India being self-reliant in every sphere of life. These economic packages are for our cottage businesses, home industries, and Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), which provides a living for millions of people. The Self-Reliant India package is for the country's workers and farmers who work hard for the countrymen in every condition and season; it is for the country's middle class, which contributes to the country's growth. It stands for the Indian Industry, which is dedicated to promote India's economic growth. Only local has rescued us in times of need, and time has taught us that we must make local our life mantra. Today, Indian medicines have proved to be life saviours.

Self-reliance does not imply that we should stop importing items from any nation; rather, it implies that we must improve our quality and branding so that people choose to buy it. India's culture and customs speak of a self-sufficient India whose essence is 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.' Today, we have the greatest resources and talent in the world. If we have to rely on someone, we must also rely on our hidden talent, morale, and confidence because it makes the person self-reliant and opens the doors of success for the individual. This COVID era has been a significant challenge; the people have also battled tremendous restraint in this war. We had numerous obstacles ahead of us, but the people worked at an incredible speed. Today, we can proudly claim that it is because of the strength of our scientists that India no longer needs to rely on other countries for vaccines, and all have been effectively vaccinated using vaccines (COVAXIN) made in India. With modern infrastructure, India requires a holistic and integrated approach to infrastructure. India's first indigenous aircraft, the INS, has arrived for sea trials. Today, India manufactures its own aircrafts and is developing its own submarine. Gaganyaan also proves our ability to have an indigenous creation to let the Indian flag unfurled in space. The production link incentive has also been announced in the country in order to establish the new conditions that have emerged in India following the COVID-19 pandemic. This scheme's transformation is an example of electric manufacturing. We used to import mobile phones worth around \$8 billion seven years ago, but today we export phones worth \$3 billion. Now that the manufacturing sector has grown, we must remember that everything we create in India must be of the highest quality in order to compete on a global scale since when a product made in India is exported, it strengthens the company's as well as India's prestige.

Therefore, Honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's goal of a new India, known as the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan, or Self-reliant India campaign is indeed a tribute to Gandhi's idea of "Swadeshi". In his one-hour-and-26-minute speech, he emphasised the themes of "Aatmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India)," "Vocal for Local," and "Make in India to Make for the World." He delivered an inspiring speech announcing the Strategic Economical and Financial Package to eradicate COVID-19 pandemic in India.



## APPROACH OF AATM NIRBHAR BHARAT

Aatmnirbhar means to promote and prioritise indigenous products and ensure that these items are competitive in terms of cost and quality. It is underlined that we create our indigenous products so that the cost of production is low and the quality is high. It was implemented in India in 1980 for our workers to get technical knowledge and enhance their managerial skills. As a result, good outcomes were obtained within only two decades. Therefore, in the coming years, the success of "Aatmnirbhar Bharat Abhiyan" will depend on the approach opted by the Indian Government. As we all know, the country was put under lockdown due to a coronavirus outbreak. During this turbulent period we learnt to be self-sufficient. People prepared food packets and distributed them to the poor and needy persons. People who had spared medicines, handed them out. The owners of the vehicles donated their vehicles. People volunteered and contributed to the cause. People who used to work in the cloth industry were motivated and began producing PPE kits, and all of this labour was only feasible due to the government's strong administrative will. The government gave swift approvals and fast-tracked things followed by a single window. When it came to the vaccination, the government advised that the sample size be determined, and three vaccines were manufactured in India, COVISHIELD, ASTRAZENECA, (Serum India Institute), and COVAXIN (Bharat Biotech). Within a year, on 15 August, 2020 from the ramparts of Red Fort, our Hon'ble Prime Minister Modi Ji assured, he also kept his promise and delivered one of the safest and effective vaccinations to the people. Now, India is almost 62% vaccinated. During the pandemic, the government also created the Aarogya Setu App, which greatly helped individuals in maintaining social distance. The price has also been fixed on RTPCR & COVID-19 Antigen Tests.

In these circumstances, the country's economic position had deteriorated significantly. The government launched the Self-Reliant India programme to improve the country's economic situation. Through the Self-Reliant India campaign, many initiatives benefiting the citizens of the country were launched to improve the country's economic situation. The major goal of the self-reliant India campaign is to repair the country's economic situation so that the country's economy may return to pre-crisis levels. Therefore, our Prime Minister has launched the Self-reliant India campaign, with some of the goals being to reduce import reliance by focusing on enhancing safety compliance and quality goods to gain a global market share. The goal of this programme is also to pay and assist all employees and farmers who have suffered significant losses from the lockdown. This will benefit the poor, labourers, migrants, and others in both the organized and unorganised sectors.

## FEATURES OF AATM NIRBHAR BHARAT ABHIYAAN

The Five Pillars of Aatmnirbhar Bharat focus on Economy, Infrastructure, Technology, Vibrant Demography and Demand. The Aatmnirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan was announced with a Rs 20 lakh crore economic stimulus package to address the COVID-19 economic crisis. This package would amount to around ten per cent of India's GDP in 2019-20. It includes previously announced packages that incorporate RBI measures as well as rewards under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY). In making India "Self-Reliant", the package will focus on Land, Labour, Liquidity, and Legislation. The Union Finance Minister has also highlighted the relief measures in stages. This mission is divided into two stages, first, it will look at industries such as medical textiles, electronics, plastics, and toys to see where local production and exports may be boosted and the second phase will look at diamonds, jewellery, state-level pharmaceuticals, and steel, among other things.

## COMPONENTS

Tranche 1, under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, a relief package of Rs 1.70 lakh crore has been kept to help the poor fight the battle against COVID-19 in which health workers will be provided insurance. For the next three months, the benefit of 5 kg of wheat or rice per person was given, Women Jan Dhan account holders got Rs 500 per month and free gas cylinders were provided to poor families.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005 seeks to promote rural people's livelihood stability by offering 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to a rural family whose adult



members agree to undertake unskilled manual labour. It has come to the rescue of millions of migrants who returned to their villages due to the Corona Virus in 2020 during the lockdown. In 2019-20, 57.4 million people had sought work under this scheme. Also, MNREGA wages were increased to give benefits. The limit of collateral-free lending was increased from Rs 10 to Rs 20 lakhs for Women Self-Help Groups supporting 6.85 crore households. The Reserve Bank of India lowered the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR), resulting in an increase in the liquidity of Rs 1,37,000 crore. He also Targeted Long-Term Repo Operation (TLTRO) of Rs 1,00,050 crore for fresh deployment in investment-grade corporate bonds, commercial paper and non-convertible debentures and overnight borrowing under Marginal Standing Facility (MSF). The target has been set. RBI announced special refinance facilities to National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and the National Housing Bank (NHB) for a total amount of Rs 50,000 crores at the policy repo rate. The government extended the definition of MSMEs by modifying the investment limit on machinery or equipment and establishing a "turnover" criterion. Businesses / Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have been badly affected due to COVID19, they need additional funds to meet the operational liabilities created, buy raw material and restart the business. According to the proposal, which will necessitate legislative changes, micro-enterprises will include those with an investment of up to Rs 1 crore and a turnover of up to Rs 5 crore, while small enterprises will include those with an investment of up to Rs 10 crore and a turnover of up to Rs 50 crore. Indian MSMEs and other businesses are frequently subjected to unfair competition from foreign businesses. Therefore, there will be a ban on global tenders in government procurement tenders up to 200 hundred crores. This is a step towards Self Reliant India and supports MAKE IN INDIA.

Tranche 2 focuses on Migrant Workers, Small and Marginal Farmers, Street Vendors, and the Urban Poor. Migrants are now able to use the Public Distribution System from any Fair Price Shop in the country thanks to the "One Nation, One Ration Card" programme. The Government of India allowed state governments to use the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) to set up shelters for migrants and provide them with food and water. Hygienically prepared three meals a day were provided to the residents of Shelter for the Urban Homeless (SUH) during the lockdown from March 28, 2020. New self-help groups have also been formed for the urban poor. Earlier, migrant families could not get food in other states. But the scheme ONE NATION ONE RATION CARD enabled a migrant beneficiary to access Public Distribution System from any fair price shop in the country. Under this scheme, 67 crore beneficiaries in 23 states covering 83% of the PDS population will be covered by national portability. Migrant labour/urban poor were faced with challenges of getting houses at affordable rents during the COVID crisis. The government launched a scheme under Prime Minister Awas Yojna (PMAY) to provide ease of living at affordable rent. The Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHC), incentivizing manufacturing units, industries, institutions, associations to develop ARHC on their private land and operate and incentivizing State Government Agencies / Central Government Organizations on similar lines to develop Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHC) and operate. Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, a plan will be established to give ease of living at reasonable rent to migratory labourers/urban poor. The fixation of minimum wages was simplified, leading to lower number rates and better compliance with minimum wages. NABARD would provide extra refinancing help to Rural Co-operative Banks and Regional Rural Banks for crop loan obligations.

In Tranche 3, which focuses on Agriculture and Allied Activities, core legislation has been suggested to allow enough options for farmers to sell output at an appealing price, barrier-free inter-state trade, and a framework for e-trading of agricultural produce. Rs 30,000 crore Additional Emergency Working Capital for farmers through NABARD which extended additional re-finance support of Rs 30,000 crore over and above the Rs 90,000 already being provided for meeting crop loan requirements of Rural Cooperative Banks and RRBs. It also benefitted 3 crore farmers, mostly small and marginal. During the lockdown period, the Minimum Support Price (MSP) was purchased in an amount of more than Rs 74,300 crores. PM KISAN funds were transferred of Rs 18,700 crores and PM Fasal Bima Yojana has claimed payment of Rs 6,400 crores. During lockdown, demand for milk was reduced by 20-25% therefore, 560 lakh litres per day (LLPD) was procured by cooperatives against the daily sale of 360 LLPD. A new scheme has provided interest subvention @2% per annum to dairy cooperatives for 20-21. This scheme will unlock 5000 crore additional liquidity, which will benefit 2 crore farmers. Rs 10,000 crores scheme for Formalisation of Micro Food Enterprises (MFE) promotes a vision of our Honorable Prime Minister Modi Ji: 'Vocal for Local with Global outreach'. A Scheme has been launched to help 2 lakh MFEs in which existing micro food enterprises, Farmer Producer Organisations, Self -Help Groups and Cooperatives





are to be supported. Therefore, the expected outcomes are to improve health and safety standards, integration with retail markets and improved incomes that may also help in reaching untapped export markets in view of improved health consciousness.

Even the PM Matsya Sampada Yojana has set aside Rs 20,000 crore for fishermen. Marketing changes will be implemented to provide farmers with enough options for selling their goods at the pricing they want. From 'TOP' to TOTAL supply chains have been disrupted and farmers are not being able to sell their produce in the markets. Distress sales and reduction of the price of perishable fruits and vegetables at the farm level need to be prevented. Operation Greens will be extended from Tomatoes, Onion and Potatoes (TOP) to ALL fruits and vegetables (TOTAL)

Tranche 4, focuses on structural reforms; programmes for industrial cluster upgradation of shared infrastructural facilities and connections will be implemented in states via challenge mechanisms. A composite exploration production mining system will be put in place, with 500 open blocks granted for exploration and a foreign direct investment limit in defence manufacture set to be automated. Restrictions on the use of Indian airspace will be relaxed, making civilian flying more efficient. Some policy reforms were carried out to accelerate investment Project Development Cells in each Ministry in coordination with investors and Central/State Governments. Incentive schemes have been introduced to promote new champion sectors in areas such as solar PV generation; advanced cell battery storage; etc. Introduction of Commercial Mining in Coal Sector needs to reduce import of substitutable coal and increase self-reliance in coal production. Therefore, Government will introduce competition, transparency and private sector participation in the Coal Sector through revenue sharing mechanism instead of the regime of fixed Rupee/tonne and entry norms liberalization. 'Make in India' for self-reliance in defence production notified a list of weapons/platforms for a ban on import with a year-wise timeline. This will help reduce the huge defence import bill and also improve autonomy, accountability and efficiency in Ordnance supplies by the corporatisation of the Ordnance Factory Board. FDI limit in the defence manufacturing under the automatic route will be raised from 49% to 74%. Time-bound defence procurement process and faster decision-making will be ushered in by setting up a Project Management Unit (PMU) to support contract management and realistic setting of General Staff Qualitative Requirements (GSQRs) of weapons/platforms.

Private participation in space activities is encouraged. Indian private sector will be co-travellers in India's space field trip. It will provide equal opportunities for private companies in satellites, launches and space-based company's services. It will also provide a predictable policy and regulatory environment for private players. The private sector will be allowed to use ISRO's facilities and other relevant assets to improve capabilities and future projects for Planetary Exploration; Outer Space travel etc. Tranche 5, concentrates on MGNREGA, Ease of Doing Business, State Government Resources, Public Sectors, and so on. PSUs will be established to designate critical industries, while others will be privatized or combined. Governance is improving for ease of doing business. Globally, potential investors look at country movements Business Report (DBR) Ranking. Due to consistent measures, India's position in the World Bank has been improved. This includes streamlining other processes such as permits and clearances, self-certification and third-party certification. The government is working on mission mode on the next phase of Ease of Doing Business Reforms regarding easy registration of property, speedy disposal.

Some measures are taken to promote corporate law measures for Ease of Doing Business. The first phase of decriminalization of the Companies Act was shifted to an internal adjudication and penal mechanism. Public expenditure on health has been increased in health reforms and initiatives. Investments will be made in health institutions. Health and wellness centres will be expanded in rural and urban areas so that India is prepared for any future epidemic. Integrated Public Health Laboratories will be set up at all districts and block levels. Labs and public health units will be set up to manage the pandemic. National Institutional Platform for One health by ICMR will be encouraged or National Digital Health Mission will be implemented for National Digital Health Blueprint. Along with that it supports state governments and promotes state-level reforms. This ensured stability of excess credit through higher future GSDP growth and a lower deficit. It promoted urban development, health and sanitation. A specific scheme has been notified by the Department of Expenditure. Public Sector Enterprise Policy brought in for a new, self-reliant India. Accordingly, the government will announce a new policy notifying the list of strategic sectors requiring the presence of public sector undertakings in the public



interest. In strategic sectors, at least one enterprise will remain in the public sector but will remain in the private sector and will also be permitted. In other sectors, public sector enterprises will be privatized (depending on time feasibility etc.) and to reduce wasteful administrative costs, there will be a number of enterprises in strategic sectors.

## CHALLENGES

The majority of the measures are aimed at improving the economy's supply side. Demand stimulation is generally disregarded, which might lead to greater issues, and even basic steps to boost family consumption have not been implemented. Despite being the frontrunners in the fight against COVID-19, states have not been provided with enough funding to address this public health catastrophe. Furthermore, workers in the organized sector are suffering wage cutbacks and job losses, resulting in a significant drop in their income. Farmers are also having difficulty obtaining minimum support prices, while migrant workers and labourers are receiving little benefit from the stimulus programme.

## STEPS TO BE TAKEN

The country's economic package as it emerges from the lockdown needs a stimulus that boosts demand across the board. The easiest way to accomplish this is to invest in Greenfield infrastructure. Infrastructure expenditure, in particular, builds institutions that increase productivity and expand purchasing power to the population segment most affected by the lockout, especially daily wage labourers. In order to finance the stimulus package, India's foreign reserves have reached an all-time high, which may be strategically utilised to finance the country's requirements. The remainder may have to come from privatization, taxation, loans, and increased international assistance. Any stimulus package will fail to have a trickle-down impact unless it is accompanied by changes in a variety of areas. Thus, the Aatmanirbhar plan includes an unfinished goal of comprehensive changes that may include reforms in civil services, education, skill and labour, and so on.

## BENEFITS

Our country's current goal is to become a 5 million-dollar economy, and we are on our way to becoming Vishwaguru. PPE kits, masks, and sanitisers are manufactured in our nation; therefore we do not need to rely on any other country. At the same time, it is our ambition and strong desire to become the world's largest manufacturer in the near future. In the future years, we want our country's economy to be the best in the world. Previously, we exported weapons to manufacturers in the defence sector, but now our country is producing indigenous weapons, which provides a new route for Self-reliance in India.

Under the economic package, special consideration has been given to MSMEs, small and cottage enterprises, farmers, and taxpayers who have suffered greatly as a result of COVID 19. It enhances the local supply chain by promoting and developing locally produced items. The notion of self-sufficiency will result in increased production efficiency as well as higher quality goods and services. This will aid in the reduction of poverty and hunger, as well as the reduction of inequality, and will give millions of people the confidence to stand straight economically. Other structural reforms, such as revisions towards the Essential Commodities Act and contract farming, would go a long way towards advanced agricultural skills and increased farmer income.

## CONCLUSION:

The Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan plan appears to provide a significant supply-side push by increasing the availability of low-cost financing and helping agriculture and business sectors. The extra funding for MNREGA will aid in the gainful employment of migrants. States are now permitted to borrow up to a greater level, subject



to strict reform conditions. For the time being, demand-side stimulation via deficit financing is not being explored. However, there is no denying that there is an urgent need for demand stimulation right now. People's purchasing power must be enhanced, and there must be a rise in demand for industrial products and services. Income support for migratory workers and the urban poor is likewise a pressing issue. As a result, even with declining revenues, a more aggressive fiscal stimulus might have been tried. Several reform initiatives, such as having open additional sectors to private involvement and increasing direct investment, should be viewed as long-term structural reforms. The impact of these actions will have to be closely monitored. Therefore, the economic crisis caused by the Covid-19 epidemic is similar to the 1991 economic crisis, which signaled the beginning of a paradigm change via liberalization, privatization, and globalization. If the implementation gap is handled effectively, the post-Covid-19 age may bring in new prospects. I also pledge and strongly support being Aatmnirbhar Bharat, and before I conclude, let me recite a prayer for everyone to be united and committed to fight every challenge..” ■

**“भारत माता के लिए स्वदेशी अपनाएंगे,  
अपने देश को आत्मनिर्भर बनाएंगे।”**

*(The author received a first prize for this article submitted earlier for the Annual Essay Competition 2021.)*

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