

## RESEARCH TO KNOW AND PROPOSE TO GAUGE THE FIVE PILLARS OF ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT ABHIYAAN

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### Abstract

Self-reliance of a country can be defined as the ability of a country, including the government, civil society, and the private sector, to plan, finance, and implement solutions to solve its own development challenges<sup>[1]</sup>. India is a rich country with abundant resources but it has been relying on other countries to reach its true potential<sup>[2]</sup>. However, time has come when India has now stepped forward to overcome this redundancy and is willing to implement and promote the idea of 'self-reliant India'<sup>[3]</sup>. On 12th May, 2020, the Honorable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi announced and initiated "Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan" or "Self-Reliant India Mission"<sup>[4]</sup>. This Abhiyan aims to make India a self-sufficient independent country by primarily focusing on development in five major pillars - Economy, Infrastructure, System, Demography and Demand. This paper tries to help in the understanding of the five pillars of Atmanirbhar Bharat, how the progress in these pillars is being strategized, what metrics can aid to quantify the status of self-reliance and what is the current status of India as a self-reliant nation compared to China, Russia and Iran.

**Keywords:** Pillars of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, Self-Reliant India Mission, Self-Reliance Index

### Introduction

Many countries have set path towards Autarky. In today's era, while on one front, different nations are finding it difficult to thrive relying on their own resources, resulting in globalization to become a vital aspect for growth and development of the country, on the other front, some nations are in the on-going race to attain 'Self-Reliance'. It is not merely the availability of resources, but working internally on the pillars of self-sustainability that enables a country to

become self-sufficient. For instance, in 2015, a comprehensive strategy of “Made in China 2025”, (MIC 2025) was launched in China comprising ‘Innovation Capability’, ‘Quality and Value’, ‘IT and Industry Integration’ and ‘Green industry’, which are measured on the basis of MIC Key Performance Index.<sup>[5]</sup> The reason behind this initiative is to make China less dependent on foreign nations and become a global powerhouse. It believes that though the goals of MIC 2025 may not be accomplished completely, it will still improve their overall economic governance and at the same time make their financial, educational, healthcare and manufacturing sectors stronger.

The ‘Self-reliant India Mission’ (‘Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan’) was launched on 12th May, 2020<sup>[4]</sup>. According to the policy makers and government officials, the mission has already begun<sup>[6]</sup>. The five phases for strengthening the pillars of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan include changes made for the welfare of Medium-small-Micro enterprises (MSMEs), facilities and amenities to the poor, different yojanas like MGNREGA and Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan yojana through which employment opportunities can be generated, reforms made for agricultural sector, steps related to healthcare, technological driven systems, online education system, emphasis to Information and Technology, measures for creating business-friendly environment and amendments in the relevant laws which further enable ease of doing business<sup>[7]</sup>. The government of India, in phases has provided financial assistance to various sectors of Indian economy in order to stimulate growth and development in each of the pillars of Atmanirbhar Bharat. The five pillars of the mission are Economy, Infrastructure, System, Demography and Demand.

### **Objectives**

- i. To help in the understanding of the five pillars of Atmanirbhar Bharat and how the progress in the development of these pillars is being strategized
- ii. To find what metrics can aid to quantify the status of self-reliance and what is the current status of India as a self-reliant nation compared to China, Russia and Iran
- iii. To propose to gauge the five pillars of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan

### **The Five Pillars of Atmanirbhar Bharat**

#### **Economy**

An economy can be efficient only when the drivers of the economy have freedom to function openly. Reduction in formalities, ease of imposed regulations, promptness in registration and licensing processes help keep the economy persistent. Reforms in policies, amendments in existing laws, financial stimulus packages, creation of open investment environment are changes for a big quantum leap rather than just incremental change in the Indian economy.

Food security is a primary goal for self-sufficiency<sup>[8]</sup>. Focus on the agriculture sector, which provides livelihood to 58% of India's population, can be proved to be a huge catalyst for the Indian economy<sup>[9]</sup>. The introduction of Kisan Credit Cards, availability of farm and agricultural loans with 3 months loan moratorium, liquidity support from the state and central government are ways through which India can further boost its agricultural sector.

Recent steps to privatize activities like mining, power distribution, planetary and space explorations, ban on import of specific list of weapons and arms, increase in FDI limit from 49% to 74% for manufacturing of weapons, ease in restrictions of utilizing airspace and setup for medical research are major structural reforms introduced in India in order to boost its sagging economy<sup>[10]</sup>. Privatization and emphasis on utilization of domestic resources will assist in making the Indian economy self-reliant.

### **Infrastructure**

The pillar of infrastructure acts as the backbone of the nation. Quality infrastructure comprises swift transport facilities, good quality education and healthcare facilities, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for connectivity and provisions for uninterrupted distribution of electricity, gas, water and food supply.

Development in Information Communication Technology (ICT) and shifting towards online mode of transmission and exchange of information contributes massively towards digitalization, which facilitates a good system of networks to build better infrastructure. Development projects like Rural Development Program<sup>[11]</sup>, new Inland waterway projects<sup>[12]</sup>, on-going metro projects, installation of power grid, healthcare and medical facilities, creation of healthy logistics network for smooth transportation and distribution, are myriad plans to generate employment as well as build an infrastructure that sets the framework for a self-reliant India.

As tweeted by, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman - The Union Finance Minister of India, on 12th May, 2020<sup>[13]</sup>.

#AatmaNirbharBharat does not imply isolationism or becoming exclusionist. We'll build capacities, skill people and compete globally acquiring strengths. We'll build the #Local. After all, every global brand began with their #Local strength. We shall integrate with GVCs. @PMOIndia

— Nirmala Sitharaman (@nsitharaman) May 12, 2020

It can be interpreted that India aspires to become a self-reliant country which will not only serve its own people but also be able to honour its commitment and voice globally to resolve issues affecting the entire world.

However, as mentioned in the 1993 reports of the committee working under Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, 'technology power will raise the nation to a position of greater strength militarily and economically.' The committee gave far reaching recommendations on how to indigenously develop critical key technology as a safeguard against denials by developed countries, by creation of a ₹100 crore Defense Technology Fund. It was after 23 years that the steps have been taken to realize India's dream for self-reliance in defense technology when in 2015-2016, Mr. Arun Jaitley announced ₹100 crore fund for improvement in defense sector.<sup>[14]</sup>

The adequacy of infrastructure and its funding is thus eminent for a technology-driven system to be set up, established and operate effectively. This will define modern India

## System

In order to become self-reliant, there must exist systems that help run activities in an efficient and effective manner. The Honourable Prime Minister of India mentioned that India is in its way to establish a technological driven system<sup>[4]</sup> that will ensure transparency in governance.

Governance system for maintaining records and regulation, Taxation systems, Public Distribution system for maintenance of food security levels and strong banking networks for protected secure means of fund transfers show scope for improvement and up gradation, where the Government of India is putting efforts<sup>[7]</sup>. The successful establishment of AADHAAR

ecosystem exemplifies the on-going agenda of digitalization which paves way for a technological driven Indian administrative ecosystem. <sup>[15]</sup>

### **Demography**

India is the world's largest democracy on account of its size of population. Abraham Lincoln said "The strength of a nation lies in the homes of its people". It is relevant and essential to keep the people of the nation safe, secured and employed. People will be satisfied and active in their work and serve the country well when their basic requirements are addressed. Employment opportunities and measures for up liftment of poor and back-word class will enhance their standard of living. Through the phases of Atmanirbhar Bharat, lots of emphasis and support is ensured to the poor farmers, migrants, unskilled workers and unemployed people<sup>[7]</sup>. High wage rate policies and employment generation through projects like Jal Jeevan Mission will help increase people's earnings. Furthermore, educational scholarships and healthcare incentives promote literacy rate and decrease the mortality rate, respectively. The demographic profile of the country will become vibrant with skilled labour, educated youth and gender-unbiased workforce which is necessary for the country to become self-reliant.

### **Demand**

The Gandhian model of self-reliance suggests that a populated country like India, with majority, living in the rural and sub-urban areas, requires an economy that can be locally driven and which can serve the needs of the local people. India has a vast population that holds capacity to offer labour in exchange of income. Availability of jobs will provide people earnings and thus, enable them to spend it as per their will. As a result of their willingness and ability to pay, there will be a spike in demand for consumption of goods and services. The robust demand and increase in the production supply chain will eventually bring soothing change in the withering economy. Moreover, even the Honorable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, has mentioned in his speech that 'Demand is the strength of Indian economy' <sup>[4]</sup>. This pillar of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, if managed well is bound to increase India's efficacy towards Self-reliance.

### **Metrics for measuring progress towards Self-Reliance**

India has set sail towards self-reliance, but how can a country quantify its progress towards reaching self-reliance? In this modern era, institutions and organizations across the globe have

created several indexes in order to gauge the entities that form the basis of self-reliance. For instance, the Index of Economic Freedom<sup>[16]</sup> measures economic freedom - individual's fundamental right to work, produce, consume and invest freely in an economic society of a country. This index is given by the Heritage foundation and covers 186 countries. The Legatum Prosperity Index<sup>[17]</sup>, is another metric, that helps to measure the national prosperity of a country. It incorporates financial, judicial and political well being of a nation. A nation is said to be prosperous when it has effective institutions, an open economy, and empowered people who are healthy, educated, and safe. An index that actually helps to determine the level of self-reliance based on the commitment and capacity of the nation towards self-reliance is the USAID Self-Reliance Index<sup>[1]</sup>. It generally covers nations with low and middle-income levels.

Below is an illustration of the current status of India as a self-reliant nation as compared to China, Russia and Iran.

The data has been extracted from the USAID Self-Reliance Index database, and shows, the values of the 17 pillars on which the USAID measures the overall scores of self-reliance of the particular country. We choose here the countries which have strategized to move towards self-reliance. In the data (Table 1.) the first seven indicators help to understand the commitment of a nation towards self-reliance, in which India stands second before Russia but above China and Iran respectively. The remaining indicators help to determine the capacity of the nation to achieve self-reliance, wherein at present - India's scores are the lowest as compared to other countries. China has more capacity than Iran but less than Russia. Out of the selected countries Russia has the highest capacity score to become self-reliant. (Figure 1.)

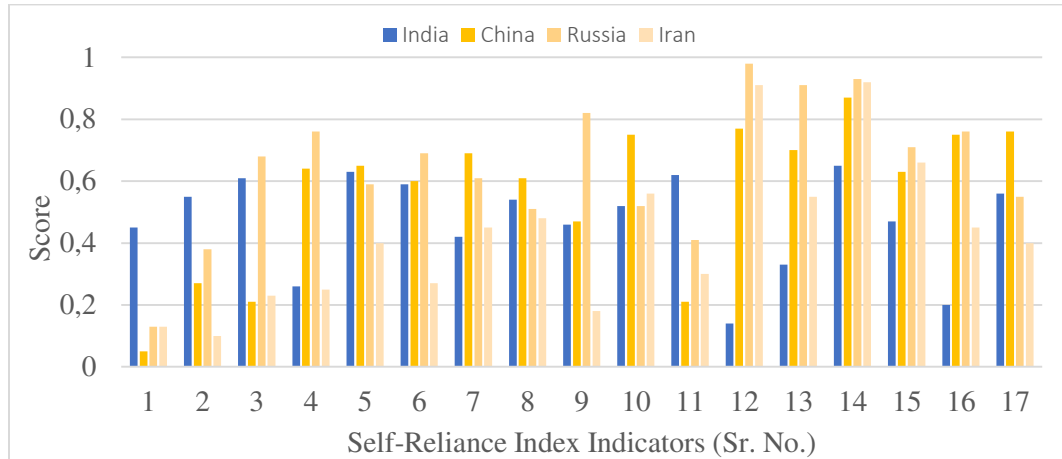


Figure1. Self-RelianceIndex Indicators' Score Comparison

Sr. No.	Metrics (Indicators)	India	China	Russia	Iran
1	Liberal Democracy	0.45	0.05	0.13	0.13
2	Open Government	0.55	0.27	0.38	0.10
3	Social Group Equality	0.61	0.21	0.68	0.23
4	Economic Gender Equality	0.26	0.64	0.76	0.25
5	Business Environment	0.63	0.65	0.59	0.40
6	Trade Freedom	0.59	0.60	0.69	0.27
7	Biodiversity and Habitat Protection	0.42	0.69	0.61	0.45
8	Government Effectiveness	0.54	0.61	0.51	0.48
9	Tax System Effectiveness	0.46	0.47	0.82	0.18
10	Safety and Security	0.52	0.75	0.52	0.56
11	Civil Society and Media Effectiveness	0.62	0.21	0.41	0.30
12	Poverty Rate (\$5/Day)	0.14	0.77	0.98	0.91
13	Education Quality	0.33	0.70	0.91	0.55
14	Child Health	0.65	0.87	0.93	0.92
15	GDP per Capita (PPP)	0.47	0.63	0.71	0.66
16	Information Communication Technology (ICT) Adoption	0.20	0.75	0.76	0.45
17	Export Sophistication	0.56	0.76	0.55	0.40

Table 1. USAID Self-Reliance Index Country Score Data

## Suggestion and Conclusion

There are other indexes such as the Human Capital Index, Environmental performance index, Global Food Security Index, Economic complexity Index, etc. which can help evaluate the level of development of individual pillars. Analogous to these global indicators, it can be suggested that India create an 'Indian Self-reliance Index' or 'Atmanirbhar Index', like the Good Governance Index<sup>[18]</sup>, that can holistically help to measure its level of self-reliance and progress. The index can help measure the changes occurring in the five pillars of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan and thereby on analysis help to determine the significant changes required in building them. The index may be utilized to gauge the intra-state prosperities or used to compare data and scores of the five pillars of Atmanirbhar Bharat emerging from different sectors of the country. The five pillars of Atmanirbhar Bharat are interconnected. Change in one pillar will eventually lead to change in another. These pillars will not only bring revolutionary change in the country but also aid in exercising of practices that will bring India a step closer to self-reliance.

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