



# The Study about Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan

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## Abstract

Atmanirbhar means 'self-reliant'. On May 12, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced in his address to the nation an economic package of Rs 20 trillion to tide over the corona virus crisis under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. He said the economic package would play an important role in making India 'self reliant' and that it would benefit laborers, farmers, honest tax payers, MSMEs and the cottage industry. He said making the country self-reliant was the only way to make 21st century belong to India. According to the government, it is not protectionist in nature. With the purview to reduce India's dependence on other countries for products, commodities, technology, food and to revive the economy shattered by COVID - 19, the Government of India had announced Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan or Self-Reliant India Mission in May 2020. This article brings into light the specifics of the scheme and the people's opinion about the same. A minor research was conducted among entrepreneurs, job seekers, retired people and students to know about their views on the scheme. The respondents are unsure if the government will be able to achieve the objective of reviving the sectors affected by COVID-19 due to unclear scheme related information; enduring pandemic and lockdown situation throughout the country; country's over dependence on foreign imports; lack of skilled labour, non-availability of infrastructure and existence of capital deficit; insider agenda and motives of the government; chances of monopoly. According to the respondents, India can become self-reliant if it manufactures mobiles, automobiles, and electronics and grow its own food, instead of importing. To conclude, India can become self-dependent, if the government concentrates on key areas like innovation, collaboration, education, governance, entrepreneurship & start -ups and take necessary steps to strengthen the same.

**Keywords:** Self-reliance, MSME, GDP, Start-ups, e-Vidhya programme.

## 1. Introduction

After Independence India was heavily dependent on the west for everything, from basic commodities like food grains to acquiring small spare parts for machineries used in industries. India's imports were more than its exports, which led to deficit in the balance of payments and huge external debt on the country. Hence, the then government, through its Five-Year Plans planned to substitute imports by encouraging manufacturing by the people of the country. The plans brought a positive effect on the GDP and the inflow of FDI. Green Revolution and Operation Flood were the initial steps in making the country Self-Reliant. In the post liberalization period, there have been improvements in foreign exchange reserves and physical infrastructure (telecommunications and roads), a stock exchange boom, IT revolution, and 8% GDP growth in 2003-04. Due

to these improvements, there was in early 2004 a feel-good factor in the form of “India Shining”. Although there were few positive indicators, the paper concluded that rural India is not shining. According to a research done in 2016, it was concluded that there was the right time by the PM to roll out the “Make in India” initiative.

**Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan or Self- Reliant India Mission** is the vision of the Prime Minister of India to make the country, a self-reliant nation. It was first mentioned on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020, when the government had announced an economic package of Rs 20 lakh crore for the people during corona virus pandemic. It primarily focuses on Economy, Infrastructure, System, Vibrant Demography and Demand. The Government aims to resume the economic activities with abundant caution in 5 phases namely Businesses including MSMEs; Poor including migrant workers and farmers; Agriculture; New Horizons of growth; Government reforms and enablers. It’s an initiative to encourage the people who are distressed by the effect of COVID- 19. However, the effectiveness of any scheme or benefit introduced or provided by the Government depends on the how well it is implemented. Hence, the scheme may become a success only if the people of the country benefit out of the scheme to the fullest. The paper aims to bring out the important aspects of the scheme, its sector wise beneficiaries, people’s opinion about the scheme, students’ opinion about the digital learning technology and the sectors through which the country can become self-reliant.

## 2. Objectives

- a) To describe the scheme with reference to its objectives, highlights & specifics of and the challenges in its implementation.
- b) To know the sector-wise beneficiaries under the scheme.
- c) To study the people’s opinions on awareness and understandability of the scheme.
- d) To check if the amount allocated is adequate and if the objectives set are achievable.
- e) To find if the monetary and non-monetary benefits offered by the Government reach the people.
- f) To understand if the country like India can become a self-reliant nation and the sector through which it can be achieved.

## 3. Methodology

Te study is based on both primary and secondary source of data. Secondary data is collected from articles, journal, newspapers, magazines, and government websites. Te primary data was collected through two structured questionnaires and telephonic interviews (when needed). One questionnaire was distributed to general public and the second questionnaire exclusively to students pursuing education in commerce. Both closed ended and open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire. Sample size was 200 respondents (100 from general public and 100 from students) randomly selected from metros, semi urban and rural areas. Sample included people who are having their own business, employed, retired, job seekers and students.

## 4. Core Outcomes

Te outcomes of the study are presented in two parts. Namely,

4.1 Nuances of the scheme which includes objectives, highlights and specifics, sector-wise beneficiaries, challenges faced by the government based on secondary data.

4.2 People's opinions based on primary data collected through questionnaire. The primary data includes the opinions, views, comments and suggestions from businessmen, people employed in organizations, retired, unemployed and students.

#### 4.1 Nuances of the scheme

##### 4.1.1 Objectives

The Government of India came up with the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan with the aim to achieve the following objectives.

- To revive the slow or dead economic activities.
- To create opportunities to ensure growth in sectors like agriculture, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), power, coal and mining, defense and aviation, etc

##### 4.1.2. Highlights of the Scheme

- Interim measures like liquidity infusion and direct cash transfers for the poor and the needy whose livelihood is severely affected because of COVID -19.
- Long term reforms for the critically affected sectors to make enable them to be globally competitive and attractive.

##### 4.1.3 Specifics of the Schemes

The following are the reforms announced under Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan that relate to primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. Primary Sector: The measures include reforms to amend ECA, APMC, and Contract Farming etc and mitigate the issues in agricultural marketing. To name a few: Announcement of Rs 1 lakh crore funds to finance agriculture infrastructure projects. Allocation of Rs 500 crore to extended "Operation Greens" which includes Tomatoes, Onion and Potatoes (TOP) to ALL fruits and vegetables (TOTAL). Allow farmers to sell their products to anyone, outside the APMC Mandy yard and creating a legal framework for contract farming. Infusion of Rs 40,000 crore through MNREGA to alleviate the distress of migrants when they return to their villages Secondary Sector: Since MSME sector is the second largest employment generating sector in India, the following policies would sustain the labour-intensive industries and leverage India's comparative advantage. Rs 3 lakh crore collateral-free loan facility for MSMEs to help this finance-starved sector Limiting imports of weapons and increasing the limit of foreign direct investment in defense from 49% to 74% and reduce India's huge defense import bill. Tertiary Sector: Policies to enable schools and universities to stream courses online and improve health institutions. Launch of "PM e-Vidhya programme" for multi-mode access to digital online education which provide a uniform learning platform for the whole nation. Increase of Public expenditure on health by investing in grass root health institutions and ramping up health and wellness centers in rural and urban areas.

##### 4.1.4 Sector-wise beneficiaries

| S. No. | Sector        | Percentage | Allocation |
|--------|---------------|------------|------------|
| 1      | FMCG          | 16.20%     | 81000      |
| 2      | Healthcare    | 13.50%     | 67500      |
| 3      | Technology    | 12.20%     | 61000      |
| 4      | Financial     | 11.70%     | 58500      |
| 5      | Communication | 08.50%     | 42500      |
| 6      | Services      | 07.30%     | 36500      |
| 7      | Chemicals     | 07.20%     | 36000      |
| 8      | Energy        | 06.50%     | 32500      |
| 9      | Cons Durable  | 05.70%     | 28500      |
| 10     | Construction  | 04.70%     | 23500      |
| 11     | Automobile    | 04.00%     | 20000      |

|              |        |             |               |
|--------------|--------|-------------|---------------|
| 12           | Metals | 01.50%      | 7500          |
| 13           | Other  | 01.00%      | 5000          |
| <b>Total</b> |        | <b>100%</b> | <b>500000</b> |

Source: Capital via Global Research Limited

#### 4.1. 5 Challenges

Though the scheme looks appealing it is open to criticisms for its shortcomings. **Liquidity:** Te package of Rs 20 lakh crore are to be transmitted by RBI to Banks and Banks to Citizens. This transmission wouldn't be as smooth and easy owing to inefficient transmission of monetary policy. **Lack of Demand:** Te monetary package announced relies excessively on credit infusion to boost the economy but it has failed to recognize that investment will pick up only when people across income segments have money to spend since the lockdown has lowered aggregate demand and a fiscal stimulus is needed and not just a credit infusion. **Lack of Backward and Forward Linkages:** There should be a revival of the entire domestic economy and not just the MSME sector. Else MSME may face a shortage of demand, and its production may soon sputter to a close.

**Escalating Fiscal Deficit:** Government claims that the stimulus package is around 10% of India's GDP but government needs to find how it will contain the fiscal deficit that is going to arise with the package announced. Though the Government seeks to this invest to finance the stimulus package, majority of Indian industries already are debt-laden and face difficulty in borrowing from foreign markets as the value of Rupee is all time low. Lack of confidence among corporate and the package focuses more on indirect benefits, with a major emphasis on loan disbursement but they would have welcomed direct benefits like cash support and pause or reduction in the GST payments.

**Higher NPAs:** With the announcements of unsecured and collateral free loans to MSMEs might lead to default by companies thereby increasing NPAs.

**Less competitive:** Economists and Industrialists feel making the equipment and industrial inputs in India might lead to making the industries and its manufactures less competitive. As the schemes introduced by the government for industrial protection in the previous year do not actually support the same.

**4.2 People's opinions about the scheme:** In order to understand the effectiveness of the scheme, a minor research was conducted using a structured questionnaire. Te data was collected from 100 respondents using Google forms. The results of the study are based on the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

**The table 4.2.1** shows the percentage analysis of the demographics of the respondents. It is found that 56% of the respondents are female, unmarried (63%), belonging to the age- group less than 25 years (51%), employed (44%) and living in metro cities (67%).

**Table: 4.2.1 Demographics**

| Demographics   | Items                 | Percentage |
|----------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Gender         | Female                | 56         |
|                | Male                  | 44         |
|                | Demographics Below 25 | 51         |
| Age (in years) | 26-50                 | 35         |
|                | More than 50          | 14         |
| Marital status | Married               | 37         |
|                | Single                | 63         |
| Occupation     | Own business          | 30         |
|                | Employed              | 54         |

|               |            |    |
|---------------|------------|----|
|               | Retired    | 07 |
|               | Job seeker | 09 |
| Place of stay | Metro city | 67 |
|               | Semi urban | 21 |
|               | Rural      | 12 |

**Table: 4.2.2 Opinion on the scheme**

| Opinion on the scheme                       | Response   | Percentage |
|---|------------|------------|
| Awareness                                   | Yes        | 61         |
|   | No         | 39         |
| Adequate amount allocated                   | Yes        | 67         |
|   | No         | 30         |
| Objective can be achieved                   | Not sure   | 03         |
|   | Yes        | 28         |
| Monetary benefits reach the needy           | No         | 32         |
|   | Not Sure   | 40         |
|   | Very often | 02         |
|   | Often      | 07         |
|   | Neutral    | 36         |
| Non-Monetary benefits reach the needy       | Sometimes  | 43         |
|   | Never      | 12         |
|   | Very often | 06         |
|   | Often      | 10         |
|   | Neutral    | 27         |
| Possibility of India to become self-reliant | Sometimes  | 38         |
|   | Never      | 19         |
|   | Yes        | 37         |
|   | No         | 12         |
|   | Maybe      | 51         |

**The Table 4.2.2** reveals that 61% of the respondents are aware of the scheme “Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan” and 67% feel the amount allocated towards the same is adequate. Majority of the respondents say that the monetary (43%) and non-monetary benefits (38%) provided by the government reach the people who are actually in need only at times. 51% are uncertain that India can become self-reliant in future. 40% are not sure if the government will be able to achieve the objective of reviving the sectors affected by COVID-19. The reasons are unclear scheme related information; enduring pandemic and lockdown situation throughout the country; country’s over dependence on foreign imports; lack of skilled labour, non-availability of infrastructure and existence of capital deficit; insider agenda and motives of the government; chances of monopoly. The respondents also feel the scheme can worsen the existing economic conditions. 28% feel the scheme can achieve the objectives for which it was announced if the citizens of the country cooperate; with honesty and dedication on part of the administrators; lack of corruption. According to the respondents, India can become self-reliant if it manufactures mobiles, automobiles, electronics and grow its own food, instead of importing. Majority of the respondents feel local farmers should be encouraged and impose restrictions on imports of food. In the automobile sector, small parts can be manufactured by MSMEs, assembled in big industries, thereby providing an employment opportunity to the unemployed youth. Also, when the ultimate consumers take a stand to buy and use products produced/manufactured by the domestic markets, self-reliance can be achieved quickly.

The government has also included the education sector in the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan by coming up with the “PM e-Vidhya programme” for multi-mode access to online education. Hence, it is necessary to

understand the views of the students who are directly related to the programme. In this regard, a minor study was conducted using a structured questionnaire among 100 college students, using Google forms. The results of the study are based on the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

**From the Table 4.2.3**, we understand that 67% of the student respondents are not aware of the e-Vidhya programme initiated by the Government. Majority (87%) of the students feel the remote learning which has emerged in full swing is very useful. More than the half the sample are unsure of whether adequate amount is allocated towards the programme. Nearly 50% feel India can be a self-reliant nation. Though more than 75% find online teaching and learning useful during this pandemic, there are challenges that they encounter. The Challenges include network and power issues, inability to concentrate continuously for long duration, innumerable distractions like advertisement pop ups during the study, lack of physical classroom set up, inability to learn anything with clarity, lack of understanding of concepts to the fullest, lack of awareness and past experience in using technology and heavy work load on part of students in which they are not trained or used to. Students also feel it affects their health as they are frequently prone to pain in the eyes, headaches and mental stress. Though they feel it's a new learning experience; it is also an additional burden on the family, which is already facing financial crisis due to lockdown. According to the students, teachers have adapted well to the change which is really a positive sign for a better teaching learning environment.

**Table: 4.2.3 Students Opinion**

| Particulars                                 | Items         | Percentage |
|---|---------------|------------|
| Year of Study                               | I             | 5          |
|   | II            | 45         |
|   | III           | 50         |
| Awareness of e-Vidhya programme             | Yes           | 33         |
|   | No            | 67         |
| Remote Learning during lockdown is useful   | Yes           | 87         |
|   | No            | 13         |
| Level of usefulness of remote learning      | Useful        | 46         |
|   | Neutral       | 44         |
|   | Waste of time | 01         |
|   | Very Useful   | 09         |
|   | Not useful    | Nil        |
| Adequate amount allocated                   | Yes           | 32         |
|   | No            | 08         |
|   | Maybe         | 60         |
| Possibility of India to become self-reliant | Yes           | 47         |
|   | No            | 37         |
|   | Maybe         | 16         |

According to the student community, India can become a self-reliant nation by bringing developments in technology, infrastructure, imparting skills rather just degrees, resurgence of entrepreneurship and by reducing India's dependence on other countries which can be achieved only when citizens start buying products and commodities of the domestic market.

## 5. Implications of the study

India can become more dependent on it, if the government concentrates on the following key areas and take necessary steps to strengthen the same. They are namely, innovation, collaboration, education, governance, entrepreneurship & start -ups, student community.

**Innovation, Collaboration & Education:** To achieve self-reliance, the country will need to encourage innovation, research and development to keep India at the cutting edge of the industry. These can be achieved either through the setting up of global innovation centers in India or through partnerships between leading Indian research and academic institutions and their global counterparts. While the seeds of such collaboration already exist in the form of the NASA-ISRO partnership and joint vaccine development efforts for Covid-19, these ties should be enhanced across institutions and fields. The success of “self-reliance” lies in the effectiveness of collaboration, India achieves through its bilateral relations, especially with American and European countries.

**Governance:** Governance and policy issues will also need attention as India seeks to carry on improving its ‘ease of doing business’ climate. Heavy investment on technology in government procedures and bureaucracy is a long overdue necessity that can’t be overlooked. Building world-class infrastructure is extremely critical, and this requires huge investments. A strong framework for collaboration (e.g. contracting) and financing such investments needs to be established. A cultural shift is required in the public sector and bureaucracy to avoid the constant distrust-whether it is towards private organizations or the public at large. While public-private partnerships are a step in the right direction, the success of such partnerships needs to be more widespread.

**Role of Entrepreneurship & Start-up:** Start-ups can change the world and in coming years it will grow more with innovation and creativity. Entrepreneurship is the only way to enhance the economic growth of a nation. A small idea can become a big innovative solution which can change the future and help in the economic growth of a nation in the following ways.

- a) **Creation of jobs** -The start-ups have introduced latest technologies like Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, and Robotics etc. Most of the technology giant companies outsource their tasks to start-ups now days thereby helping to increase its cash flows.
- b) **Creation of wealth** - Entrepreneurs are attracting investors as they are investing their own resources. The people of the nation benefit when start-ups grow and since the money is shared in the society, wealth is being created within the nation.
- c) **Better standard of living** - Start-ups can implement innovations and technologies to improve the living of people. Also, there are many start-ups which work in rural areas to develop the community.
- d) **Increase in GDP** - Gross Domestic Products plays a vital role in enhancing the economic growth of a country. According to World Bank, India will become the fastest growing country. By supporting and encouraging more start-ups, it is possible to generate more revenue domestically and consumer’s capital will also flow around the Indian economy.

### **Contribution from the Student Community/ Youth**

Young people can contribute to the nation by becoming responsible buyers. They can support the domestic traders by buying their products instead of demanding for foreign products. They can explore possibilities for entrepreneurship that they can take up after graduation, thereby generating jobs for self and others, rather than depending on the governments for employment opportunities.

## **6. Conclusion**

Government of India has taken steps to recover the nation from the ill-effects of Covid-19 and the economic downcast which is the result of lockdown. But, the effectiveness of any scheme or benefit introduced or provided depends on how well it is implemented. Hence, government should ensure to achieve the objectives for which it has framed the schemes. Also, India can become more dependent on it, if the government concentrates on the key areas like innovation, collaboration, education, governance, entrepreneurship & start -ups and take necessary steps to strengthen the same. India is supporting and encouraging start-ups to stand up for developing the nation with the announcement of schemes for promoting start-ups. Start-up India Schemes are

helping many budding entrepreneurs to make their dreams come true and also creating jobs for others. And we hope, India becomes self-reliant, slowly yet steadily and with the schemes announced by the Government of India.

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