



Self-Reliant India: The Vision of Madan Mohan Malviya

Saurabh Kumar Maurya¹

University of Lucknow, Lucknow, U.P. India

Abstract

In the context to India the philosophy of Mahamana's has an important role in the development of the Indian economy and also in the betterment of the education. Malaviya's focuses on emphasis on economic independence and their efforts to increase domestic production which helps in self-reliance India. It also highlights the importance of economic self-sufficiency and the need for development to boost growth. A mild attempt has been done to show that he not only envisaged the revival of the past but also the idea of merging with modern science and technology to make India an economically and progressive strong country in terms of inclusive growth. It aims to offer important perspectives on fostering and improving India's self-sufficiency by examining guidelines for policies and initiatives. This research paper explores the path to self-reliance in India by analyzing the vision of Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, highlighting the importance of sustainable progressive development combined with modern technology to establish India as an economically robust nation.

Keywords: economic independence, Inclusive growth, self-reliant, self-sufficiency.

Introduction

Nations like India emerged as independent and sovereign entities, taking pride in their own capabilities and committing to eliminate the burden of dependence. Thus, "self-reliance" became a crucial element of this commitment and a fiercely protected principle of independence. This is why a national consensus emerged around the objective of self-reliance. As early as 1940, the National Planning Committee of the Indian National Congress highlighted the significance of self-reliance and "planning" for the independent economic development of India.

¹ Research Scholar, Department of Economics, University of Lucknow
Phone No. – 8009907677
Email Id- sm8626361@gmail.com

It acknowledged the nascent state of Indian industry and the necessity to shield it from foreign competition; it also recognized the vital role that the government should and could play in facilitating swift industrial and agricultural progress (Baru 1983).

Self-Reliance

India aimed to achieve self-reliance by reducing imports and producing essential goods within its own borders. Although this approach promoted self-sufficiency, it also resulted in constraints concerning the availability of financial and intellectual resources. Additionally, it sought to leverage India's demand potential and align it with local supply. The goal was to change India from a passive market into a dynamic manufacturing center central to global value chains. The requirement was to establish local production, meet local needs, and create efficient local supply chains. India rose to this challenge by committing to becoming 'Self-reliant' and, in the process, also made contributions on a global scale in the form of inclusive growth which refers to economic development that generates job opportunities and contributes to alleviating poverty. It entails ensuring that the underprivileged have access to crucial services in health and education. It encompasses offering equal chances, empowering individuals through education and skill enhancement.

In other terms, it was understood quite evidently even prior before India's attained independence, the government would need to take on a significant role in the economic development agenda, which would focus on "self-reliance." This indicated that the two main aspects of economic development in post-independence India, as envisioned even at the threshold of independence, were "self-reliance and mixed economy." It was the diverse group of individuals who established the "national consensus," and the shared trait that defined them all was their varying degrees of nationalism. Their underlying nationalism, coupled with their commitment to swift economic progress for different reasons, enabled them to reach the national consensus and Mahatma was one of them.

Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya was born on December 25, 1861, in Allahabad to a Brahmin family. He was one of eight siblings in his family, with parents Meena Devi and Pandit Baijnath. At the age of five, he began his early education at a Mahajani school. Following that, he attended a religious school led by Haradevaji. He continued his studies by enrolling in the newly established Government High School in 1868. He graduated from Muir Central College in 1879 and obtained his B.A. from Calcutta University in 1884. Soon after, he took up a teaching position at a school in the Allahabad district, earning a salary of Rs. 40 per month.

He was an extraordinary leader whose important contributions to India's political, social, and educational fields are frequently neglected in mainstream historical accounts. Malaviya had a variety of talents and served as a social reformer, educator, writer, speaker, esteemed lawyer, and notable political figure. His education in a traditional Sanskrit institution significantly shaped his principles, giving him a strong foundation in ethics, morals, and advanced thinking. Despite his connections with royalty, landowners, and industrialists, he remained committed to fairness and constitutional governance. Malaviya understood the vital role of economic independence in achieving true national sovereignty and consistently encouraged the public to buy self-produced Indian goods.

By emphasizing the importance of supporting local enterprises, he recognized that political freedom could not be fully attained without economic self-reliance.

Review of Literature

Baru (1983) emphasizes that nations like India became independent, sovereign entities, taking pride in their own capabilities while committing to eliminate the burden of dependence. Thus, "self-reliance" became a key component of this commitment and a fiercely protected ideal of independence. For this reason, a national consensus on the objective of self-reliance in India emerged. It recognized the early development of Indian industry and the importance of protecting it from foreign competition and recognized the vital role the government could and should play in facilitating swift industrial and agricultural development.

Ghosh (1992) highlights that India is primarily an agricultural nation and that its foreign trade constitutes a minor portion of its GDP. One must interpret the idea of self-reliance in a way that exports fulfill all our imports, both tangible and intangible, and a return to economic stability. The people of India should concentrate on achieving self-reliance.

Aradhna (2022) highlights that India has initiated a journey towards self-reliance, albeit without a clear roadmap. The necessity to clarify this concept is highlighted, suggesting that achieving self-reliance entails the development of new productive capabilities based on export potential rather than domestic production. It is recommended that India formulates a comprehensive export strategy that includes a vision, objectives, and targets, incorporating input from the industry for both export development and promotional efforts. Lastly, she underscores the vital importance of positioning international competitiveness at the forefront of the government's narrative on self-reliance.

Jha (2022) highlights that the Mahamana and mahatma were the two main heroes of Indian public life in development through different paths. As Gandhi was impressed by the Mahamana as the fact that of his ideology and work in the movement of swaraj and use of our own khadi products and leading to growth of our own products which is been producing in India. They both supported the movement of non-cooperation and boycott of the foreign good and promoting the Indian ones by adding all class of the society in growth of nation to the main stream of the population.

Mishra (2024) says that Malviya ji actively participated in the Swadeshi movement, advocating for the use of locally made Indian goods and products. He recognized that the growth of industry and economic development could be achieved by reducing imports and promoting exports. Mahamana significantly contributed to the development of Indian industries and encouraged the establishment of new entrepreneurial ventures by securing funding sources. The founding of Punjab National Bank exemplifies Mahamana's vision to bolster Indian industries. He also promoted policies aimed at protecting Indian industries, including tariffs and protective measures. Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya was critical of policies that were detrimental to Indian industries while favoring British industrial interests.

Objective

This research paper examines the perception of Madan Mohan Malviya's on the economic development emphasizing their economic philosophy and promoting as a means of achieving economic self-reliance for the Indian economy.

Methodology

This research paper employs a qualitative methodology centered on an extensive review of secondary data to assess examines the perception of Madan Mohan Malviya's on the economic development emphasizing their economic philosophy and achieving self-reliance for the Indian Economy. By conducting a thorough analysis of relevant literature, including peer-reviewed journals, research papers, and official reports, the study aims to map the current landscape of self-reliance in India. The research methodology involves a detailed examination of data sources from academic databases, government publications, and reports from international and local organizations. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of economic development and inclusive growth through self-reliance in India.

Malviya Economic Vision

For about sixty years, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya controlled Indian public life. His life was a brilliant illustration of selflessness, service, and duty-driven commitment. The improvement of the people, their well-being, and their overall advancement and prosperity were the subjects of his dreams. He was deeply troubled by the widespread poverty, the illiteracy and backwardness of the populace, the anguish and sufferings of regular people, and the evils plaguing the nation, and he dedicated his life to improving the lot of his fellow citizens. There is a misperception that Malviya's beliefs were regressive because he adhered to Sanatan Dharma, but in reality, he was widely considered a man of profound religious principles. This essay is a meek attempt to demonstrate that he was a positive utopian who envisioned not only the resuscitation of the past but also its integration with contemporary science and technology to create a forward-thinking and economically powerful India. His views on different factors which helps India to become self-sufficient and self-reliance. His interest in the economic development of India was as deep as his other interests, though he was no financial expert like Naoroji, Vacha, Gokhale etc. He could talk about the huge losses India suffered because of British economic policies. He realized that "finance is not just arithmetic. Finance is big politics." Without sound financing, the impossible government is impossible; Without a sound government, no sound finances are possible.

Mahamana has frequently underlined the significance of economic success for a country in his extensive publications. His assertion that "one of the abstract principles that had been established in the industrial world was to look at problems from a national point of view and not to have a parochial and small commercial man's point of view" exemplifies his progressive economic outlook.

As Malaviyaji has frequently mentioned, his economic thought was impacted by the works of nationalists like Naoroji, Dutt, and Ranade as well as by John Stuart Mill, Hyndman, and Digby. Important topics like Indian

benefits or losses from British control and how to make India affluent were hotly debated. He played a key role in the British government's encouragement of British enterprises in India at the expense of native ones, which enriched the wealthy and plunged the poor into extreme poverty. Dissatisfaction among the educated middle classes and distress among the impoverished parts were caused by it. To put it briefly, the government's actions were viewed as harmful to India's economic growth. The revival and growth of the Indian economy, which the British government had turned into a target for exploitation, was the main focus of Malaviyaji's economic theory.

Reduction in India's Economic Performance

Malaviyaji made numerous helpful suggestions in his 1918 note of dissent about the Indian Industrial Commission, allowing India to grow its industries for its own benefit. He claimed that government policies, not a lack of industrial potential or entrepreneurial spirit among the populace, were the reason India had transformed from an industrial and agrarian nation to an agricultural one. Malaviyaji used a number of sources to demonstrate that, although the cotton textile industry in Britain did not begin until the 17th century, India had trading links with Babylon as early as 3000 BC and Indian Mulmul had a monopoly market in Egypt and Greece over 2,000 years ago. India was even better at forging and producing iron and steel, and Indian steel was used to make the renowned Damishk Swords. In the end, the British traders used political oppression to silence a rival that they could never have met fairly. He echoed Sir Fredrick Nicholson's statement as a member of the Indian Industrial Commission: "I beg to record my strong opinion that in the matter of Indian Industries, we are bound to consider Indian interest firstly, secondly, and thirdly—by which I mean "firstly" that the profits of such industries should remain in the country, "secondly" that industries should be introduced, and "thirdly" that the local raw products should be used.

Agrarian Economy and Self-Reliance

The agrarian economy, self-reliance, and the Swadeshi movement in India are interlinked concepts that collectively promote sustainable development and economic independence. The agrarian economy, which forms the backbone of rural livelihoods, is essential for ensuring food security and enhancing rural incomes. The self-reliance initiative, or "Atmanirbhar Bharat," builds on this foundation by encouraging domestic production and minimizing dependency on imports. This aligns with the Swadeshi ethos, which advocates for the use of local resources and products to foster self-sufficiency and empower communities. Together, these principles aim to revitalize the agricultural sector, promote local industries, and create a resilient economy that honors India's heritage while addressing contemporary challenges. Madan Mohan Malviya, a prominent nationalist leader and educationist, envisioned an agrarian economy that prioritized rural development and self-sufficiency. He advocated for the upliftment of farmers and the promotion of indigenous industries, aligning closely with the Swadeshi movement's emphasis on using local resources and goods. Malviya believed that economic self-reliance was essential for India's independence, arguing that a strong agrarian base would empower rural communities and reduce dependency on foreign products.

In the current scenario, Malviya's vision finds relevance in initiatives like "Atmanirbhar Bharat," which focuses on enhancing agricultural productivity, promoting sustainable practices, and supporting small farmers through technology and financial aid. There is also a renewed interest in organic farming and local handicrafts, reflecting the Swadeshi ethos. Efforts to improve rural infrastructure and market access further echo Malviya's commitment to self-reliance and the development of an equitable agrarian economy, aiming to uplift the rural populace and foster sustainable growth.

Madan Mohan Malviya recognized that the dire economic conditions of the rural population stemmed from the decline of local industries and oppressive British land revenue systems. He advocated for a reduction in land taxes and improved irrigation infrastructure, emphasizing the need for water storage through tanks and wells over canals. Malviya also supported free trade of grains to alleviate poverty and proposed the establishment of organizations to purchase grains directly from farmers, selling them at affordable prices. He called for increased credit access for farmers and the inclusion of tenant representatives in legislative bodies to protect their interests. Malviya's vision for an agrarian economy focused on self-sufficiency and local resource use aligns with today's initiatives like "Atmanirbhar Bharat," which aims to boost agricultural productivity, support small farmers, and promote sustainable practices, reflecting his enduring influence on rural development and economic independence in India.

Industrialization and Self-Reliance

Industrialization in India has historically been intertwined with the concepts of self-reliance and the Swadeshi movement. The Swadeshi movement, initiated in the early 20th century, emphasized the use of indigenous goods and the boycott of British products as a form of economic resistance. Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi advocated for the revival of local industries, such as handloom and handicrafts, to promote self-sufficiency and empower rural communities. Self-reliance, or "Atmanirbhar Bharat," has become a contemporary mantra for economic policy, encouraging domestic production across various sectors, including manufacturing and agriculture. This initiative seeks to reduce dependency on imports and stimulate local industries, aligning with the goals of the Swadeshi movement.

Today, India's industrialization efforts focus on fostering innovation, promoting small and medium enterprises, and enhancing infrastructure. By prioritizing local resources and capabilities, India aims to build a robust economy that honors its historical commitment to self-reliance while adapting to modern global challenges. This synergy of industrialization, self-reliance, and the Swadeshi spirit continues to shape India's economic landscape. Madan Mohan Malviya envisioned industrialization as a crucial driver for India's economic self-reliance and development. He advocated for the promotion of indigenous industries and the Swadeshi movement, emphasizing the importance of using local resources and goods to empower the Indian populace and reduce dependency on foreign products. Malviya believed that a strong industrial base, alongside a thriving agrarian economy, would uplift rural communities and stimulate overall economic growth.

In the current scenario, Malviya's vision resonates with initiatives like "Atmanirbhar Bharat," which aims to boost domestic manufacturing, encourage innovation, and enhance the capabilities of small and medium enterprises. There is a growing emphasis on promoting local industries, sustainable practices, and self-sufficiency in various sectors, including textiles, agriculture, and technology. This contemporary focus on self-reliance reflects Malviya's ideals, aiming to build a robust economy that honors India's heritage while addressing modern challenges and fostering sustainable growth.

Importance of Swadeshi

The main objective of the Swadeshi movement was to improve the country's economic situation. It was spearheaded by a proactive nationalist who emphasized the necessity of adopting a self-reliant and self-sacrificing approach. He understood that while consumers might experience short-term savings, they would ultimately become dependent on foreign products, resulting in exploitation by overseas manufacturers. He strongly believed that the strengthening of the rupee harmed local trade and industry, as well as farmers who received lower prices for their goods. He advocated for a gold-based currency, arguing it would lead to higher wages for workers, better returns for farmers, and the advancement of local industries. He also urged for government regulation of the nation's credit and currency, acknowledging its profound influence on the economy. This leader held a deep appreciation for Indian philosophy and values, drawing from the "Isha Upanishad" the idea that "Knowledge is wealth, knowledge is power." His philosophy encouraged a balanced approach to development, promoting a virtuous lifestyle free from scarcity and poverty. He endorsed industrial growth, viewing it as crucial for India's economic revival, and highlighted the pressing need for scientific and technical education in the country. As part of this initiative, a national university was founded in Banaras to train skilled technical, scientific, and engineering professionals to aid in industrial progress.

While mainly addressing the concerns of farmers, he also believed that the government should safeguard the rights of industrial workers, ensuring fair wages, safe working conditions, and protection against poverty, illness, and job loss. He was against labor strikes, viewing them as harmful to both the public and labor interests, yet acknowledged the labor's right to strike to protect their rights. This reflects his commitment to both the workforce and the nation's economy. His views resonated with ancient Indian principles that advocate respect for all life and the importance of considering every individual's well-being. This philosophy aligns closely with the ideas of non-violence and common ownership of resources, showing a connection to socialist principles. He promoted state oversight of essential industries and a socio-political framework rooted in justice to encourage economic progress. His economic philosophy centered on national welfare, with the betterment of the common person at its core. His vision is even more relevant today in a knowledge-driven global economy, where countries are adopting strategies that promote innovation and access to advanced knowledge. He envisioned the blend of modern technologies with local methods to address the country's unique needs, aspiring to achieve advancement and prosperity for the nation.

Current Scenario of The Self-Reliance in India

The current scenario of self-reliance in India is robustly supported by the "Atmanirbhar Bharat" initiative, which aims to foster economic independence and reduce reliance on imports, echoing Madan Mohan Malviya's vision of promoting indigenous industries and empowering local communities. Malviya believed that a strong agrarian base coupled with vibrant local industries was essential for national prosperity. This vision is reflected in contemporary policies that emphasize domestic manufacturing, agriculture, and sustainable development. Key schemes underpinning this initiative include the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, designed to incentivize domestic manufacturing across critical sectors like electronics, pharmaceuticals, and textiles. The PLI aims to attract significant investments, with projections indicating that it could generate \$100 billion in production over the next five years. Additionally, the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi provides direct financial support to over 12 crore farmers, offering ₹6,000 annually to enhance their income and promote agricultural self-reliance. The MUDRA Yojana, launched in 2015, has disbursed over ₹3 lakh crore to micro-entrepreneurs, facilitating self-employment and empowering small businesses. This aligns with Malviya's advocacy for accessible credit to farmers and entrepreneurs, reducing dependency on local moneylenders. Moreover, the Skill India Mission aims to enhance the skill sets of the workforce, ensuring that individuals are equipped to contribute effectively to local industries and the economy. In terms of agricultural productivity, India has achieved record harvests of staples like rice and wheat, significantly improving food security. The country's manufacturing sector recorded an impressive growth rate of approximately 9% in FY 2022-23, driven by a resurgence in demand post-pandemic and supportive government policies. Additionally, India has set ambitious targets for renewable energy, aiming for 500 GW of capacity by 2030, which will further enhance energy independence and sustainability. Malviya's vision for self-reliance is not only about economic independence but also about fostering a sense of pride in local production and capabilities. The current push towards self-reliance encompasses a holistic approach that includes infrastructure development, financial inclusion, and sustainable practices, reflecting his enduring influence on India's economic landscape. By prioritizing local industries and empowering rural communities, India aims to build a resilient economy that honors its heritage while adapting to contemporary challenges, ultimately realizing Malviya's dream of a self-sufficient and prosperous nation.

Conclusion

Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya deserves greater recognition in the history of modern India. As a founding member of the Hindu Mahasabha and a four-time president of the Indian National Congress, he envisioned a prosperous, self-reliant India, particularly in terms of economic development. His commitment to education is exemplified by the establishment of Banaras Hindu University, a premier institution that continues to cultivate talent essential for the nation's growth. Malviya was a strong proponent of the Swadeshi movement, advocating for national self-sufficiency through domestic production. He understood that India's large population required a focus on local manufacturing, as reliance on imports would not suffice to meet its needs. This vision is increasingly relevant today, linking the agrarian economy with the industrial sector. While agriculture remains a cornerstone of India's

economy, the industrial sector must enhance its role in supporting local production to achieve true self-reliance. Currently, the agrarian economy faces significant challenges, including fluctuating prices and the impacts of climate change. However, there is a growing awareness and movement towards sustainable agricultural practices that can bolster resilience and productivity. Simultaneously, the industrial sector is responding to global competition by emphasizing innovation and supporting local enterprises. This synergy between agriculture and industry aligns with the Swadeshi movement's principles, promoting self-sufficiency and the development of local industries. The resurgence of the Swadeshi movement's ideals has fostered positive momentum towards self-reliance, encouraging policies that prioritize local production and consumption. This is evident in government initiatives aimed at promoting Make in India and supporting small and medium enterprises. To realize Malviya's vision of a self-reliant India, it is essential for the government to decentralize its approach, focusing on rural communities and marginalized populations. By implementing environmentally sustainable practices, India can enhance its potential for self-sufficiency on a global scale. This holistic approach not only honors Malviya's legacy but also fosters a resilient economy capable of thriving in the contemporary world.

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