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Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan: (A Deep Dive into Challenges and Questions)

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Abstract: ***The Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, or the Self-Reliant India Campaign, is an ambitious initiative launched by the Indian government to make the nation more self-sufficient and reduce its import dependency. The program was introduced in May 2020 after the COVID-19 pandemic, this strategic vision seeks to boost various sectors, including agriculture, technology, and manufacturing, with the broader objective of transforming India into a global economic powerhouse. However, despite its ambitious goals, the implementation of Atmanirbhar Bharat faces significant challenges, including infrastructural limitations, technological gaps, and financial constraints.***

I. INTRODUCTION

The process of change has started all over the world, and then this change started in India, too. While there has been a change in all sectors, a radical change has started in India, too, in terms of self-reliance. Through it, good and effective change is possible in other areas. Many challenges have been created in the world during the coronavirus period. With a virus that turns the whole world upside down, millions of people all over the world are facing a crisis. At the end of Lockdown-3, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India started Atmanirbhar India **Abhiyan.** India has achieved self-reliance and moved towards economic development.

The campaign focuses on several key areas, including economic reforms, promotion of local entrepreneurship, fostering innovation, and enhancing the country's production capabilities across various sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, and technology. With the vision of transforming India into a global economic powerhouse, **Atmanirbhar Bharat** seeks to strengthen the nation's self-reliance and reduce its reliance on external sources for critical goods and services.

II. LAUNCH OF ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT ABHIYAN

The Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, which signifies the vision of a self-reliant India, was launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. This campaign aims to establish India as a key and influential player in the global economy. The Prime Minister's vision focuses on creating an economy that is not only resilient, efficient, competitive, and sustainable, but also self-generating. It is important to note that the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan does not advocate for isolation or protectionism. Instead, it envisions India's growth in harmony with the global economy, while ensuring that the nation remains efficient, resilient, and competitive on the international stage.

The overarching goal is to enable India to leverage its potential, strengthen domestic capabilities, and ensure sustainable growth, while being fully integrated into the global economic system, without being reliant on external factors.

Shri Narendra Modi has emphasized that the initiative of Atmanirbhar Bharat carries a profound message for the nation. It signals an opportunity for India to transform challenges into growth and development. In his vision, India's journey towards progress is rooted in a culture that reveres the Earth as a mother. When India becomes self-sufficient, it has the potential to contribute to a happy and prosperous world.

Consequently, India's progress will simultaneously be linked to the advancement of the global community.

The Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan thus marks the first step towards achieving self-sustainable economic development in India. It is a path that the nation is following resolutely, supported by various economic packages designed to fortify the economy, even in times of crisis. This approach embodies the timeless philosophy of Vasudev Kutumbakam, the idea that the world is one family.

The Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan was officially launched on May 12, 2020, by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this initiative, an economic package worth 20 lakh crores was allocated to support and strengthen the nation's economy.

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The campaign is built upon four key pillars that are vital to its success and focus on fostering growth, innovation, and self-reliance across various sectors.

A. *Infrastructure*

Infrastructure plays a foundational role in supporting economic growth and development. The development of robust infrastructure ranging from transportation to energy and digital infrastructure is pivotal for enhancing connectivity, enabling seamless trade, and facilitating economic integration at the global level. A strong infrastructure foundation ensures that India can effectively support its growing industries and attract foreign investments.

B. *Technology*

In today's rapidly evolving global landscape, technological advancements are essential for creating competitive industries. The Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan emphasizes innovation and the adoption of cutting-edge technologies to bolster domestic manufacturing capabilities, improve productivity, and foster new industries. Technology also plays a critical role in enhancing the efficiency of sectors like healthcare, education, and services, enabling India to lead in various fields on the global stage.

C. *Population*

India's demographic advantage, with a large and youthful population, offers both challenges and opportunities. The Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative recognizes the potential of this demographic dividend and focuses on skill development, entrepreneurship, and inclusive economic growth. By empowering India's youth, the nation aims to harness its human capital to drive innovation, productivity, and self-reliance in various sectors.

D. *Demand*

Domestic demand is a powerful driver of economic growth for any country. The Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan seeks to create conditions that enhance domestic consumption, boost local businesses, and promote the production of goods and services within India. By stimulating demand through government policies, consumer incentives, and support for local industries, India can reduce its reliance on imports and enhance its self-sufficiency in crucial sectors.

The Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan is an initiative aimed at making India self-reliant, while simultaneously strengthening its connections with the global community, as emphasized by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. The core objective of this campaign is to achieve self-reliance through the implementation of policies that promote productivity, efficiency, equity, and resilience. The goal is to build a self-sustaining India capable of thriving in the global economic landscape. It is important to note that this initiative does not promote economic isolation or protectionism. Rather, it envisions a self-reliant India that can grow in harmony with the global economy.

The campaign encourages initiatives such as Make in India, Made in India, Work from Home, rural development, and agricultural development, while also focusing on the upliftment of poor communities and laborers. The Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan aims to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), foster technological advancements, and stimulate growth across various sectors. By enhancing India’s domestic capabilities and promoting innovation, the initiative seeks to position India as a competitive and self-sufficient player in the global economy.

The Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan envisions making every individual in India self-sufficient, both in their villages and cities. The goal is to make the country’s industries self-reliant by reducing imports and enhancing exports. This initiative seeks to strengthen the Indian economy by promoting self-sufficiency, which will contribute to the development of agriculture, industrial growth, employment generation, and increased financial resources.

As a significant and vital component of India’s broader development agenda, the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan also plays a crucial role in the development of the global economy. The campaign was officially launched on May 12, 2020, with an economic package of ₹10 lakh crore, representing approximately 10% of India’s GDP. This economic stimulus package was designed to support domestic industries, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), laborers, the poor, and the middle class.

A major focus of the initiative is to promote local industries by making them more vocal for local, thereby enhancing their visibility and competitiveness. The aim is to elevate these local industries to a global level, positioning them as major contributors to both the domestic and international markets.

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The Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan is primarily structured into five key components, each targeting specific areas essential for building a self-reliant and sustainable economy. Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan is mainly divided into five sections viz –

1) Poor Work with Respect to Migrant Labourers and Farmers.

The campaign specifically targets the upliftment of **migrant laborers** and **farmers**, two sectors that have faced significant challenges in recent years. Efforts are focused on improving their livelihoods by providing better access to resources, social security, and financial assistance. The initiative seeks to bridge the gap between rural and urban employment opportunities, create skill development programs, and ensure that these communities benefit from increased economic opportunities, especially in times of crisis.

2) In terms of Agriculture

Agriculture, being a cornerstone of the Indian economy, is a key focus area under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. The campaign aims to modernize agricultural practices, improve infrastructure, and enhance productivity through better access to technology and resources. Policies are designed to strengthen the agricultural supply chain, improve market access for farmers, and promote sustainable farming practices. The ultimate goal is to make agriculture more profitable and self-sustaining, thereby ensuring food security and income generation for rural communities.

3) With Regard To the Reform of Policies

The **Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan** calls for **policy reforms** that foster economic growth, efficiency, and inclusivity. These reforms focus on creating an enabling environment for businesses to thrive, improving the ease of doing business, and providing financial support to various sectors. Special attention is given to ensuring that the policies are equitable and accessible, particularly for small and medium enterprises, farmers, and marginalized communities. The reforms also aim to enhance India's competitiveness on the global stage by promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, and investment.

4) With Respect to the Reform and Development of Laws

The initiative also emphasizes the **reform and development of laws** to promote a more efficient, transparent, and business-friendly environment. Legal reforms focus on labor laws, agricultural laws, and the simplification of regulatory frameworks to reduce bureaucratic hurdles. These reforms aim to improve labor market flexibility, enhance worker rights, and ensure that industries are incentivized to adopt sustainable practices. The objective is to create a balanced legal framework that encourages growth while protecting the rights of workers, businesses, and consumers.

Atmanirbhar Bharat is an effort to make every section of the society effective. Efforts have been made to revive the economy by bringing out the severe effects of Kovid-19 which can boost the economy. There is a plan to create a global product by increasing the production of local to vocal products. Also, for the development of the entire economy, various types of economic packages have been announced by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri and Finance Minister Shri. However, there are various challenges facing the Atmanirbhar Bharat campaign.

III. CHALLENGES AND KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT ABHIYAN

A. Increasing Burden of Recruitment for Informal Labourers

The COVID-19 lockdown has significantly impacted the informal labor sector, leading to widespread unemployment among informal workers. As a result, a major challenge now lies in the **re-recruitment** and **employment** of these workers. Efforts to reintegrate them into the workforce have been hindered by several factors, including a lack of formal records, mobility issues, and the slow pace of economic recovery. Addressing this challenge requires focused interventions to ensure that informal laborers are provided with adequate employment opportunities and social protection in the post-pandemic economy.

B. Challenges Related to Liquidity

The ₹20 lakh crore economic package introduced as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan includes several measures aimed at boosting liquidity across sectors. However, one of the significant challenges faced is the reluctance of banks, financial institutions, and cooperatives to extend credit or provide cash flow support, particularly to small and medium enterprises (SMEs), laborers, and low-income populations. This hesitancy stems from concerns over credit risk, non-performing assets (NPAs), and a generally cautious approach due to the economic uncertainty caused by the pandemic. Overcoming these barriers requires targeted interventions to restore confidence in the financial sector and ensure that funds reach those who need them the most.

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C. Challenges Facing Digital India

The **Digital India** initiative, aimed at transforming India into a digitally empowered society, faces significant challenges, especially in the context of lockdown-induced disruption. One of the primary challenges is providing **reliable internet connectivity** and **banking facilities** to the vast rural and underserved populations. While digital infrastructure has improved, many areas still lack access to stable internet connections, and digital literacy remains low. Additionally, the closure of physical banking institutions during the lockdown further limited access to financial services. Overcoming these obstacles is crucial for the success of **Digital India**, as it requires expanding digital infrastructure, improving internet accessibility, and ensuring that all citizens are equipped with the necessary skills to fully participate in the digital economy.

D. Challenges Facing Online Education

The closure of schools and colleges due to the **COVID-19 pandemic** has significantly disrupted traditional education, forcing a rapid shift to **online learning**. However, a major challenge lies in ensuring that students, particularly those in rural and remote areas, have the necessary resources to access **online education** and participate in **exams**. The lack of **reliable internet connectivity**, **smartphones**, and **digital literacy** in these areas creates a significant barrier to equitable access to education. Moreover, the question arises whether the infrastructure required to support **online learning**—including access to digital platforms, devices, and stable internet connectivity—can be extended to the village level, ensuring that all students, regardless of their location, have equal opportunities to continue their education and take exams.

E. Challenges to Entrepreneurship

One of the significant challenges facing entrepreneurs during the COVID-19 lockdown is whether they will be able to benefit from the announced economic packages. While the government introduced various measures to support businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs), during the lockdown, many entrepreneurs faced difficulties in accessing financial relief and support due to bureaucratic delays, complex application processes, and lack of awareness about available schemes. Furthermore, cash flow issues, disruptions in supply chains, and reduced consumer demand have made it difficult for businesses to operate and sustain themselves during this period. The real challenge lies in ensuring that entrepreneurs can effectively access the support offered by the economic package and that the relief reaches them in a timely and efficient manner.

F. Challenges to Campaign Success

The success of the **Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan** heavily relies on its **effective implementation** by various stakeholders, including **administrators**, **officials**, and **political leaders**. A significant challenge lies in ensuring that these parties can execute the campaign **on time** and with **integrity**. The efficiency of implementation depends on overcoming administrative bottlenecks, ensuring transparency, and avoiding delays caused by bureaucracy or political interference. The ability to deliver the intended benefits to the people in a timely manner and with honesty is crucial for the credibility and success of the campaign. Therefore, a coordinated effort and strong accountability mechanisms are essential to ensure that the goals of **Atmanirbhar Bharat** are achieved effectively.

IV. SUMMARY

In conclusion, the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan was launched with the noble intention of making India a more powerful and self-reliant nation. The campaign aims to empower India by promoting self-sufficiency across various sectors and reducing dependency on other countries. Through this initiative, significant efforts have been made to strengthen India's economy, foster local industries, and ensure inclusive growth. However, despite the positive vision and ambitious goals, several challenges remain in the path of successful implementation. Only time will reveal whether these challenges can be effectively addressed and whether the campaign can truly lead to the intended outcomes of national empowerment and sustainable economic growth.

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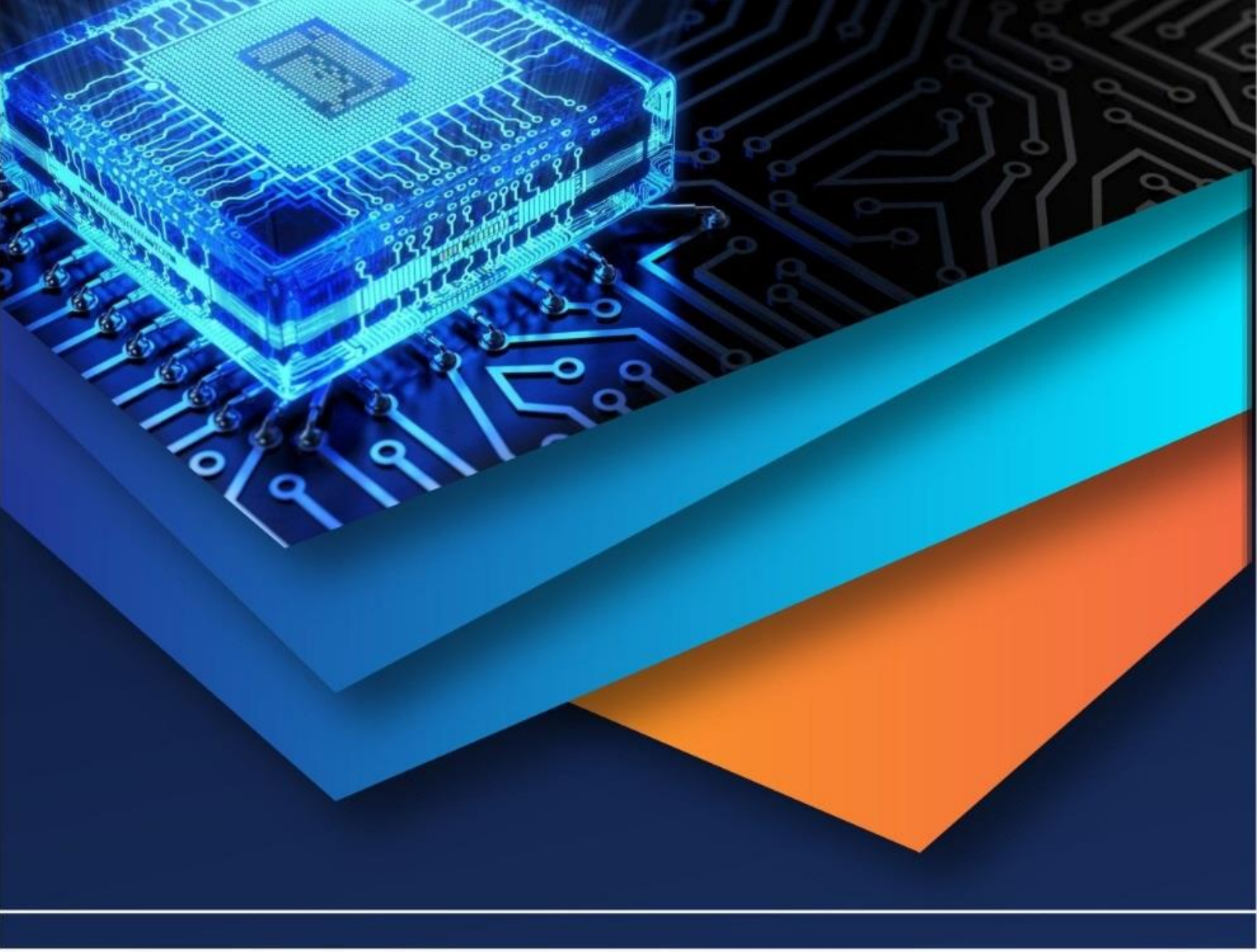

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