



Atmanirbhar bharat in the Defence sector

Description

Theme:

- Russia's invasion of Ukraine reiterated the importance of achieving self-reliance in the defence sector because India is still dependent on Russia for nearly 60% of military equipment, and the war has resulted in the uncertainty of future supplies from Russia.

The present situation in India:

- As per SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) report, India accounted for 11 per cent of global arms imports in 2017-21. India is amongst the world's largest arms importers.
- At present, India depends on Russia for nearly 60% of its defence equipment.
- Defence equipment imports from France have increased over the period of 2017-21 and made France the second-largest supplier of arms to India in this period.

Steps taken by the Indian government:

- Since 1958, DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) is developing advanced defence technologies.
- In 2001, the Indian government fully opened the defence sector to the private sector. It was completely reserved for the public sector till then. Private companies' participation brought more investments and also innovation in the defence sector.
- The Indian government launched the iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence) scheme in 2018 to encourage innovators and entrepreneurs in the defence sector.
- Several other schemes such as Make in India, launched in 2014 and Startup India, launched in 2016 are also encouraging innovators in the defence industry.
- In 2020, the Indian government announced that foreign companies can invest up to 74% in local defence manufacturing companies. This is attracting more foreign investments in the defence sector.

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- In the Defence budget 2022-23, the allocation for procuring the equipment from domestic defence manufacturing companies is increased from 58% to 68% of the capital outlay.
 - As of April 2022, the Indian government banned the import of over 300 items to promote the domestic manufacturing industry.
 - In April 2022, the Indian government announced that it is planning to ramp up domestic defence production to balance the possible shortfall from its main supplier Russia.

What more need to be done:

- There is a need to increase investment in the research and development of the defence sector.
- The Indian government took steps to attract foreign companies to India to establish defence industries. But many such companies are assembling the spare components to make defence equipment. There is a need to take steps to encourage these companies to make the equipment from scratch to reduce the need to import spare parts.
- Even though the Indian government is taking steps to promote the domestic defence industry, the investment is not sufficient to reach complete self-reliance in a few years. For example, the iDEX scheme provides financial support for startups, but on average, a startup gets 15 to 20 lakhs per year. The amount is not sufficient to develop innovative technologies. So, the investment to promote indigenous technologies needs to be increased.

Conclusion:

India is taking steps to increase the share of domestic manufactured defence equipment. We have come a long way. But there is a need to put more investment and speed up the process so that India can achieve self-reliance in the defence sector in the near future.

Your Turn!

What are your thoughts on this topic? Did we miss any important point? Join us in the group discussion through the comment section below. And subscribe to our blog to read answers to the trending GD topics.

References:

- "Atmanirbharathe Srirama raksha" article published in Eenadu Telugu newspaper dated 18th March 2022.
- [India to boost arms output, fearing shortfall from Russia](#)
- [Defence innovation will cost money, private control. Else be happy with drone light shows](#)

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