



Atma Nirbhar in Defence Production

This editorial is based on [“Atma Nirbhar in defence production: Where India stands among Indo-Pacific nations”](#) which was published in The Indian Express on 08/10/2022. It talks about the current state of Indigenisation of Defence Sector in India.

For Prelims: Defence Sector in India, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Defence India Startup Challenge, INS Vikrant, Dhanush, Arihant, Prachand, Defence Industrial Corridors (DICs), SRIJAN Portal

For Mains: Indigenisation of Defence, Challenges Related to the Defence Sector, India’s Recent Indigenous Move in the Defence Sector.

The [Defence Sector in India](#) is identified as an important area with an ocean of opportunities for [self-reliance](#). With large-scale modernisation requirements of the [Indian Armed Forces](#), India’s vision for [Atma Nirbhar Bharat](#) has provided further impetus to realise the goal of indigenisation of Defence Sector.

According to a study released by the [Stockholm International Peace Research Institute \(SIPRI\)](#), **India ranks 4th among 12 Indo-Pacific nations** in self-reliant arms production capabilities. But the concern is, **India is also ranked as the 2nd largest importer of arms for its armed forces in 2016-20.**

In spite of significant efforts to become self-sufficient in defence production, the **indigenous texture still lacks its flavour** due to higher import bills and it needs to be addressed.

What is Indigenisation of Defence?

- **Defence Indigenization** is the process of developing and manufacturing defence equipment within a country as a way to reduce import dependency as well as achieve self-reliance.
 - [Defence Research Development Organisation \(DRDO\), Defence Public Sector Undertakings \(DPSUs\)](#) are the major front runners in Atma Nirbhar Bharat vision.
- **1983** is marked a significant milestone in **defence indigenization** as the government approved the [Integrated Guided Missile Development Program](#) to develop 5 missile systems:
 - [Prithvi](#) (surface-to-surface)
 - [Akash](#) (surface-to-air)
 - [Trishul](#) (the naval version of Prithvi)
 - [Nag](#) (anti-tank)
 - [Agni Ballistic Missiles](#)

What is India’s Recent Indigenous Move in the Defence Sector?

- [Defence India Startup Challenge](#)
- [INS Vikrant: Aircraft Carrier](#)
- [Dhanush: Long-range artillery gun](#)
- [Arihant: Nuclear Submarine](#)
- [Prachand: Light Combat Helicopter](#)

What are the Challenges Related to the Defence Sector in India?

- **High Dependence on Imports:** The defence sector in India relies heavily on imports, and changing geopolitical circumstances cause it to be delayed. **For instance**, amid the [Russia-Ukraine war](#), India is awaiting the delivery of the [S-400 Air Defence Systems](#) under a deal signed in 2018.
 - In addition, several new deals are in line including [12 Sukhoi-30MKI aircraft](#) and [21 MiG-29](#) fighter jets for the [Indian Air Force](#).
- **Narrow Private Participation:** Private sector participation in the defence sector is constrained by the **lack of a conducive financial framework**, that means our defence production is unable to benefit from **modern design, innovation, and product development**.
- **Lack of Critical Technology:** Lack of design capability, **inadequate R&D investment**, inability to manufacture major subsystems and components hamper indigenous manufacturing.
 - Also, the **relationship between R&D institutions, production agencies (public or private) and end-users** is extremely fragile.
- **Lack of Nexus Between Stakeholders:** India's defence manufacturing capability is hindered by **overlapping jurisdictions** between the **Ministry of Defence** and the **Ministry of Industrial Promotion**.

What Should be the Way Forward?

- **Indigenisation with Private Boom:** There is a **need to revitalise and regulate entry points for Private sector** to enter in defence production embracing sustainable design and development to meet the needs of Indian Armed Forces in coming years.
- **Defence Industrial Corridors (DICs):** It is necessary to **extend dedicated defence industrial corridors** across the length and breadth of the country in order to harness and channel the potential of **Indian MSMEs and DPSUs** in the defence manufacturing sector, as well as to facilitate the smooth transit of raw materials.
 - Government's initiative to establish two [Defence Industrial Corridors \(DICs\) in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu](#) is a welcome step in this direction.
- **Defence Investor Cell:** It is necessary to strengthen investment in defence by providing entrepreneurs/industry with **a single point of contact to deal with all defence production-related queries, procedures and regulatory requirements** for investment in the sector.
 - The [SRIJAN portal](#) can be linked with Investment Cell.
- **Inclusion of Defence Entrepreneurs in Policy Making:** Through streamlining procurement and shaking hands with **newer defence entrepreneurs for better policy making and implementation**, can reduce the qualitative and quantitative gaps in its defence sector.
- **Tapping the World's Defence Market:** There is also a need to give **adequate attention to the promotion of exports** of Indian Defence products.
 - It is important to **simplify and streamline export authorisation procedures** through an online mechanism and targeted outreach efforts.
 - [Defence Exim Portal](#) is a welcome step in this direction.
- **Strengthening Economy with Strategic Independence: Indigenised India's defence sector** would further strengthen the **economy by generating employment opportunities** and saving the exchequer by **reducing the import burden**.
 - **Also, Self-sufficiency** in defence will fundamentally lead to India's **strategic independence**.

Drishti Mains Question

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q.1 Which one of the following is the best description of 'INS Astradharini', that was in the news recently? (2016)

- (a) Amphibious warfare ship
- (b) Nuclear-powered submarine
- (c) Torpedo launch and recovery vessel
- (d) Nuclear-powered aircraft carrier

Ans: (c)

Q.2 Consider the following in respect of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS): (2017)

1. Inaugural IONS was held in India in 2015 under the chairmanship of the Indian Navy.
2. IONS is a voluntary initiative that seeks to increase maritime co-operation among navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)