

Headline: Atmanirbhar Bharat: Strengthening India's Retail & Franchise Ecosystem for a Viksit Bharat

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Atmanirbhar Bharat, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2020, began as a response to the pandemic but has now evolved into a long-term national movement. Its purpose is to make India self-reliant, resilient, and globally competitive. With the vision of *Viksit Bharat @2047*, a fully developed India by the 100th year of independence, this initiative plays a major role in shaping industry, entrepreneurship, and economic growth, especially in retail and franchising.

What Atmanirbhar Bharat Truly Represents

Atmanirbhar Bharat is built on the idea that India must strengthen its own foundations, from manufacturing, technology, and innovation to infrastructure development, while still engaging with global partners. Rooted in five key pillars: Economy, Infrastructure, System, Demography, and Demand, the initiative goes beyond reducing import dependence. It aims to transform India into a global manufacturing and retail hub, boost domestic capabilities, and encourage entrepreneurship. For the retail and franchising ecosystem, it signifies creating opportunities for home-grown businesses to scale, fostering local brands, supporting franchise growth, and building a self-sustained marketplace where Indian enterprises can thrive and compete on the world stage.

How India's Industries Are Being Supported

India's industries are being strengthened through the Atmanirbhar Bharat campaign, which provides wide-ranging support to help domestic businesses grow. The initiative includes Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes that encourage local manufacturing, financial and regulatory assistance for MSMEs through loans, equity funding, and simplified policies, as well as a strong push for import substitution and the 'Make in India' vision. Alongside this, the government is promoting digital transformation and innovation across traditional sectors. Retail and franchising also benefit from these reforms, as easier access to capital, improved manufacturing capacity, and priority for Indian companies in government procurement help homegrown brands expand faster, scale their franchise networks, and strengthen India's retail ecosystem.

Retail and Franchise Sector: A Key Beneficiary

Retail and franchising are among the largest employment generators in India and a direct reflection of India's entrepreneurship spirit. Under Atmanirbhar Bharat, this sector has emerged as a major driver of innovation, growth, and grassroots empowerment.

Rise of Local Brands and Franchises

Atmanirbhar Bharat encourages homegrown brands to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with global players. It opens doors for Indian franchise models, especially in food and beverages, apparel, jewelry, wellness, and services, to strengthen their presence across the country and even overseas. Campaigns like **Vocal for Local** have improved awareness and preference for Indian-made products, giving local franchises a strong boost.

Opportunities in Tier II and Tier III Cities

Many franchise brands are expanding beyond metros and tapping into emerging markets in smaller towns and rural regions. This shift is creating jobs, stimulating local economies, and driving entrepreneurship at the grassroots level. Digital tools like UPI, logistics platforms, and e-commerce have helped small businesses and franchises operate more efficiently and reach wider markets.

Reforms Encouraging Business Growth

A series of reforms under Atmanirbhar Bharat, such as easier GST compliance, digital business registration, and startup incentives, are making it simpler for new and existing franchises to grow.

Policies supporting foreign investment in retail also include conditions that protect MSMEs and Indian suppliers, creating a balanced ecosystem.

Key National Aspirations Include:

India aims to build a \$5 trillion economy driven by strong domestic production, exports, retail growth, and innovation, creating a thriving environment for both entrepreneurship and franchising. The vision emphasises large-scale job creation across sectors such as retail, franchising, manufacturing, logistics, and digital services, enabling micro, small, and large businesses to scale sustainably. India seeks to emerge as a trusted global supply chain partner while strengthening urban and rural economies through decentralisation, digital adoption, and seamless market access, including opportunities for local retailers and franchise networks. The country is prioritising investments in AI, green energy, modern retail formats, digital infrastructure, and sustainable development, encouraging new business models and franchise expansions. Flagship initiatives such as Digital India, Startup India, Skill India, and Make in India, along with policy support for retail, MSMEs, and franchise-led entrepreneurship, are collectively shaping an inclusive, future-ready, self-reliant nation positioned for long-term growth.

Atmanirbhar Bharat is more than a policy, it is a transformational movement that supports Indian industries, boosts entrepreneurship, and positions India as a strong global contender. For the retail and franchise sector, it unlocks vast opportunities, promoting local brands, fostering innovation, and extending growth beyond big cities into the real Bharat. As India marches toward *Viksit Bharat @2047*, self-reliance, digital empowerment, local growth, and strategic policymaking will shape a nation that is not just a large market, but a manufacturing hub, a global innovator, and a trusted economic leader.
