

# **Atmanirbhar Bharat Between Self-Reliance and Global Integration: Rethinking India's Role in The Global South Under Globalisation 3.0**

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## **Abstract**

*“Every tool is a weapon if you hold it right. We created it. Let's take it over”*

*The world's geopolitics and international trade are witnessing a profound shift, making it increasingly difficult for nations to anticipate the next phase of globalisation. Within this flux, the United States under President Trump's protectionist “MAGA” orientation has sought to recalibrate international relations and redefine the global order, often constraining the strategic space of emerging economies such as India. While recent pronouncements from Washington have generated political, economic, and strategic anxieties in New Delhi, it would be reductive to portray India merely as a victim of these turbulences. India, with its aspirational ‘ATMANIRBHAR’ approach, represents a recalibrated vision of strategic autonomy that has the potential to redefine the global order and emerge as a champion, turning the challenges of the protectionist world order steered by the WEST into a strategic advantage while positioning itself as a Global South leader.*

*This paper highlights the opportunities and challenges India is facing in navigating a protectionist world, not only under the influence of policies from countries like the U.S. but also under the assertive rise of China. It argues that Atmanirbhar Bharat is not simply a defensive or isolationist posture but a proactive developmental and diplomatic strategy that enhances India's bargaining power within international institutions and supply chains. By repositioning itself as a ‘Vishva guru’, India has the potential to redefine the contours of Globalisation 3.0 and emerge as a pivotal champion of the Global South in the 21st century, rather than a passive participant in Western-led frameworks*

**Keywords:** Atmanirbhar Bharat, Globalisation, Globalisation 3.0, Protectionism

## **Introduction: The Rise of Globalisation, Globalisation 3.0 & Neo Protectionism**

### **What Is Globalisation & Pre-Globalisation 3.0**

Globalisation is a far-reaching and all-encompassing process affecting the whole world and is driven by the emergence of the global economy. It involves the integration of national and regional economies, societies and cultures through the worldwide network of trade, finance, communication, migration and transportation.<sup>2</sup> Jan Arte Scholte defined it as a process whereby many social relations become delinked from territorial geography, so that human lives are increasingly played out in the world as a single place.<sup>3</sup> Ted Turner has put it, “globalisation is in fast forward, and the world's ability to

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<sup>2</sup> The Financial and Economic Review, Magyar Nemzeti Bank, <https://hitelintezetiszemle.mnb.hu/en/the-financial-and-economic-review>.

<sup>3</sup> Jan Aart Scholte, *Globalization: A Critical Introduction* (Macmillan 2000).

understand and react to it is in slow motion”.<sup>4</sup> Globalisation has often been equated with liberalisation, westernisation, universalisation or internalisation. Still, it is quite different from these concepts.<sup>5</sup>

The word *globalisation* appeared first in the late 20th century.<sup>6</sup> At that time, the term ‘*Global City*’<sup>7</sup> was also immensely popularised by the scholar Saskia Sassen. Anthony Giddens says, "Globalisation can be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa".<sup>8</sup> Globalisation is not a new idea; it has been happening for centuries, though in different forms. Modern globalisation, as we know it today, was picked up after the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries, and disputes and international diplomacy by the nations played a significant role in its development.<sup>9</sup> Advances in transport, such as steamships and railways, and later communication tools like the telegraph, made it easier and faster to connect across the globe. After World War II, international organisations like the United Nations, World Bank, and later the World Trade Organisation encouraged global cooperation and integration of market forces. With the arrival of the internet in the late 20th century, globalisation entered a new phase, making the world more connected than ever before.

### Globalisation 3.0 & Neo Protectionism

The world is now witnessing a new form of ‘*Economic nationalism*’<sup>10</sup> which has historically been equated with mercantilist policies that resist free trade, such as import substitution and protectionism, particularly after World War II. However, globalisation in the 1990s challenged its relevance. Later scholarly re-evaluations of Friedrich List and Alexander Hamilton reframed economic nationalism not as a fixed policy model but as a worldview prioritising national interests over individual or global concerns.<sup>11</sup> From this perspective, economic nationalism can take two primary forms, i.e. *neo-mercantilist*, emphasising protectionism and strategic state intervention, and *liberal economic nationalism*,<sup>12</sup> which supports national industries and harnesses nationalist sentiment but remains compatible with globalisation.<sup>13</sup> What India is witnessing now is a new form of economic nationalism.<sup>14</sup>

Thomas L. Friedman, in his famous book ‘*The World is Flat*’,<sup>15</sup> described the world as a level playing field where everyone must remain competitive to survive. Friedman traced the evolution of globalisation through three distinct phases. First, he identified when globalisation began, shaped largely by the expansion of nations and exploration, which he called globalisation 1.0. The second phase of globalisation, which is globalisation 2.0, interrupted by the brutal World Wars and the great depression, highlighted the role of

<sup>4</sup> Mark Leon Goldberg, *How Ted Turner Changed the World*, Global Dispatches (Oct. 27, 2023), <https://www.globaldispatches.org/p/how-ted-turner-changed-the-world>.

<sup>5</sup> *Globalization: The Phenomenon in Making*, ShodhPatra (Dec. 16, 2024), <https://www.shodhpatra.org/globalization-the-phenomenon-in-making/>

<sup>6</sup> Id.

<sup>7</sup> Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton Univ. Press 1991).

<sup>8</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford Univ. Press 1990).

<sup>9</sup> Andre Gunder Frank, *ReORIENT: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Univ. of Cal. Press 1998).

<sup>10</sup> Eric Helleiner, Economic Nationalism as a Challenge to Economic Liberalism? Lessons from the Nineteenth Century, 46 *Int'l Stud. Q.* 307 (2002).

<sup>11</sup> David Levi-Faur, Friedrich List and the Political Economy of the Nation-State, 4 *Rev. Int'l Pol. Econ.* 154 (1997), <https://doi.org/10.1080/096922997347887>.

<sup>12</sup> Helleiner (n 9).

<sup>13</sup> Priya Chacko, A New Quest for Self-Reliance: East Asia and Indian Economic Nationalism, 2 *J. Indian & Asian Stud.* 2140005 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1142/S2717541321400052>.

<sup>14</sup> Id.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas L. Friedman, *The World Is Flat 3.0*, <https://www.thomasfriedman.com/the-world-is-flat-3-0/>.

market forces and multinational companies in deepening global integration. This was followed by a collapse during the global financial crisis, which disrupted the trajectory of globalisation. The global financial and economic crisis of 2008–2009 gave a major blow to globalisation,<sup>16</sup> with global flows declining by more than 10 per cent.<sup>17</sup> Although trade volumes recovered by 2010, the international capital flows, which had surged in the pre-crisis years, have become more restrained and volatile. Rising protectionist approaches among nations, symbolised by events like Covid-19, Brexit, the Russia-Ukraine War, and the U.S.-China trade war, reflected a growing desire among nations to reclaim control over their economies. The COVID-19 pandemic further deepened scepticism about global supply chains, as countries realised the risks of overdependence on foreign production for critical goods.<sup>18</sup> More recently, geopolitical conflicts such as the Russia–Ukraine war and tensions between China and the West have accelerated a shift toward “*de-risking, reshoring, and regionalism*,”<sup>19</sup> signalling what many now describe as an era of deglobalisation. This has led scholars to question whether globalisation is entering a phase of stagnation, or whether it is undergoing structural transformation rather than outright retreat. Where many argue that “Globalisation is not dying, it has merely changed,”<sup>20</sup> which Friedman has called as globalisation 3.0. Globalisation 3.0 by empowered individuals who could participate in the global economy as creators, innovators, and entrepreneurs with a computer and Internet connection. The US president remarked that the “world is not a ‘*global community*’ but an arena where nations, nongovernmental actors, and businesses engage and compete for advantage.”<sup>21</sup>

The future of globalisation remains uncertain: whether it will adapt and survive in a new form, or continue to fragment, will depend on how nations balance openness with security in the years to come. Now, it has also been suggested that people’s faith has been lifted from international organisations and platforms,<sup>22</sup> and the so-called Liberal International Order is in serious peril.<sup>23</sup> Due to the hard-nosed policies of authoritarian rulers, a protectionist regime is flourishing.<sup>24</sup> But is deglobalisation or complete withdrawal from the globalisation process possible? The paper has tried to highlight that while it is true that geopolitical disruptions and protectionist policies of nations have periodically altered global trade patterns but a complete reversal of globalisation remains highly improbable. As per the author, Globalisation is inevitable; it can be regulated or reformed, but it can’t be denied wholly. The Global supply chains continue to operate across borders, technological innovation facilitates cross-border collaboration, and the flow of information remains faster and more pervasive than ever before. What we are witnessing, therefore, is not an outright retreat from globalisation, but, as per recent trends, it is a recalibration or a sudden shift of global economic relationships. Some scholars describe

<sup>16</sup> Fabio Ghironi & Andrei A. Levchenko, Globalization in the Aftermath of the Crisis, 66 *IMF Econ. Rev.* 415 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41308-018-0064-6>

<sup>17</sup> Markus Kornprobst & T.V. Paul, Globalization, Deglobalization and the Liberal International Order, 97 *Int’l Aff.* 1305 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiab120>.

<sup>18</sup> Md. Mofijur et al., Impact of COVID-19 on the Social, Economic, Environmental and Energy Domains: Lessons Learnt from a Global Pandemic, 26 *Sustain. Prod. Consum.* 343 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.spc.2020.10.016>.

<sup>19</sup> Protectionism Is Failing to Achieve Its Goals and Threatens the Future of Critical Industries, World Bank (Aug. 29, 2023), <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2023/08/29/protectionism-is-failing-to-achieve-its-goals-and-threatens-the-future-of-critical-industries>.

<sup>20</sup> Martin Wolf, Globalisation Is Not Dying, It’s Changing, *Fin. Times* (Sept. 13, 2022), <https://www.ft.com/content/f6fe91ab-39f9-44b0-bff6-505ff6c665a1>.

<sup>21</sup> The Implications of “The World Is Not a Global Community,” *Ethics & Int’l Aff.*, <https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/online-exclusives/the-implications-of-the-world-is-not-a-global-community>.

<sup>22</sup> Markus Kornprobst & T.V. Paul, Globalization, Deglobalization and the Liberal International Order (Sept. 13, 2024).

<sup>23</sup> Kornprobst and Paul (n 16).

<sup>24</sup> Id.

it as deglobalisation,<sup>25</sup> while others prefer terms such as ‘pseudo-deglobalisation’ or temporary deglobalisation<sup>26</sup> to emphasise its contingent nature. Instead, these scholars frame the present phase as a process of re-globalisation,<sup>27</sup> or what is increasingly referred to as ‘Globalisation 3.0’,<sup>28</sup> that reflects the transformation of the global economic order and the change in global policies.

This paper has tried to analyse the current global trends in the form of globalisation 3.0 and the challenges it poses to India’s aspirational self-reliance programme through the “ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT”. India, with its neo-mercantilist policies, is ready to support strategic protectionism and selective liberalisation, encouraging its domestic market while redefining the global order and integrating into global value chains. India has reimagined its role from being ‘Vishwa Guru’ or teacher of the world, to become ‘Vishwa Mitra’, or friend of the world.<sup>29</sup> This development reflects a maturing of India’s foreign policy. In Jaishankar’s formulation, the “Vishwamitra” approach abandons the passive, defensive stance of Cold War non-alignment and instead projects a proactive, confident India, one that forges coalitions around specific issues and accepts multiple, pragmatic alignments rather than strict ideological commitments.<sup>30</sup>

## Atmanirbhar Bharat in The Global Context: India’s Footprint in The Global South

‘*Swadeshi*’ or ‘*Atmanirbharta*’ has always been at the heart of India’s aspirations. The Atmanirbhar Bharat is a vision, often translated as ‘Self-Reliant India’, that is frequently misunderstood as a purely inward-looking economic strategy or revival of pre-liberalisation era policies<sup>31</sup>. But India believes it to be a protectionist policy by the nation, for a strategic recalibration to boost the manufacturing sector, which is mainly targeting these five key areas- Economy, Infrastructure, System, Vibrant Demography and Demand<sup>32</sup>. Atmanirbhar Bharat was announced with a package of 20 lakh crore<sup>33</sup> to provide a stimulus to the Indian industry, when disrupted supply chains exposed the vulnerabilities of over-dependence on external sources. By nurturing indigenous innovation, India is creating assets that benefit not only its own citizens but also the wider world. For instance, India’s rapid vaccine production and global distribution through the Vaccine Maitri initiative reflected how self-reliance can translate into global goodwill and leadership. India, through its vision of *Atmanirbharta or vocal for local*, is moving towards Gandhi’s idea of ‘Swadeshi’.<sup>34</sup> The

<sup>25</sup> What Is Deglobalization?, *Chatham House*, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/10/what-deglobalization>.

<sup>26</sup> On Pseudo De-Globalization, Silk Road of Global Value Chains and Role of Georgia – OpEd, *Eurasia Rev.*, <https://www.eurasiareview.com/18102021-on-pseudo-de-globalization-silk-road-of-global-value-chains-and-role-of-georgia-oped/>.

<sup>27</sup> Ralph Ossa, Re-Globalization for a Secure, Inclusive and Sustainable Future, *WTO Blog* (Sept. 12, 2023), [https://www.wto.org/english/blogs\\_e/ce\\_ralph\\_ossa\\_e/blog\\_ro\\_12sep23\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/blogs_e/ce_ralph_ossa_e/blog_ro_12sep23_e.htm).

<sup>28</sup> Caroline Burnett, Globalization 3.0: How to Survive and Thrive in a New Era of Trade, Tax and Political Uncertainty, *Employer Rep.* (Feb. 12, 2018), <https://www.theemployerreport.com/2018/02/globalization-3-0/>.

<sup>29</sup> Why Has India Reimagined Its Role from Vishwaguru to Vishwamitra?, *Lowy Inst.*,

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/why-has-india-reimagined-its-role-vishwaguru-vishwamitra>.

<sup>30</sup> ‘India Positioning Itself as “Vishwamitra”... Generating Goodwill, Says Jaishankar | India News - The Indian Express’ <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/jaishankar-india-vishwamitra-9650536/>.

<sup>31</sup> India Positioning Itself as “Vishwamitra”... Generating Goodwill, Says Jaishankar, *Indian Express*, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/jaishankar-india-vishwamitra-9650536/>.

<sup>32</sup> Sadanand Dhume, The False Promise of Self-Reliance: An Inward-Looking India Could Quickly Slide Towards Closed-Mindedness, Cronyism and Mediocrity, *Times of India Blogs*, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/toi-edit-page/the-false-promise-of-self-cronyism-and-mediocrity/>.

<sup>33</sup> Aatmanirbhar Bharat, *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav*, Ministry of Culture, Gov’t of India, <http://amritkaal.nic.in/aatmanirbhar-bharat.htm>.

<sup>34</sup> From Mahatma Gandhi to PM Modi, Swadeshi and Vocal for Local as India’s Answer to Global Trade Wars, *DD News*, <https://ddnews.gov.in/en/from-mahatma-gandhi-to-pm-modi-swadeshi-and-vocal-for-local-as-indias-answer-to-global-trade-wars/>.

process of globalisation in current times is no longer an unquestioned force; trade disruptions, aggressive tariff policies by the nations, supply-chain realignments, geopolitical tensions and China's assertive policies are reshaping economic landscapes. The Indian vision of *Atmanirbhar Bharat* aligns with this shift by prioritising ingrown supplies while keeping markets open for global fusion. The Nation-first approach is being prioritised more<sup>35</sup>. As India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said that, "*Bharat is a belief and an attitude, it means don't let others define you. Try and define yourself*".<sup>36</sup>

India's move towards self-reliance is planned towards critical sectors like health, technology, defence and manufacturing. In the field of defence, 'Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020', revised from DPP 2016 in line with *Atmanirbhar Bharat*, prioritises the *Buy (Indian-Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured)* category to ensure defence procurement from domestic sources. To attract foreign investment and advanced technology, the FDI limit in defence has been raised to 74% via the automatic route and up to 100% with government approval. Innovation is being fostered through initiatives like *iDEX*, which supports startups, MSMEs, and academia, and the *Technology Development Fund (TDF)*, which aids the industry in building advanced defence capabilities<sup>37</sup>. Additionally, the *SRIJAN Portal*, launched in 2020, promotes indigenisation by listing previously imported items for local development, with over 46,000 items identified so far<sup>38</sup>. Although the country projects an inward-looking strategy, it continues to forge numerous strategic partnerships and agreements with other nations, including defence procurements, trade deals and joint military exercises. For instance, the U.S.-India launched COMPACT (Catalysing Opportunities for Military Partnership, Accelerated Commerce & Technology), a deeper cooperation in defence, trade and technology.<sup>39</sup> Both the nations under "Mission 500"<sup>40</sup> are aiming to double bilateral trade to 500 billion dollars by 2030. As AI is the new facet of globalisation today, India and France have come together on a common platform to launch 'Inclusive and Sustainable Artificial Intelligence for People and the Planet'.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, India and the UK finalised a strategic partnership for bilateral cooperation in key sectors and recently concluded an FTA and Double Contribution Convention.<sup>42</sup> India and the European Union, both open-market democracies, have shared a strategic partnership since 2004.<sup>43</sup> The EU and India are also big trading partners, with bilateral trade in goods reaching US\$137 billion in FY 2023–24 and services trade at US\$53 billion in 2023. The two sides have also set up a Trade and Technology Council (TTC)<sup>44</sup> to strengthen cooperation in

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<sup>35</sup> Adopt "Nation-First" Approach to Decision Making: PM Modi to Civil Servants, *Bus. Standard* (Apr. 21, 2022), [https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/adopt-nation-first-approach-to-decision-making-pm-modi-to-civil-servants-122042100797\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/adopt-nation-first-approach-to-decision-making-pm-modi-to-civil-servants-122042100797_1.html).

<sup>36</sup> Remarks by EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar at the Knowledge India Visitors Programme (Dec. 4, 2023), Ministry of External Affairs (Gov't of India), [https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/37338/Remarks\\_by\\_EAM\\_Dr\\_S\\_Jaishankar\\_at\\_the\\_Knowledge\\_India\\_Visitors\\_Programme\\_December\\_04\\_2023](https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/37338/Remarks_by_EAM_Dr_S_Jaishankar_at_the_Knowledge_India_Visitors_Programme_December_04_2023).

<sup>37</sup> Atmanirbharta in Defence Sector, Press Info. Bureau (PIB), <https://pib.gov.in/FactsheetDetails.aspx?Id=149238>.

<sup>38</sup> Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh Launches Indigenisation Portal SRIJAN; DPSUs Sign Contracts and MoUs with Industry Partners and Academia; Atmanirbhar Week Celebration of MoD Concludes, Press Info. Bureau (PIB), <https://www.pib.gov.in/www.pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1645805>.

<sup>39</sup> United States-India Joint Leaders' Statement, *The White House* (Feb. 13, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/2025/02/united-states-india-joint-leaders-statement/>

<sup>40</sup> Id.

<sup>41</sup> Inclusive and Sustainable Artificial Intelligence for People and Planet, *IOD Global*, <https://www.iodglobal.com/blog/details/inclusive-and-sustainable-artificial-intelligence-for-people-and-planet>.

<sup>42</sup> UK-India Trade Deal: Conclusion Agreement Summary, *GOV.UK*, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-india-trade-deal-conclusion-summary/uk-india-trade-deal-conclusion-summary>.

<sup>43</sup> Parwani, A. H., Chaudhari, S. P., Sharma, A., Parwani, M., & Shukla, N. B. (2025). Research assessment on Financial Contagion: Network Visualization. <https://acidajournal.org/index.php/AEIDA/article/view/21>

<sup>44</sup> U.S.-E.U. Trade and Technology Council (TTC), *U.S. Trade Representative*, <https://ustr.gov/useuttc>.

trade, technology, and security. Today, India is not advancing a non-alignment policy but embracing a multi-alignment strategy to protect the nation's interests.<sup>45</sup>

The country also invested in education<sup>46</sup> and the research sector to boost technological advancement and innovation. India's move towards Atmanirbhar Bharat has sparked an indigenous cottage industry boom and is looking towards the 'Make in India for the World'<sup>47</sup> initiative. India has launched 'National Manufacturing Mission' with a 100-crore budget, aiming to boost innovation, production and competitive capacity of the nation.<sup>48</sup> India's pharma sector is flourishing with ₹4,17,345 crore turnover in 2023–24.<sup>49</sup>

Strategically, Atmanirbhar Bharat enhances India's influence on the international stage. India strengthens its bargaining power in global institutions and forums such as BRICS, QUAD, and the G20 by fostering self-reliance in defence, space, and critical technologies. India's powerful presidency in G20 marked a defining chapter in global diplomacy, which reflects India's cultural ethos and quest for global cooperation.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, India's emphasis on South-South cooperation at various international groupings and summits positions it as a leader among developing nations. India has witnessed a surge in international trade with nations of the global south, particularly with African and Latin American countries, from \$5 billion in 2001 to \$90 billion in 2020, making India Africa's third-largest trading partner.<sup>51</sup> India, guided by the vision of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' and 'Sabka Saath', 'Sabka Vikas', 'Sabka Vishwas', has conducted three editions of the *Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS)*.<sup>52</sup> At Cop 21, India launched its International Solar Alliance<sup>53</sup> for reducing the nation's dependency on non-renewable energy sources.

Atmanirbhar Bharat does not isolate India; it equips the nation to engage in globalisation on its own terms, projecting resilience, innovation, and leadership with a forward-looking strategy. India is reshaping its economic outreach with the Act East Policy and multilateral and bilateral groupings like BIMSTEC, QUAD and ASEAN. In March 2025, the MAHASAGAR doctrine was announced by the Prime Minister for having "Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions".<sup>54</sup> Lal Bahadur Shastri once said, "Self-reliance does not mean that we have everything we need. No country is self-sufficient in all respects. Self-reliance is an attitude of mind. A poor man can be self-reliant, while a wealthy person may be dependent on others. Self-reliance means making do with what we have and cutting out what we do not and cannot have." There is a vast difference between being 'Self-Reliant' and 'Self-Sufficient'.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> From Non-Alignment to Multi-Alignment: Assessing India's Foreign Policy Shift, 112 *Round Table* 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/00358533.2023.2165367>.

<sup>46</sup> National Education Policy Will Help Make India Self-Reliant: PM Modi, *Indian Express*, <https://indianexpress.com/article/education/pm-modi-to-address-session-on-education-skill-development-for-atmanirbhar-bharat-7212071/>.

<sup>47</sup> "Make in India, for the World": PM Modi Hails Maruti Suzuki's Gujarat EV Plant as a Big Leap, *News18*, <https://www.news18.com/india/pm-modi-gujarat-maruti-suzuki-make-in-india-symbol-japan-strong-ties-9528708.html>.

<sup>48</sup> Manufacturing an Atmanirbhar Bharat, Press Info. Bureau (PIB), <https://pib.gov.in/FactsheetDetails.aspx?Id=149250>.

<sup>49</sup> PIB Headquarters, Press Info. Bureau (PIB), <http://www.pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?NoteId=154488>.

<sup>50</sup> Asian Development Bank, India's G20 Presidency: An Opportunity to Steer the World Toward Inclusive and Sustainable Growth (June 19, 2023), <https://www.adb.org/news/features/indias-g20-presidency-opportunity>.

<sup>51</sup> India and the Global South, Embassy of India, Athens, <https://www.indiaingreece.gov.in/section/news/india-and-the-global-south-by-amb-ashok-sajjanhar/>.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> International Solar Alliance, <https://isa.int/>.

<sup>54</sup> News Detail, Ministry of External Affairs (Gov't of India), <https://mea.gov.in/newsdetail1.htm?13355/>.

<sup>55</sup> Govt Needs to Understand the Difference between Self-Sufficiency and Self-Reliance: Swaminathan Aiyar, *Economic Times* (June 30, 2020), <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/markets/expert-view/govt-needs-to-understand-the-difference-between-self-sufficiency-and-self-reliance-swaminathan-aiyar/articleshow/76710928.cms>.

## Policy Adaptations by India for Achieving Self-Reliance in Globalisation 3.0

The global economic landscape has been increasingly shaped by protectionist impulses and strategic recalibrations in recent years.<sup>56</sup> While in the post-Cold War era, we celebrated the free flow of goods, capital, and information, mounting economic uncertainties, geopolitical rivalries, and domestic political pressures have prompted nations to rethink their engagement with the global economy.<sup>57</sup> Trade wars, sanctions, and restrictive investment policies have become more frequent, signalling a departure from the unbridled liberalisation of the 1990s and early 2000s. This phase is less about a retreat from globalisation and more about a realignment of priorities. Countries are seeking to safeguard critical industries, secure supply chains, and reduce vulnerabilities exposed by global shocks such as the 2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. After achieving self-sustenance in the 17th and 18th centuries, the Global North advanced the idea of a 'Global State,' largely serving the interests of the bourgeois class. This so-called "non-territorial Global State" functioned as a means of expanding into the global economic sphere, where international human rights laws were often positioned as a balancing mechanism for the dominance of international economic laws. Meanwhile, the Global South remained largely unrepresented and excluded from the real benefits of globalisation. India's experience illustrates this imbalance;<sup>58</sup> despite decades of integration into the global economy, its Human Development Index ranking slipped from 119 in 2011 to 130 in 2025.<sup>59</sup>

India has demonstrated strong performance in technological innovation, recording \$320 billion in software exports in FY23, alongside an 11% growth in global computer service exports. India has risen to become the World's second-largest mobile manufacturer.<sup>60</sup> However, the country's net exports have not shown any significant boost. India is pushing its startups to equip them with the technology. The number of DPIIT-recognised startups as per the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has expanded significantly, rising from around 500 in 2016 to 1,59,157 as of January 15, 2025.<sup>61</sup> But quite interestingly, a statement has been made that Indian startups are more focused on converting the youth of the nation into cheap labour<sup>62</sup> and are struggling to adopt modern technology and beat the competition and pricing standards, which suggests that though the Indian startup ecosystem is expanding, its qualitative expansion remains limited. Indian telecom companies have not very enthusiastically adopted *the 'Vocal for Local'* campaign under *Atmanirbhar Bharat*. The ground reality of the Make in India campaign is that we have now become mere 'assemblers' of the products rather than manufacturers.<sup>63</sup> India still does not own patents, which is the

<sup>56</sup> Robert A. Manning, *Trade and Financial Fragmentation: New Challenges to Global Stability* (Atlantic Council 2020), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep26007>.

<sup>57</sup> Geopolitics and Economic Statecraft in the European Union, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/11/geopolitics-and-economic-statecraft-in-the-european-union?lang=en>.

<sup>58</sup> B.S. Chimni, A Just World Under Law: A View From the South, 100 *Proc. ASIL Ann. Meeting* 17 (2006), <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272503700023740>.

<sup>59</sup> India's Human Development Continues to Make Progress, Ranks 130 out of 193 Countries, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), <https://www.undp.org/india/press-releases/indias-human-development-continues-make-progress-ranks-130-out-193-countries>.

<sup>60</sup> India Rises to Become the World's 2nd Largest Mobile Manufacturer; From 2 Units in 2014, over 300 Units Are Operational Nationwide Today, Press Info. Bureau (PIB), <https://www.pib.gov.in/www.pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=2099656>.

<sup>61</sup> Nine Years of Startup India, Press Info. Bureau (PIB), <https://www.pib.gov.in/www.pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=2093125>.

<sup>62</sup> Goyal's Comment on Delivery Apps Hit a Nerve. Here's Why It Should, *The Core*, <https://www.thecore.in/business/goyals-comment-on-delivery-apps-hit-a-nerve-heres-why-it-should-833049>.

<sup>63</sup> 'Under "Make in India", We're Assembling, Not Manufacturing: Rahul Gandhi | India News - Business Standard' [https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/under-make-in-india-we-re-assembling-not-manufacturing-rahul-gandhi-125071900503\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/under-make-in-india-we-re-assembling-not-manufacturing-rahul-gandhi-125071900503_1.html).

essence of the whole business, as most parts are imported from other countries. This makes us rethink that the aspiration of Atmanirbharta is losing its significance in this situation, as we are just doing cheap “Assemble in India” rather than ‘Make in India’.

In 2016, India put an Equalisation Levy of 6% for taxing foreign e-commerce companies that are accruing income from India,<sup>64</sup> but with the threat of US reciprocal tariffs in 2025, India planned to retreat from the equalisation levy.<sup>65</sup> This poses a broad dilemma for India to balance its self-reliance aspirations with the interconnected global economy. The US’s then-President Trump is quite loud and clear with his ‘America First’ approach. This era is characterised by the localisation of national politics on one hand, and the rise of technology-driven, sustainability-oriented trade practices in the global marketplace on the other.<sup>66</sup> In this era of globalisation, India is facing significant challenges, particularly in its technology-driven sectors. The IT industry is undergoing a period of restructuring marked by widespread job cuts and shifts in business strategies. With artificial intelligence redefining the contours of global trade and services, experts are urging Indian firms to reposition themselves as indispensable partners in the AI era rather than remain as mere service providers.<sup>67</sup>

### **Summing Up India’s Path in Globalisation 3.0**

In 2020, India opted to retreat from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Agreement (RCEP), signalling an effort to recalibrate domestic priorities while rethinking its role in the global economy.<sup>68</sup> India is entering a new phase of 'neo-mercantilist' economic nationalism, aiming to protect local industries while also attracting foreign investment and joining global value chains.<sup>69</sup> In recent years, India’s foreign policy has increasingly focused on building stronger partnerships across the Global South. This reflects India’s effort to position itself as a leading voice for developing nations and to encourage greater South-South cooperation in today’s evolving global order. Key initiatives such as the India-Africa Forum Summit, the Forum for India–Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC), and the India-CARICOM Summits<sup>70</sup> demonstrate this commitment. India’s leading role in the International Solar Alliance through South–South Cooperation.<sup>71</sup> It is one such example of a nation’s ability to shape global consensus and highlight its leadership. The New Delhi Declaration at the G20 stands as a clear example of India’s rising global influence and its ambition to contribute meaningfully to international governance and stability.<sup>72</sup> In a global landscape where post-World War II institutions like the UN and WTO are often seen as outdated and unresponsive, India is increasingly positioning itself as both a reformer and a potential leader in shaping a new, post-West world order.<sup>73</sup> In India, the process of globalisation is way more democratic with people’s participation or ‘Jan Bhagidari’. Sh. S. Jai Shankar,

<sup>64</sup> ‘Equalization Levy’ <https://incometaxindia.gov.in/Pages/equalization-levy.aspx>.

<sup>65</sup> ‘India Ends 6% Equalisation Levy Foreign Digital Ad Revenues - Vatcalc.Com’ (25 March 2025) <https://www.vatcalc.com/india/india-2-equalisation-levy-extension-to-e-commerce-sellers-and-facilitating-marketplaces-apr-2020/>.

<sup>66</sup> Burnett (n 27).

<sup>67</sup> Mini Tejaswi, ‘How Is AI Reshaping India’s Infotech Sector? | Explained’ *The Hindu* (9 August 2025) <https://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/how-is-ai-reshaping-indias-infotech-sector-explained/article69914441.ece>

<sup>68</sup> ‘The Implications of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) for Asian Regional Architecture.Pdf’.

<sup>69</sup> ‘A New Quest for Self-Reliance: East Asia and Indian Economic Nationalism’ (n 12).

<sup>70</sup> Embassy of India, Cairo, Egypt, Press Releases, [https://www.eoicairo.gov.in/news\\_letter\\_detail/?id=211](https://www.eoicairo.gov.in/news_letter_detail/?id=211).

<sup>71</sup> South-South Trust Funds: Powering Progress and Clean Energy Solutions, *UN Office for South-South Cooperation*, <https://unsouthsouth.org/2025/01/28/south-south-trust-funds-powering-progress-and-clean-energy-solutions/>.

<sup>72</sup> India | Leading by Examples | Global South, IC-CE, <https://ic-ce.com/india-on-global-south-stage-leading-by-examples/>.

<sup>73</sup> How India Disrupts and Navigates the World Trade Organization, *Council on Foreign Relations*, <https://www.cfr.org/article/how-india-disrupts-and-navigates-wto>.

Indian Foreign Minister, believes that “people's participation has quadrupled, which can be termed as as ‘*Re-globalisation*’, rather than ‘*De-globalisation*’.”<sup>74</sup> The retreat of the state from its earlier role has allowed people to assume greater control, signalling the emergence of a new phase – Globalisation 3.0 – which marks the decline of the West-led order often described as Globalisation 2.0. As existing powers turn inward and their influence fragments, revisionist states like India are asserting themselves more strongly. Against this backdrop, India’s G20 presidency has shifted global attention toward the Global South.

### **Conclusion & Way Forward**

It is often said that “necessity is the mother of invention” In 1991, India embraced globalisation within its socialist framework, liberalising trade and stabilising a struggling national economy. However, in the aftermath of the global pandemic, India has felt a renewed urgency to pursue *Atmanirbhar Bharat* – self-reliance – as a safeguard against future vulnerabilities. While foreign capital remains essential, the lesson drawn from the Russia-Ukraine war and the U.S.-China trade conflict is that over-dependence on a single market can jeopardise national economic stability. However, corporations continue to face difficulties adjusting to the slower pace of a more cautious global economy. However, such a strategy, though protectionist in appearance, can be viewed as pragmatic given the fractured state of global commerce.

The real challenge lies in how India positions itself in this new phase of globalisation. On the one hand, there is a need to avoid excessive retreat into protectionism, which risks undermining the spirit of free trade. On the other hand, strengthening domestic capacity is crucial for long-term resilience. India now stands at a crossroads: if it can successfully balance local empowerment with strategic global engagement, it has the potential not only to secure its own economic future but also to redefine the role of the Global South. The opportunity is ripe for India to move beyond the historical cycle of exploitation by the Global North and emerge as a voice for equitable globalisation and become multi-aligned in this bipolar world, or *Viswa Mitra*.

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<sup>74</sup> Bhaswati Mukherjee, India’s G20 Presidency: A Voice of the Global South, *Organiser* (Sept. 4, 2023), <https://organiser.org/2023/09/04/193858/bharat/indias-g20-presidency-a-voice-of-the-global-south/>.