

Global Innovations must be leveraged for Atmanirbharta in Telecom Manufacturing: BIF

9th June 2021, New Delhi: Broadband India Forum (BIF), the leading policy forum and think-tank for digital transformation and broadband proliferation in the country, organised a virtual session of The Digital Dialogues today. An Industry White Paper on **Atmanirbharta in Telecom Manufacturing** was also released on the occasion by the **Chief Guest Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog, Government of India, and Shri TK Paul, Member (T), Department of Telecommunications (DoT), who joined as the Special Guest of Honour.** The session delved on the several policy and regulatory initiatives undertaken, and further required actions to strengthen and optimize the national mission of Atmanirbhar Bharat and its progressive objectives. These would lead to significant economic benefits for the country, by helping establish India prominently in the global manufacturing map and supply chain ecosystem, decreasing reliance on import of critical technologies and infrastructure, and thereby making it truly Atmanirbhar.

Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog, in his address, said, *"The Government is determined to make India 'Atmanirbhar' with a world-class manufacturing infrastructure and transform it into a competitive global manufacturing destination, an important part of the global supply chain. Aggressive duty reforms, and various incentive schemes have been introduced to encourage domestic manufacturing and thereby help reduce the import bills in the high value sectors. I am delighted to release today this White Paper by BIF on 'Atmanirbharta in Telecom Manufacturing' and I'm glad to note the number of opportunities that exist for the industry to utilise, with the help of the Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Telecom announced by the Government. This would provide a big boost to local manufacturing of the device ecosystem as well, a critical driver for our 'Digital India' goals."*

The White Paper, titled **"Atmanirbharta in Telecom Manufacturing"** is an initiative of the High-Level Manufacturing Network Committee of BIF, and explores various critical facets of the Telecom Manufacturing vertical, including the Building Blocks for an 'Atma-Nirbhar Bharat' and the role of Digital Communications in supporting the same, opportunities for telecom in the PLI Scheme, the evolving device ecosystem, making India the preferred investment destination, ease of doing business and regulatory compliance.

Mr. TV Ramachandran, President, Broadband India Forum, commented: *"The idea of Atmanirbharta is to leverage the global ecosystem and innovations to build on our competence, and grow in sync with the global economy to achieve world class manufacturing and supply chain leadership for India. For that, we need enabling laws and policies alongside voluntary, incentive-led schemes to propel investments in infrastructure and boost technology driven systems, so as to provide a fillip to local businesses through organic demand and investments – both domestic and global. This approach is the sustainable way to make India the preferred destination for investment, and a long-term pivotal player in the global supply chain."*

Key Recommendations of the White Paper:

- **PMI policy must be leveraged to enable exports in the following ways:**
 - ✓ **OEMs must be granted 'points' equivalent to the total value of exports, which can be used to qualify as a class 1 supplier for other products, which may not be manufactured in India ('deemed domestic');**

- ✓ MEITY's definition of value addition must be adopted as a standard for telecom manufacturing, as it provides the full value of all components that go into a PCB.
- There is an opportunity for domestic companies to form consortiums with MNCs on technologies like 5G and IoT.
- 5G spectrum should be priced affordably and allocated fast for network rollout.
- Connecting rural or unconnected areas should be encouraged and prioritised.
- State-funded R&D (including basic research) by PSUs, research institutions and academia need to be scaled-up well above the dismal 1% of GDP currently. Private sector delivery-oriented R&D could also be supported and be further linked to meaningful participation in manufacturing at appropriate levels of the supply chain.
- V band to be made available with supportive and liberal policy measures to foster innovation, leading to mass use of SRDs for a plethora of applications - encouraging large-scale manufacturing of SRDs for both the domestic market, and global supply chain.
- Incentivise manufacturing of IoT, M2M and SRD devices through a focused PLI scheme.
- India's public expenditure (4.6% of total GDP and 3.2% of the Union Budget – ranked 62nd out of 104 countries by IMD) on education needs to be ramped up with a digital talent strategy, including skill development and new ways of working in the Digital age.
- There is a need to create an ecosystem for the propagation of Industry 4.0 by every Indian manufacturer by 2025.

About Broadband India Forum

Broadband India Forum (BIF) functions as an independent policy forum and knowledge-based think-tank that works for the development and enhancement of the entire broadband ecosystem in a holistic, technology-neutral and service-neutral manner. BIF has established itself as a thought leader and a credible and effective voice, to help propel the nation to achieve the country's ambitious vision of creating a Digital India. To achieve this, BIF works to promote the rapid development of policies, so as to facilitate affordable and high-speed ubiquitous broadband throughout the country.

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