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CONTENTS

Sr.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)		
No.		No.	
1.	A STUDY ON SELF HELP GROUPS IN KARNATAKA DR. RASHMIRANI AGNIHOTRI H.R & DR. K.S MALIPATIL		
2.			
۷.	SECTOR IN INDIA - WITH REFERENCE TO NOIDA REGION	6	
	SANGEETA RANI & PRABHAT SRIVASTAVA		
3.	PROBLEMS OF MICRO ENTREPRENEURS IN CHITTOOR DISTRICT	8	
Э.	P.VENKATADRI REDDY & DR. HAMPANNA	0	
4.	MAKE IN INDIA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN DEFENCE SECTOR	13	
	AZHAR SHAIKH, DR. UTTAM KINANGE & ARTHUR FERNANDES	_	
5.	MICROINSURANCE: WAY AHEAD TO TAP RURAL INSURANCE MARKETS	16	
	DR. N. SUMAN KUMAR		
6.	GO GREEN WITH GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES	19	
	RIZWANA KHURSHID & MUSHTAQ A DARZI		
7.	ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS	22	
	DR. DAVINDER SHARMA		
8.	NEXUS BETWEEN REMITTANCE INFLOW AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN NEPAL	29	
	SURAJ GAUDEL		
9.	PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED MICROFINANCE INSTITUTIONS IN INDIA	34	
	S. RADHIKA & DR. P. KANCHANA DEVI		
10 .	A STUDY ON WORK LIFE BALANCE OF WOMEN FACULTY IN PRIVATE COLLEGES WITH SPECIAL	38	
	REFERENCE TO NAMAKKAL DISTRICT		
	DR. K. GIRIJA		
11.	BUSINESS-TO-CONSUMER (B2C) e-COMMERCE: A SURVEY	43	
	YOGITA SHARMA		
12 .	AGRO BASED INDUSTRY: A WAY OF BALANCING INDIAN ECONOMY	47	
	DR. BANESWAR KAPASI		
13.	IMPACT AND CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTATION OF GST ON INDIAN ECONOMY	49	
	VANDANA SHARMA		
14.	A COMPARATIVE STUDY AMONG PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES ABOUT	52	
	RETIREMENT FINANCIAL LITERACY, KERALA		
	ASWATHY MOHAN		
15.	ECONOMETRIC MODELING OF THE IMPACTS OF SHIPPING ON NIGERIAN ECONOMY	58	
	THEOPHILUS C NWOKEDI, DR. L.I. OKOROJI & CHINEMEREM C. IGBOANUSI		
16 .	WHY SHOULD BUSINESSMEN BE ETHICAL?	62	
	BILAL AHMAD RATHER		
17.	IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON INDIAN AGRICULTURE	65	
10	INDRA BANSAL	60	
18.	A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INDIA AND CHINA ECONOMIC RELATION WITH SPECIAL	68	
	REFERENCE TO STOCK MARKET IN THE 21 st CENTURY JOHN MANG MUAN LIAN ZOU		
10	ANALYSIS USING CAMEL MODEL: EVIDENCE FROM LARGE COMMERCIAL BANKS IN TANZANIA	71	
19.	JANALYSIS USING CAMEL MODEL: EVIDENCE FROM LARGE COMMERCIAL BANKS IN TANZANIA	71	
20	THE GAP OF HOSPITAL SERVICE PERFORMANCE BY USING SERVICE QUALITY ANALYSIS	76	
20.	MUSTAFA HERMANTO	/0	
		80	
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK & DISCLAIMER	00	

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MAKE IN INDIA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN DEFENCE SECTOR

AZHAR SHAIKH JUNIOR RESEARCH FELLOW KOUSALI INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES KARNATAK UNIVERSITY DHARWAD

DR. UTTAM KINANGE PROFESSOR & DIRECTOR KOUSALI INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES KARNATAK UNIVERSITY DHARWAD

ARTHUR FERNANDES RESEARCH SCHOLAR KOUSALI INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES KARNATAK UNIVERSITY DHARWAD

ABSTRACT

An ambitious Make in India campaign by the government of India can not only change the image of the country as a hub for manufacturing but also as a destination to do business. Annoyed by India's status as the world's biggest arms importer, Indian government wants to build an advanced defense industry which aims to turn the country into a manufacturing powerhouse. It offers a way of improving the country's self-reliance in defence production. However, for the Make in India to succeed in the defence manufacturing sector, the government needs to address some legacy issues. This paper attempts to give a present state of affairs of the Indian Defence, then depicts the global scenario relating to defence and attempts to identify the opportunities and the challenges waiting for the Make in India campaign for defence sector.

KEYWORDS

FDI, defence, manufacturing, make in India, private sector.

INTRODUCTION

"What counts is not necessarily the size of the dog in the fight – it's the size of the fight in the dog"

- General Dwight D. Eisenhower 's this former President of USA and also a five-star general of US army during World War II said, the might of the army is in the size of the fight it gives and there might be many factors influencing the might of the army. Soldiers, military equipments, guns and tanks, intelligence and surveillance capabilities and rother military requirements can be seen as the source for the confidence the army can have to safeguard its borders. Investment in the emerging markets by global aerospace and defence companies has witnessed an increase, driven primarily by a search for low-cost manufacturing options, research and development capabilities and acquisition of engineering and related critical talent. In future battles, the technology superiority is going to play a crucial decisive role. A roadmap should be laid down to be able to develop and change superior technology into affordable and critical military capability keeping in mind affordability, timeliness, dual use, technology base and modular design. This would enable the country's R&D establishments to focus on specific capability requirements and work out appropriate technologies needed to fulfill these requirements. A concentrated effort should be put to design and produce indigenously not just to satisfy the domestic demand but also to export. Public or private sector who have interest in the defence sector would be able to work out a strategic plan develop the needed technology, including the required funding and research and development goals in very specific areas. This would include plans for the development of capability in areas that are considered and draw-up a roadmap towards achieving it by tapping all available national resources including the civilian industry, private as well as government enterprises and the academia. The significance of being self-reliant in the defence sector desires no prominence as it is not only of critical strategic and national importance but also an essential part of the national power. In six decades since independence, the country has made major progress in achieving this objective. However, much remains to be done. Ministry of defence recognises that progress needs to be accelerated by harnessing our national capability in all its forms. The cutting edge technology with defence application needs substantial investment in terms of time, money and human resource to develop. Induction of new weapon systems is cost and time intensive. It is therefore imperative that the long term requirement of capability be identified and understood for appropriate technology to be developed indigenously.

INDIAN DEFENCE SECTOR – THE PRESENT SCENARIO

- India has the 3rd largest armed forces in the world in terms of active personnel
- India imports 60% of arms from various countries. It is the world's largest arms importer and accounts for 14 percent of the world's arms imports
- India is one of the largest importers of conventional defence equipment and spends about 40% of its total defence budget on capital acquisitions.
- India ranks 8th globally in military spending
- India will spend \$100-150 billion (about Rs 5.4-8.1 lakh crore) on defence modernisation programmes by 2022
- The government, as the sole purchaser of defence equipments, spends heavily with defence expenditure accounting for close to 15 percent of central government expenditure
- Foreign direct investment (FDI) in defence is increased to 49% from 26%
- Hardly any investment in R & D by government. Only 6 % of the defence expenditure is diverted towards research
- Indian firms have spurned some \$15 billion worth of government tenders to make a range of weapons since 2013
- The allocation for defence in the last budget was approximate USD 37.3 Billion. [1][2][3]

DEFENCE SECTOR ACROSS THE GLOBE

Fifty nations account for 92 percent (\$163B) of the world's total spending on national account defence. The defence policies and programmes of these top 50 nations explains most of the world's defence activity and shape the global security environment in the broadest and most enduring ways. The top 50 nations produce more than 90 percent of global economic output and include populations of more than five billion people across six continents. 60 percent of global defence spending is generated only by six nations [4].

Country	Planned budget for 2014-15 in \$ billion	Increase in the budget year on year in percentage		
India	38	10		
Brazil	31	5		
South Korea	33	4.2		
China	131	12		
Saudi Arabia	30	NA		

TABLE 1: BUDGET FOR DEFENCE OF VARIOUS COUNTRIES

The Table.1 shows the planned budget by some of the countries for the year 2014-15. It shows that India's planned budget for the defence is \$ 38 billion which is about 10% increase from its previous year's budget. Neighbouring country China has increased its defence budget from \$117 billion to 131%, an increase of 12 percent. The budget of China is almost equal to the combined budge of India, Brazil, South Korea and Saudi Arabia [4]. Following Figure 1 shows the expected changes in defence spending vary for different regions of the world

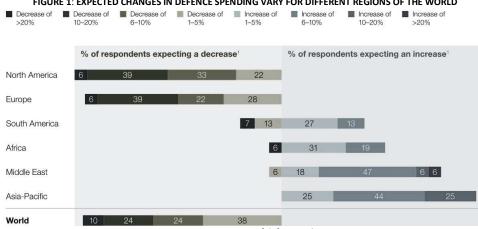
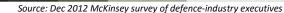


FIGURE 1: EXPECTED CHANGES IN DEFENCE SPENDING VARY FOR DIFFERENT REGIONS OF THE WORLD



If we observe the chart, the increase in the defence budget of Asia-Pacific region is highest; where as North America and Europe have drastically reduced the defence budget. Middle Eastern region is the next to Asia Pacific. We can infer from the chart that these two regions have started to invest in defence recently as there has been much unrest in these regions. To defend and to keep the peace within the country, the countries in these regions have invested heavily. On other hand North America and Europe has reduced the budget as they have been investing large amount of capital in defence since years [5].

MAKE IN INDIA AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN DEFENCE SECTOR

The Government will focus on indigenisation with the increasing presence of Indian companies and giving cost advantages relating to basic design and engineering services, components, and assemblies manufacturing. Indian companies will also succeed with the help of foreign companies which creates a benefit for both. Once indigenous manufacturing takes root, research and development for the indigenous military industry and civil aircraft is likely to be the other focus area of the Indian Government, the report added [6]. The program will facilitate the development and production of high-end technology systems within the country. This will comprise a wide range of technologies and systems, like Missile Technology, Remote Weapon Systems and Advanced Armor Solutions [7]. Getting foreign companies to establish businesses in India is not to avoid the import cost but to increase the domestic market capabilities to support the Indian defence sector by enhancing investment, growing manufacturing, support enterprise, state-of-art technology and increase economic growth in India.

The opportunities what small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) will have is umpteen. The SME have been the subcontractors to many of the Public sectors as well as private sector players undertaking the projects of the defence. As the Indian private players start their venture in defence, many SMEs would emerge not just in manufacturing but also in other supporting services. These services can be training institutes to upgrade the technical skills required for the working class. The skill sets of these SMEs who are undertaking the private organizations work will improve drastically as they have to match the quality standards of the defence. This will bring a systemic change in the way production plants work. They would be more organized and technically sound. As government of India has allowed 49 percent FDI in defence sector, many foreign players would set up their businesses with help of Indian companies. Along with the technical help, these foreign companies will update the technical capabilities of the Indian manufacturing sector. The SME market has always constituted a significant component of the Indian economy, accounting for 40% of employment and making an almost equivalent contribution to India's GDP. The challenge has been getting them to spend on technology.

Private sector, though is in its nascent stage in the defence manufacturing is eager to manufacture for the defence. Tata and Boeing have already signed for a joint venture. Rafael of Israel has started a joint venture with Kalyani group. They will are more than eager to serve the defence as India is considered as the most favoured country to invest in defence sector. Indian government has been pumping substantial amount of money in defence procurement and establishment. Following table shows the defence budget since 2005 to 2015.

India will spend \$100-150 billion (about Rs 5.4-8.1 lakh crore) on defence modernisation programmes by 2022 and this makes India the most attractive place to set up a business related to defence. Provision of Rs. 2,290 billion for defence has been announced in the union budget 2014-15. Although the Indian defence industry was opened to the private sector in 2001, the latter is yet to contribute in any meaningful manner. The biggest hindrance in the private sector's participation so far has been mistrust. When it comes to big contracts, procedural hurdles come in the way, making it virtually impossible for the private sector to get into complex defence manufacturing. Moreover, single source procurement from the private sector is still considered a taboo, whereas import without competition is greatly admired [8].

CHALLENGES FOR THE DEFENCE SECTOR IN INDIA

The indifference towards in-house manufacturing of defence equipment is perhaps best exemplified in the way various defence plans are prepared and pursued. All these plans are prepared with a focus on 'acquiring' the best possible equipment available in the world. The Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and domestic industry are entirely disregarded in the planning process. To make matters worse, there is no channel for the armed forces to make available

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advance information to the local industry so as to facilitate the public or private sectors to come up with detailed financial, technological and industrial plans to meet the requirements in a timeframe that is acceptable to the armed forces[8]. Government wants to put up an advanced defense industry but almost an year into its "Make in India" campaign, which aims to turn the nation into a manufacturing hub for the world, not one large domestic weapons project has been awarded. Indian firms have rejected some \$15 billion (Rs. 945 billion) worth of government tenders to make a range of weapons since 2013, in a blow to the drive to wean the country off imported arms. Tenders have lapsed for the projects of air defence guns to surface-to-air missiles to transport planes. Government has laid down impossible requirements by insisting on technology which only foreign manufacturers had. Companies with prior experiencing in supplying the defence goods is entertained by defence is also a hurdle in motivating the domestic players to participate in any tenders.[2]. The domestic manufacturing industry will be hard pressed to provide to the demand from the global primes for components, which they will need to procure from India to discharge the potential offset obligations. This capacity constraint can be a potential deterrent to the foreign companies, especially when seen in light of efficient supply chain and program management which are at the core of such manufacturing projects [9]. The greatest weakness in India's defence manufacturing is the lack of a high-powered institution that can lay out a long term roadmap for the defence industry, set a target for the industry, monitor the progress, and more importantly bring all the stakeholders on one platform and commit to the common cause of self-reliance. Defence industry requires a highly skilled labour force. Currently, there is hardly any thinking on how to generate a robust human resource base both in terms of number and quality. Low education and lack of training is also an aspect that is common to other high-end R&D organisations like the ISRO and atomic energy department, and even to manufacturing establishments such as Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd [8]. Defence acquisition is a highly specialized progression and needs adequately qualified human resource. India lacks a dedicated cadre of workforce for assets acquisitions along with any explicit training programs for employees involved in the acquisition process. The conception of a separate and dedicated institutional structure to take on the entire range of procurement functions is required to make possible a higher degree of professionalism and cost effectiveness in the defence procurement process [9].

An increase in FDI of 49 percent from 26 percent in defence sector has turned into a challenge too for the large organizations which are involved in defence manufacturing as they would not have the control over the management of the manufacturing. On the other hand China and South Korea have been very liberal in their approach to allow FDI and utilize their country for manufacturing defence equipments. India has a complex taxation system with a large number of taxes applicable at different stages of the manufacturing process. The tax regime is perceived as aggressive and bureaucratic in its application. For example, while the indirect tax laws provide various exemptions and concessions from payment of custom duty (on imports) and excise duty (on domestic manufacturing) of capital goods, machinery, equipment, spares, tools, etc. for use by the Armed Forces and defence sector, such benefits are specific in nature and have been restricted to certain types of equipment, machinery, etc. or to various programs or development projects undertaken by the Ministry of Defence [11].

A strong research and development is another challenge to the Indian firms who are interested in being the part of Make in India. The private sector gets to know once the government issues request for proposal (RFP). Once the RFPs are issued, the domestic players don't have sufficient time to respond with designs or any other proposals regarding the product. Eventually, the order goes to the foreign suppliers who possess the technology[11]. Government should make either the RFP known in advance so that the domestic players can invest their time and money in developing the requirements to should establish research centers which involve in research and development in regular basis and suggest the defence to include any innovative product in the force. There should be a forum where private sector can experiment with innovative products and can suggest the same to defence to make those products as part of the defence equipments.

CONCLUSION

India needs to develop a macro vision for promoting 'Make in India' in defence sector to attain the level of developed countries in defence manufacturing. It should not only have Make 'In' India approach but also Make 'For' India. It should first satisfy the domestic market and then look for the exports. Present approach is more of export oriented than for the domestic market. An export-led growth strategy will not pay for India as it did for Asian economies, including China, due to the tepid global economic recovery, especially in the industrial countries. The government should rather focus on creating an environment where all sorts of enterprise can flourish, and then leaving entrepreneurs to choose what they want to do. Make in India will typically mean more openness, as we create an environment that makes our firms able to compete with the rest of the world, and encourages foreign producers to come and take advantage of our environment to create jobs in India.

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