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Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses: Transforming India's Pulse Economy for Self-Sufficiency, Nutritional Security, and Farmer Prosperity

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Pulses play a vital role in India's agricultural, nutritional, and economic landscape as key sources of plant-based protein and essential nutrients. Despite being the world's largest producer and consumer, India continues to face a demand–supply gap, importing nearly 15–20% of its pulse requirements. To address this challenge, Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji on 11th October 2025 launched the *Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses*, a comprehensive national initiative aimed at achieving complete self-sufficiency in pulse production by 2030–31. The mission adopts a holistic, value-chain-based approach encompassing seed and technology interventions, area expansion, productivity enhancement, assured procurement, and post-harvest value addition. With an outlay of ₹11,440 crore over six years, it targets production of 350 lakh tonnes and productivity of 1,130 kg/ha. It emphasizes climate-smart agriculture, capacity building, FPO-based processing, and digital integration across the pulse ecosystem. The mission is expected to enhance farmer incomes by 30–40%, save substantial foreign exchange, improve nutritional security, generate rural employment, and promote sustainable, low-carbon agriculture. By aligning research, innovation, and policy support, the Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses is poised to transform India's pulse economy and advance the nation toward self-reliance, sustainability, and agricultural prosperity.

Introduction

Pulses occupy a central position in India's agrarian economy, nutritional security, and cultural heritage. As the largest producer, consumer, and importer of pulses in the world, India's pulse sector represents both a challenge and an opportunity. Pulses — including chickpea, pigeon pea (tur), lentil (masoor), urad, and moong — are vital sources of plant-based protein, essential amino acids, and micronutrients. They play a crucial role in improving soil fertility through biological nitrogen fixation, thereby supporting sustainable farming systems and reducing dependence on synthetic fertilizers.

Despite India's impressive record in agricultural growth, the demand for pulses has consistently outpaced domestic supply. Rising population, urbanization, dietary diversification, and growing health awareness have led to an increasing per capita demand for pulses. However, domestic production has not kept pace, leading to a persistent demand–supply gap. Consequently, India has been importing nearly 15–20% of its total pulse requirements, leading to outflows of valuable foreign exchange.

To address this strategic gap and strengthen the nation's food and nutritional security, the Union Cabinet chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses, a transformative national initiative aimed at achieving complete self-sufficiency in pulse production by 2030–31. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji has inaugurated the mission on 11th October 2025 that seeks to empower

farmers, enhance productivity, ensure assured market linkages, and promote sustainable, climate-resilient pulse-based farming systems.

Mission Objectives

The overarching objective of the Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses is to achieve **self-sufficiency in pulse production** through an integrated and value-chain-based approach. The mission focuses on strengthening every critical link — from research and seed production to processing, marketing, and export promotion. Key goals include:

- **Enhancing domestic production** of pulses to meet the entire national demand sustainably.
- **Empowering farmers** through technology transfer, quality seed availability, and assured procurement mechanisms.
- **Promoting nutritional security** by ensuring the availability of affordable pulses to all households.
- **Encouraging crop diversification** and resilience through sustainable agricultural practices.

Strategic Components and Key Targets

Production Enhancement for Self-Sufficiency

- The mission aims to increase India's total pulse production to 350 lakh tonnes by 2030–31, aligning with projected national demand.
- Productivity is targeted to rise from 881 kg/ha to 1,130 kg/ha, supported by scientific agronomic practices, improved seed replacement rates, and precision farming techniques.
- Research institutions under ICAR and SAUs will play a pivotal role in developing region-specific technologies and promoting resource-efficient practices.

Expansion of Cultivation Area

- Cultivation will expand to 310 lakh hectares through utilization of rice fallow lands, particularly in eastern India.
- Promotion of intercropping and crop rotation with cereals, oilseeds, and commercial crops will enhance soil fertility, reduce risk, and increase farm income.
- The mission emphasizes climate-smart interventions, including short-duration, drought-tolerant varieties suited for rainfed and dryland conditions.

Seed and Technology Interventions

- Distribution of 88 lakh free seed kits of high-yielding, disease-resistant, and location-specific varieties.
- Multi-location varietal trials will be conducted to identify the most suitable cultivars across diverse agro-ecological regions.
- Adoption of modern agricultural technologies, including precision agriculture, drone-based input delivery, mechanized sowing, and integrated pest management (IPM).
- Strengthened collaboration between ICAR, State Agricultural Universities (SAUs), KVKs, and seed corporations will ensure faster dissemination of innovations.

Farmer Support and Capacity Building

- Structured training programs and exposure visits for farmers, seed producers, and extension officials.
- Extensive outreach through Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), mobile-based advisories, and digital learning platforms.
- Demonstration of improved crop management and post-harvest technologies to promote adoption and reduce losses.
- Focus on women farmers and youth entrepreneurs to encourage participation in seed production, processing, and marketing enterprises.

Post-Harvest Management and Processing Infrastructure

- Establishment of 1,000 pulse processing units with a capital subsidy of up to ₹25 crore each, aimed at reducing post-harvest losses, improving quality, and adding value locally.

- Promotion of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and primary processing centers for aggregation, cleaning, grading, and packaging.
- Incentivizing private sector participation in storage, cold chain, and logistics infrastructure for pulses.
- Linking processing units to e-NAM, GEM, and AgriStack for transparent and efficient marketing.

Assured Procurement and Market Support

- Central agencies such as NAFED and NCCF will ensure 100% procurement of key pulses — Tur, Urad, and Masoor — under the Minimum Support Price (MSP) framework.
- Introduction of cluster-based interventions, identifying high-potential pulse zones and establishing localized procurement and processing hubs.
- Encouragement of contract farming and market-led production planning in collaboration with agri-startups and cooperatives.

Budgetary Outlay and Implementation Framework

The Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses will be implemented over a six-year period (2025–26 to 2030–31) with a total outlay of ₹11,440 crore. The allocation will be strategically distributed across seed multiplication, infrastructure development, capacity building, technology dissemination, and institutional support. A National Steering Committee under the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare will monitor progress, supported by State-level Implementation Committees. Convergence with other schemes such as PM-KUSUM, PMKSY, PMFME, and FPO Scheme will ensure synergy and resource optimization.

Research, Innovation, and Policy Synergy

Research institutions as ICAR, SAUs etc will play a major role that have developed high-yielding, biofortified, and climate-resilient varieties. The mission encourages accelerated varietal replacement and participatory seed production models. The integration of data analytics, remote sensing, and digital extension services will help track crop progress, predict yield variability, and optimize input use. Policies promoting ease of doing agri-business, custom hiring centers, and cluster-based development will ensure scalability and sustainability.

Expected Outcomes and Impact

The Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses is projected to yield multifaceted benefits:

1. **Self-Sufficiency and Import Reduction** – Achieving full domestic sufficiency will save an estimated ₹15,000 crore annually in import bills and stabilize domestic prices.
2. **Enhanced Farmer Income** – Assured procurement, value addition, and diversification will increase farmer income by 30–40% in pulse-growing regions.
3. **Nutritional Security** – Affordable availability of pulses will improve protein intake, reducing malnutrition and supporting national nutrition missions.
4. **Employment Generation** – Processing and value-chain development will create **over 20** lakh rural jobs, particularly for women and youth.
5. **Environmental Benefits** – Increased pulse cultivation enhances soil fertility, reduces fertilizer use, and contributes to low-carbon sustainable agriculture.
6. **Rural Industrialization** – Development of decentralized processing and marketing units will stimulate rural entrepreneurship and strengthen the local economy.

Challenges and the Way Forward

While the mission is ambitious, several challenges need careful attention:

- **Climatic vulnerabilities** such as erratic rainfall, droughts, and heat stress.
- **Limited mechanization** and post-harvest technology in pulse-growing regions.
- **Price volatility** and market fluctuations affecting farmer confidence.
- **Weak linkages** between research, extension, and farmers' fields.

To overcome these, a multi-stakeholder approach involving government agencies, research institutions, private sector, and farmers' organizations is essential. Emphasis on climate-resilient technologies, digital extension, and market intelligence systems will ensure long-term sustainability.

Conclusion

The Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses represents a visionary step towards transforming India's pulse economy. It aligns with the broader goals of the National Food Security Mission (NFSM), Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, and Viksit Bharat 2047. By integrating research, innovation, infrastructure, and policy reforms, the mission envisions a future where Indian farmers are empowered, consumers are assured of nutritional security, and the nation achieves genuine agricultural self-reliance. This mission embodies the philosophy of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, aur Sabka Prayas" — ensuring that every farmer becomes a stakeholder in India's journey toward prosperity, sustainability, and self-sufficiency.