From 'Make in India' to 'Move in India' : Building the Logistics Backbone of a $1 Trillion Export Economy

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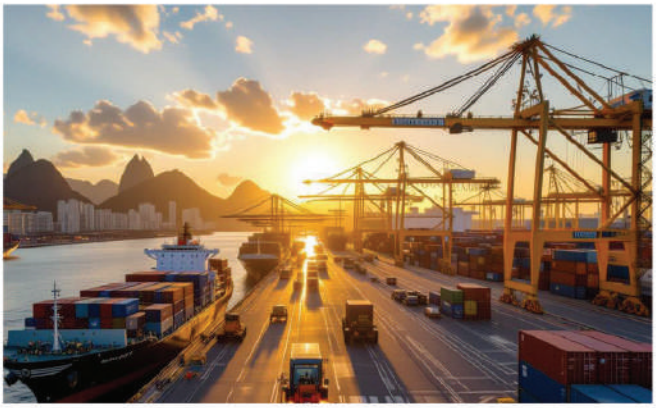
"Move in India" is the missing link to India's $1trillion export dream. By empowering homegrown logistics companies and building a world-class logistics ecosystem, India can transform the "Make in India" vision into the reality of a true global economic powerhouse.

As India stands at the transition point of becoming a global economic powerhouse, the success of initiatives like 'Make in India' increasingly depends on a complementary revolution in logistics and infrastructure. While India aspires to become the world's next manufacturing powerhouse, its local logistics players still struggle to scale. Developed economies such as China, Korea, Germany, Japan, and the Netherlands built their export strength by actively nurturing home-grown freight forwarders, shipping lines, and LCL (Less than Container Load) Consolidation companies, backed by strong policy support and national alignment. It's time to recognize that "Move in India" is as vital as "Make in India". "Move in India" needs to be a comprehensive approach that recognizes how world-class movement of goods supported by robust port infrastructure, shipping lines, freight forwarders, and consolidators, can empower Indian exporters, including MSMEs, to achieve the broader goal of doubling merchandise exports to $1 trillion by 2030.

While 'Make in India' has positioned the country as a manufacturing hub, the next phase of growth demands equal focus on 'Move in India', the efficient, cost-effective movement of goods domestically and globally. This requires a holistic logistics ecosystem approach which helps to build a logistics ecosystem that supports its homegrown logistics companies, creating jobs, enabling seamless multimodal connectivity, leveraging digital platforms for real-time visibility, and simplifying processes to cut costs and delays.

The Port Infrastructure Renaissance

India's next wave of growth will be export-driven, and the port sector is gearing up to match that ambition.Ports function as critical channels for India's international trade, facilitating more than 90% of trade volume and 70% of trade value. Currently India has an installed Port capacity of more than 30 million teus and had a total throughput of more than 22 million TEUs (Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit) in the last financial year. One of India's most ambitious port projects is the Vadhvan Port in Maharashtra, designed with a capacity of over 23 million TEUs . Once fully operational - after 2030, it would be ranked among the world's top 10 ports



These statistics highlight India's shift from a land-locked mindset to a maritime-driven growth strategy. Ports are no longer just transit points, they are integrated economic ecosystems that fuel regional growth, jobs, and global trade connectivity.The government's port-led development agenda reflects a core truth: nations that control their maritime gateways control their economic destiny.

The MSME Export Ecosystem

MSMEs are both the primary beneficiaries and drivers of India's infrastructure transformation. Contributing ~45% of exports and employing 110 million people, they represent the democratization of global trade. But sustainable growth depends on the world-class logistics ecosystem accessibility, efficient networks that can manage smaller shipments and cost-effective solutions for enterprises with limited capital.

Traditional logistics, built for large corporates, often sidelined MSMEs with high shipment thresholds and complex documentation. Today, modern ports with digital platforms, consolidation services, shared warehousing, and streamlined customs are reversing this trend, making exports far more accessible.

Take textiles; MSME clusters in Tirupur, Ludhiana, and Surat now leverage improved port connectivity to ship directly to global buyers, bypassing intermediaries, capturing higher margins, and building stronger market links. Efficient handling of small consignments and compliance support have enabled this transformation.

Integrated Economic Corridors

The development of economic corridors that integrate manufacturing zones with port facilities marks the next stage of India's growth strategy. Initiatives such as the Delhi–Mumbai Industrial Corridor, the Chennai–Bengaluru Industrial Corridor, and other planned Freight corridors are creating ecosystems where manufacturing, logistics, and export facilities are co-located—reducing transportation costs and cutting time-to-market.

These corridors give businesses, especially MSMEs, access to world-class infrastructure without the burden of heavy capital investment. Shared logistics services, common effluent treatment plants, and integrated customs systems lower barriers to entry while enhancing efficiency. A strong example is the pharmaceutical sector, where MSME clusters in Hyderabad and Ahmedabad benefit from specialized cold-chain logistics and direct port connectivity. This infrastructure enables them to serve regulated markets in Europe and North America and effectively compete with global giants.

This integration is now supercharged by digital technologies, AI demand forecasting, blockchain traceability, and IoT monitoring—delivered through shared digital platforms at ports. India is already setting benchmarks: container dwell time averages just three days, ahead of the UAE (4 days) and Germany (10 days). With 76% of global port operators prioritizing yard and terminal optimization, India's progress underscores the impact of tech-driven upgrades and process improvements.

The Economic Multiplier Effect

The synergy between port development, MSME empowerment, and logistics optimization creates a powerful economic multiplier effect. Each job created in port operations generates approximately 3-4 jobs in related sectors, including transportation, warehousing, customs clearance, and financial services. For MSMEs, this expanded ecosystem provides access to specialized services previously available only to large corporations.

Furthermore, efficient logistics networks enable MSMEs to participate in global value chains as reliable suppliers, moving beyond simple product exports to integrated manufacturing partnerships. Indian MSMEs in sectors ranging from automotive components to textiles are increasingly becoming integral parts of global production networks, enabled by reliable, cost-effective logistics connectivity.

The Path Forward

As India progresses toward its goal of becoming a $5 trillion economy, the integration of 'Make in India' and 'Move in India' initiatives will determine success. Port infrastructure development, MSME empowerment, and logistics optimization are not separate policy objectives but interconnected elements of a comprehensive growth strategy.

The current trajectory is promising. With port infrastructure investments accelerating and logistics costs declining, Indian MSMEs are better positioned than ever to compete in global markets. The challenge lies in maintaining this momentum while ensuring that infrastructure development translates to tangible benefits for smaller enterprises.

India's economic future will be written not just in factories and boardrooms but in ports and logistics hubs where goods begin their journey to global markets. The success of 'Move in India' will ultimately determine whether 'Make in India' achieves its transformative potential, creating a truly integrated, globally competitive economy powered by the entrepreneurial energy of its MSMEs.