

AATMANIRBHARTA IN PULSES – BUDGET 2025

NEWS: The Finance Minister has announced the launch of a six-year ‘Mission for Aatmanirbharta (self-reliance) in Pulses’.

WHAT’S IN THE NEWS?

Budget Allocation and Objective

The **Government of India** has allocated **₹1,000 crore** towards a comprehensive initiative aimed at boosting **domestic pulses production** and achieving **self-sufficiency** in the coming years. This initiative focuses primarily on three major pulse crops:

- **Tur/Arhar (Pigeon Pea)**
- **Urad (Black Gram)**
- **Masoor (Red Lentil)**

The program will provide **Minimum Support Price (MSP)-based procurement** to farmers, ensuring financial security for their produce. Additionally, it will introduce **post-harvest warehousing solutions** to reduce storage losses and prevent price fluctuations caused by seasonal oversupply or shortages.

India’s Self-Sufficiency Target for Pulses

India has set an ambitious target of **eliminating its dependence on imported pulses by 2029**. Recently, the **Union Home Minister** announced that the country aims to **completely stop importing pulses by 2028-29**. This would not only strengthen food security but also reduce India's reliance on global markets, making it resilient to international price fluctuations and trade restrictions.

Current Status of Pulses Import in India

Despite being the **largest producer and consumer of pulses**, India remains a significant importer due to rising domestic demand and supply constraints.

- In **2023-24**, India imported **4.65 million tonnes** of pulses, an **84% increase** compared to the previous year, marking the highest import level in the last six years.
- In terms of value, the country's expenditure on pulse imports rose by **93%**, reaching **\$3.75 billion**.
- India primarily imports pulses from the following countries:
 - **Canada**
 - **Australia**

- **Myanmar**
- **Mozambique**
- **Tanzania**
- **Sudan**
- **Malawi**

This sharp increase in imports highlights the urgent need for **policy interventions** to enhance domestic production and reduce import dependency.

Pulses Production in India: An Overview

India plays a crucial role in global pulses production, consumption, and trade:

- **Production:** India contributes **25%** to global pulses production.
- **Consumption:** The country accounts for **27%** of total global pulses consumption.
- **Imports:** Despite high domestic production, India imports around **14%** of the world's total pulses trade.

Contribution of Pulses to Indian Agriculture

- Pulses cultivation covers approximately **23%** of the total **area under food grains** in India.
- They contribute **9-10% of total food grain production** in the country.
- **Rabi (winter-sown) pulses account for over 60%** of total pulses production.

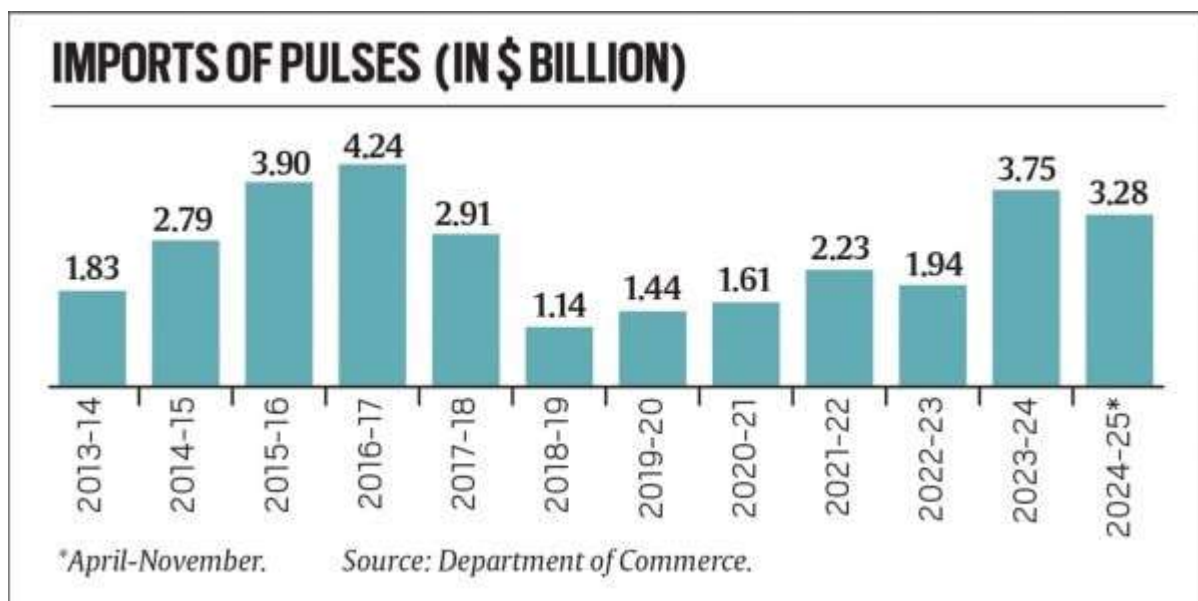
Major Pulses and Their Production Share

1. **Gram (Chana) – 40% share** in total pulses production.
2. **Tur/Arhar (Pigeon Pea) – 15-20% share.**
3. **Urad (Black Gram) & Moong (Green Gram) – Each contributes 8-10%.**

Top Pulses-Producing States in India

The leading pulses-producing states in India are:

1. **Madhya Pradesh** (highest producer)
2. **Maharashtra**
3. **Rajasthan**



Trends in Domestic Pulses Production

- In **2013-14**, India's pulses production stood at **192.55 lakh tonnes (lt)**.
- By **2021-22**, production rose significantly to **273.02 lt**.
- In **2022-23**, production slightly declined to **260.58 lt**.
- The increase in production over the years was primarily driven by two crops:
 - **Chana (Gram)**
 - **Moong (Green Gram)**

Despite this progress, **fluctuations in production** and the growing demand-supply gap continue to pose challenges for achieving complete self-sufficiency.

Challenges in Pulses Production

1. Low Productivity and Yield Instability

- Pulses have traditionally been **neglected** due to their **unstable yields**, which discourage farmers from prioritizing their cultivation.

2. Grown as a Residual Crop on Marginal Lands

- In India, pulses are often grown as a **residual crop** on **less fertile and rain-fed lands**, receiving minimal attention in terms of irrigation, pest control, and nutrient management.

- The **Green Revolution** prioritized the cultivation of **rice and wheat**, leading to the marginalization of pulses and land degradation.

3. Lack of Technological Breakthroughs

- Unlike rice and wheat, pulses have **not benefited from significant technological advancements**.
- The **penetration of high-yielding varieties (HYV) seeds** remains low.

4. Lower Profitability for Farmers

- Farmers perceive pulses as **less profitable** compared to cash crops like **wheat and rice**, leading to lower cultivation areas.

5. Post-Harvest Losses and Storage Issues

- Pulses suffer from **high post-harvest losses**, particularly due to:
 - Excessive moisture during storage.
 - **Infestation by stored grain pests**, especially the **pulse beetle**.

Government Measures to Boost Pulses Production

1. National Food Security Mission (NFSM) - Pulses

- Implemented by the **Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare**, the mission aims to **increase production through area expansion and yield improvement** across all major pulse-growing districts.

2. Research and Development (R&D) by ICAR

- The **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** is actively engaged in **developing high-yielding, location-specific varieties** in collaboration with **State Agricultural Universities**.

3. PM-AASHA Scheme

The government has launched an **umbrella scheme, PM-AASHA**, to ensure fair prices for farmers. It includes:

- **Price Support Scheme (PSS):** Direct government procurement at **Minimum Support Price (MSP)**.
- **Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS):** Compensates farmers if market prices fall below MSP.
- **Private Procurement Stockist Scheme (PPSS):** Encourages private players to procure pulses at MSP.

4. Integrated Scheme on Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm, and Maize (ISOPOM)

- Launched in **14 major pulses-producing states**, ISOPOM supports farmers by providing subsidies on **seeds, irrigation, and fertilizers**.

5. Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)

- A broad agricultural development scheme that allows states to implement **pulses development programs**.

Way Forward: Strategies for Achieving Self-Sufficiency

1. Establishing Model Pulses Villages

- The **Agriculture Ministry** plans to set up "**Model Pulses Villages**" to serve as **hubs for best practices and high-yield production**.

2. Expanding Pulses Cultivation to Fallow Lands

- The government is collaborating with **state governments** to convert **unused fallow land** into **pulses-growing areas**.

3. Creating 150 High-Yielding Seed Hubs

- The government plans to establish **150 seed hubs** to distribute **high-yielding and climate-resilient seed varieties**.
- These efforts will be carried out in collaboration with **agricultural research institutions**.

4. Encouraging Crop Diversification

- The government must **incentivize farmers to diversify their crops** and promote pulses cultivation by providing **financial support, technology, and training**.

By adopting these measures, India can **significantly boost domestic pulses production, enhance farmer income, and achieve self-sufficiency by 2028-29**, eliminating the need for imports and strengthening national food security.

Sources: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-economics/budget-announcement-why-aatmanirbharta-in-pulses-is-a-challenge-9813887/>