

‘Modi-fying’ leadership style for Atmanirbhar Bharat

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Abstract

Building Atmanirbhar Bharat is concerned with making India emerge as a hub for manufacturing and investments. The Prime Minister, Sh.Narendra Modi with his new style of leadership has sown the seed of ‘sabka saath, sabhka vikas, sabka vishvas and sabka prayas’ in pursuit of a new course of long term development. His dynamic leadership and style of governance is quite impressive. The paper tries to highlight and develop a framework of the leadership style of PM Sh.Narendra Modi and its intended outcome for the aspirational dream of achieving Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Keywords: Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, leadership style, atmanirbhar bharat

1. Introduction

“The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things.”

– Ronald Reagan

The capability of a person to successfully bind as well as sway the material and human resources of a country is fundamental to the development of a society as a sub-system and all the other sectors of a country as a whole (Ekene and Ugwunwanyi,2016). It will be suitable to state unequivocally that leaders play a fundamental role in ensuring that the lives of the citizens are improved through relentless progress in their lifestyle and basic infrastructural amenities. Leaders are those political figures that enthuse the people with their extraordinary vision and commitment to high ideals. They are the people who are able to command loyalty, commitment, trust, dedication, respect, love or even worship from their followers (Linstead, Fulop and Lilley, 2004)

Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi has given a clarion call for a self-

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reliant India based on the five pillars, i.e., Economy, Infrastructure, System, Demography & Demand and announced a special economic package for Self-Reliant India named 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'. It gives India a chance to emerge Atmanirbhar in local markets and spread its wings globally. Keeping the growth agenda in mind, the government is working hard to create a conducive environment for India to be a global powerhouse.

Sh. Narendra Modi being a man of vision realizes the importance of Atmanirbhar Bharat. In May 2014, he joined his office with an absolute majority, becoming the first PM in three decades to achieve this feat. His journey starts from him being a junior cadet in the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh to being the Prime Minister of the largest democracy in the world. His victory was not just a mandate of popularity; but it was rather seen as a mandate of expectations and hope of citizens frustrated with massive corruption, dynamic feudalism and insipid economic growth. In his address to the nation on 12th May, 2014, he has put forward the idea of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' or Self-reliant India in front of the entire nation. Atmanirbhar Bharat has gained a similar momentum like Swadeshi movement introduced by Mahatma Gandhi to support local businesses and boycott goods of the enemy (China this time) (Chindaliya, 2020). Self-reliance was also the avowed goal of economic policy in India in the early years after 1947. The principle architect of this idea was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (Balakrishnan,2020). Half a century after his death, his vision for India has been majestically brought back into play.

After assuming office, his government and his office has announced many programmes at periodic intervals. Many programmes and schemes with catchy campaigns became popular which captivated the attention of Indian Citizens. Some of them are, Swachh Bharat, Make in India, and Less Cash with emphasis on digital transactions. However, experiences and achievements of other countries in Asia have this notion that self-reliance is a loom created from Nehruvian 'socialism'. Countries like South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong took huge technological and industrial leap in the 1970s and 80s. These countries firmly climbed up the technology ladder and strengthened value chains in electronic goods, consumer durables, automobiles, micro-processors, personal computers and heavy machinery. This gradually led to their emergence as a global powerhouse in manufacturing and in indigenously developed technologies. These self-reliant capabilities were enabled along with other factors, by intended state investments in research and development, including basic research (3-5% of GDP), technology and policy support to private corporations, infrastructure and, importantly, education and skill development (4-6% of GDP)(Raghunandan,2020).

On similar lines, government has been trying to create a powerhouse

of Digital India with the motto “Power to Empower”. The three core components of this Digital mission of ‘E-Kranti’ are, creation of the digital infrastructure, digital literacy, and digital delivery of services. Digital India for Atmanirbhar Bharat aims for inclusive growth in areas of electronic services, job opportunities, products, and manufacturing. It is a vision of our government to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.

According to Vijay Govindrajan, distinguished Professor at Tuck, Dartmouth, in a centralized structure, a leader has a power over decision making, whereas in a decentralized structure, people down the hierarchy are also vested with the power to take decisions. In large multinationals, the operations are generally decentralized across geographies. However, “What India needs now, more than ever, is centralized decision making in setting fiscal, monetary, and regulatory policies but decentralized decision making with regard to creating new businesses and getting the economy going (Singh,2014).However, it is also believed that the Sh Narendra Modi’s government will not micro-manage all economic activities. Before liberalization came into play, India’s centralized system was at fault. This is because all the important and powerful industries like the steel mills and power plants were being run by the government.

For any government to sustain, it is important that they should best do what they are supposed to do i.e. ‘govern’ and let the fellow citizens do what they are good at i.e. ‘entrepreneurship’. Organizations adopt either decentralized or centralized structure. These structures usually have their own set of norms and relevance while functioning and these really depend on the strategy, ecosystem and the style of leadership. In case of India, Sh. Modi’s leadership style fits the Indian frame perfectly, especially during the time when India needs a tough and bold decision maker who can help India become an important link in the global supply chains.

The mission of Atmanirbhar Bharat was announced during the pandemic when the government allocated funds worth Rs. 20 lakh crore, which amounts to 10% of India’s GDP, as a stimulus package to help recover the economy by promoting incentives for domestic production. It encompasses themes such as ‘Local for Global: Make in India for the World’ and ‘Vocal for Local’. With introduction of this package Prime Minister wanted to emphasize on building sustainable communities and developing an independent economy.

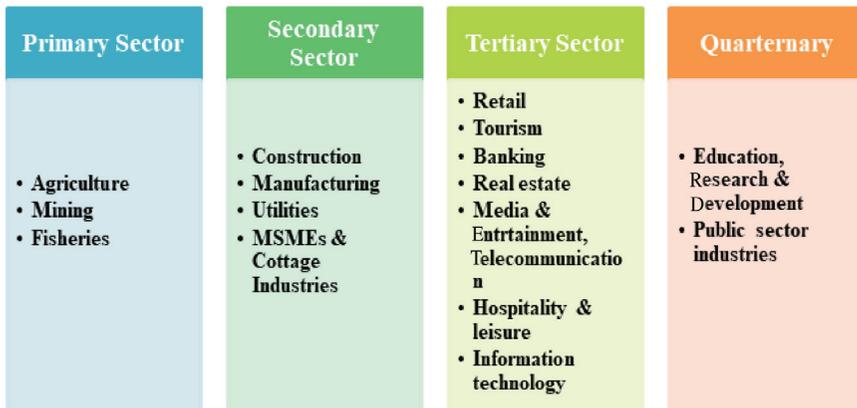
Some of the objectives of ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan’ are as follows:

- i. Develop India into a global supply chain hub.
- ii. Build the government’s trust in the private sector capabilities and prospects.

- iii. Establish ‘good force multipliers’ for Indian manufacturers.
- iv. Enter the global markets to export goods including agriculture, textiles, clothing and jewellery.
- v. Determine adequacy of each sector (e.g., defense, agriculture, health-care, infrastructure, etc.), with the help of FY22 budget, to achieve self-reliance.

2. Benefits of Atmanirbharta

The Atmanirbhar Bharat aims at giving a push to key industries in every sec-



tor of the Indian economy. Following are some of the Industries in the key sectors.

Figure 1. Focus on self-reliance in key industries (Source: IBEF³)

After seven decades of political independence, Sh.Modi has tried to turn India into ‘New India’ or a modern nation-state. It is because of his dynamic leadership that the economic, cultural and political awakening has to a large extent been realized after all these years since independence.

Under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, several measures have been taken up by the government. One such measure which will surely inspire

³. Self- reliant India (Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan), IBEF <https://www.ibef.org/government-schemes/self-reliant-india-aatm-nirbhar-bharat-abhiyan>

generations of entrepreneurs and innovators is the ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat Innovation Challenge’. The basic idea behind this, is to identify the best Indian apps that are already being used by citizens and have the potential to progress and become world-class Apps in their respective categories. Another important step in this direction has been to ban the import of 101 weapons and military items including artillery guns, assault rifles and transport aircraft.

According to Defence Minister, Sh Rajnath Singh, this is a “big step towards Atmanirbhar Bharat” that will “create big opportunities for the Indian defence industry” (Singh, 2020). The idea of ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’ is already showing results. It is evident from the fact that from zero production of personal protection equipment (PPE) kits before March 2020, India today has created a capacity of producing 4.5 lakh PPE kits daily, which is also growing steadily. Therefore, the mission focuses on the following four key factors i.e. Land, Labour, Liquidity and Laws. In line with these factors, the government

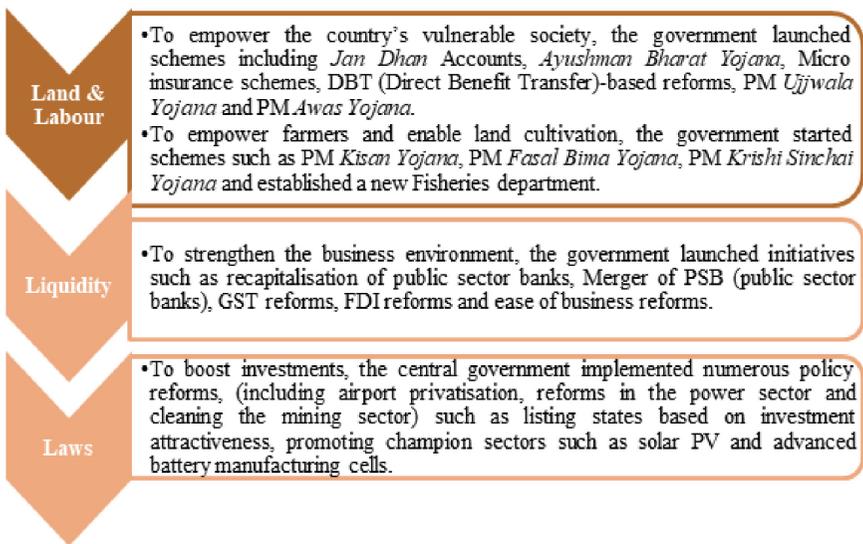


Figure 2. Government initiatives (between 2014 and 2020) to boost ‘Self-reliant India’ (Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan) mission

Source: IBEF³

³ Self- reliant India (Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan), IBEF <https://www.ibef.org/government-schemes/self-reliant-india-aatm-nirbhar-bharat-abhiyan>

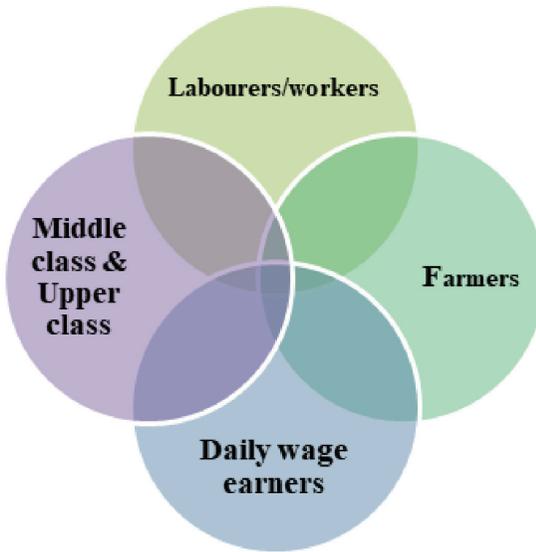


Figure 3. Beneficiaries of Atmanirbhar Bharat Initiatives

Source: Author

has introduced several initiatives, between 2014 and 2020, to help the country achieve self-reliance.

With the aim of ‘*Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas*’, Shri Modi has brought some revolutionary changes to the Indian diaspora. He has initiated various campaigns and multicolour revolutions (white revolution with cattle and livestock, blue revolution for fisherman and clean water, saffron revolution for solar energy, and second green revolution focussing on protein-rich pulses). White and Green Revolution are not new to the Indians and to a large extent have influenced their lives.

One of the main priorities of Atmanirbhar Bharat is self-reliant agriculture and self-reliant farmer. This has been planned well wherein, the government has introduced an agricultural infrastructure fund of Rs 1 lakh crore to create modern agri-infrastructure, and has also brought in the reforms that allow farmers to sell their produce anywhere in the country. Today to a large extent the farming economy has transitioned from importing grains to producing enough not just for the country but also for those in need globally.

Hence, Atmanirbhar Bharat can be interpreted in the following ways:

- i. As a reform that supports and promotes various communities towards environmental and social sustainability.

- ii. As an idea which promotes entrepreneurship culture and environment based on neoliberal design
- iii. As a policy to develop national industry, independent economy and strengthen India's position in the global supply chains.

3. Conclusion

With reference to the Atmanirbharta, the youth of the country has understood the developmental aspects of the Prime Minister's clarion call to design, innovate, and develop an ecosystem of start-ups. The government has been liberal on foreign direct investments and simultaneously supporting the technological and structural advancement of the nation. This is a thriving time for Indian startups and budding business to prosper. The twin objective of increasing self-reliance and being a part of global business environment by attracting investments along with solving the issue of unemployment proves to be appealing in times of Pandemic. India has the potential of being a major economic powerhouse, and therefore, along with its composite culture and vibrant democracy, the role of transformational leadership of PM Narendra Modi, in any situation, economic, political or social becomes instrumental and critical.

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