

# Vocal for Local

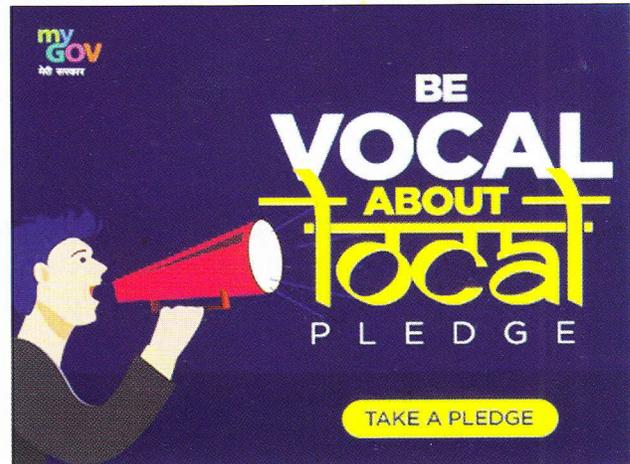
Vishnu Sharma

In his Independence Day speech in 2020, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi gave a clarion call to nation to go Vocal for Local. He emphasised that the mindset of independent India should be 'Vocal for Local'. He said, "We should take pride in our local products. If we do not praise and support our indigenous products, then how will they get an opportunity to flourish and improve, how will they gain strength? Come, let's pledge that as we move towards the 75<sup>th</sup> year of our independence, we shall adopt the talisman of 'Vocal for Local' and together let's strengthen ourselves." Ever since then, the government has taken various steps and measures to take forward India in an age of self reliance and dependent on locally manufactured goods.

**T**he outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has an unprecedented impact on economies worldwide. According to a joint statement issued by International Labour Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organisation, International Fund for Agricultural Development, and World Health Organization on 13 October 2020, "The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide and presents an unprecedented challenge to public health, food systems and the world of work. The economic and social disruption caused by the pandemic is devastating: tens of millions of people are at risk of falling into extreme poverty, while the number of undernourished people, currently estimated at nearly 690 million, could increase by up to 132 million by the end of the year." The statement further says, "Millions of enterprises face an existential threat. Nearly half of the world's 3.3 billion global workforce are at risk of losing their livelihoods. Informal economy workers are particularly vulnerable because the majority lacks social protection and access to quality health care and have lost access to productive assets. Without the means to earn an income during lockdowns, many are unable to feed themselves and their families. For most, no income means no food, or, at best, less food and less nutritious food."

In the face of the crisis the statement suggests that "Priority should be given to addressing underlying food security and malnutrition challenges, tackling rural poverty, in particular through more and better jobs in the rural economy, extending social protection to all, facilitating safe migration pathways and promoting the formalisation of the informal economy."

India, too, had its share of hardship during the pandemic. According to a Ministry of Finance press release of 8 February 2021, "as per the First



advance estimates of GDP released by NSO, GDP growth is estimated to contract by 7.7 per cent in 2020-21." Although agriculture and allied sector are estimated to grow at 3.4 per cent in 2020-21 and are likely to cushion the shock of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Indian economy in 2020-21 nevertheless, the same release says, "industry and services sector are estimated to contract by 9.6 per cent and 8.8 per cent respectively during the year 2020-21."

Sailing through the crisis as big as this has been a major challenge for the governments across the world. The World Bank had forecasted in June 2020 that the global economy will shrink by 5.2 per cent in the year 2020. The Bank said that this would represent the deepest recession since the Second World War, with the largest fraction of economies experiencing declines in per capita output since 1870.

## Clarion Call for Vocal for Local

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our local products. If we do not praise and support our indigenous products, then how will they get an opportunity to flourish and improve, how will they gain strength? Come, let's pledge that as we move towards the 75<sup>th</sup> year of our independence, we shall adopt the talisman of 'Vocal for Local' and together let's strengthen ourselves."

He further asked people to take pledge that "we will contribute towards reducing the import dependence, we will empower our small-scale industries, we all will be vocal for local. We will innovate more; empower our youth, women, scheduled tribes, scheduled castes, especially differently-abled, economically weaker sections, villages, backward classes, and everyone."

Addressing the nation, amid the pandemic, on 12 May 2020, Shri Modi gave a clarion call for 'AatmaNirbhar Bharat' and 'Vocal for Local' saying, "a virus has destroyed the world. Crores of people around the world are facing a crisis. World all over is engaged in a battle to save precious lives. We have never seen or heard of such a crisis. This crisis is unthinkable as well as unprecedented for mankind." In his speech Shri Modi highlighted that the building of self-reliant India will stand on five pillars which are: Economy, Infrastructure, Our System, Our Demography and Demand.

Announcing the economic package for the country to the tune of Rs. 20 lakh crore or around 10 per cent of the GDP, he said, "the Corona crisis has also explained to us the importance of local manufacturing, local market and local supply chain." Shri Modi said that time has taught us that we must make the 'local' as a mantra of our life. He added, "Therefore, from today every Indian has to become vocal for their local, not only to buy local products, but also to promote them proudly. I am confident that our country can do this. Your efforts have increased my reverence for you every time."<sup>i</sup>

Prime Minister Shri Modi has asked India's spiritual leaders to help popularise Vocal for Local to give boost to AatmaNirbhar Bharat. On 16 November 2020, speaking after unveiling the 'Statue of Peace' to mark the 151<sup>st</sup> birth anniversary celebrations of Jainacharya Shree Vijay Vallabh Surishwer Ji Maharaj, via video conferencing, Mr Modi said, "as the base of the freedom struggle was provided by the bhakti movement, similarly, today, basis of the AatmaNirbhar Bharat will be provided



by the saints, mahatma, mahants and acharyas of our country." He requested the mahatmas to relentlessly preach the message of 'vocal for local' wherever they address their disciples or spiritual gatherings. He said that the message of 'vocal for local' will gain strength with its endorsement by the spiritual leaders. This will inspire the nation to become AatmaNirbhar as it electrified the country during the freedom struggle."<sup>ii</sup>

The Prime Minister believes that success of 'vocal for local' and AatmaNirbhar Bharat is dependent on our youth. Interacting in an 'At Home' event with Tribal Guests, NCC Cadets, NSS volunteers and tableaux artists before the Republic Day on 24 January 2021, Prime Minister said, "Ek Bharat-Shreshth Bharat' will give strength to 'local for vocal' movement. When one region will feel pride for the product of the other region and will promote that, only then the local product will have national and global reach. Success of 'vocal for local' and AatmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan is dependent on our youth."<sup>iii</sup>

Ever since then Prime Minister Modi has been advocating people to buy local products. On 24<sup>th</sup> June this year, interacting with the participants of Toycathon-2021 through video conferencing he said, "The global toy market is about 100 billion USD and India's share is only around 1.5 billion USD. Today we import about 80 per cent of our toys from abroad. That is, crores of rupees are siphoning out of the country on these toys. It is very necessary

to change this situation.” Mr Modi spoke about the importance for locally developed toys for downtrodden segments of our society such as dalits and tribal people. He remarked, “A lot of cottage industries, art, poor, Dalit and tribal artisans related to sports exist in large numbers in our villages. With very limited resources, these colleagues have been molding our tradition and culture in their toys with their finest art. In this regard, especially our sisters and daughters are playing a huge role. The development of the toy sector will immensely benefit such women, our tribal and poor friends living in far-flung areas of the country.” But he also emphasised that “this is possible only when we will be vocal for our local toys. It is necessary to be vocal for locals.” He ensured that his government will provide “encouragement at every level to improve them so as to make them competitive in the global market.”<sup>iv</sup>

Ever since COVID-19 pandemic began, the Indian manufacturing sector has taken a hit. Although its agriculture sector remained strong but “contact-based services, manufacturing, construction were hit hardest”, as per the Economic Survey-2021. Accordingly, to tackle this situation the government has announced a Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme in the 10 key sectors under the aegis of AatmaNirbhar Bharat for enhancing India’s manufacturing capabilities and exports: Advance Chemistry Cell (ACC) Battery, Electronic/Technology Products, Automobiles and Auto Components, Pharmaceuticals drugs, Telecom and Networking Products, Textile Products: MMF segment and technical textiles, Food Products, High Efficiency Solar PV Modules, White Goods (ACs and LED) and Speciality Steel. The PLI scheme is to be implemented by the concerned ministries with an overall expenditure estimated at nearly Rs.1.97 lakh crores and with sector specific financial limits.

The PLI scheme across these 10 key specific sectors will make Indian manufacturers globally competitive; attract investment in the areas of core competency and cutting-edge technology; ensure efficiencies; create economies of scale; enhance exports and make India an integral part of the global supply chain.

- ACC battery manufacturing represents one of the largest economic opportunities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century for several global growth sectors, such as consumer electronics, electric vehicles, and renewable energy. The PLI scheme for ACC battery will incentivise large domestic

and international players in establishing a competitive ACC battery set-up in the country.

- India is expected to have a USD 1 trillion digital economy by 2025. Additionally, the Government's push for data localisation, Internet of Things market in India, projects such as Smart City and Digital India are expected to increase the demand for electronic products. The PLI scheme will boost the production of electronic products in India.
- The automotive industry is a major economic contributor in India. The PLI scheme will make the Indian automotive industry more competitive and will enhance globalisation of the Indian automotive sector.
- The Indian pharmaceutical industry is the third largest in the world by volume and 14<sup>th</sup> largest in terms of value. It contributes 3.5 per cent of the total drugs and medicines exported globally. India possesses the complete ecosystem for development and manufacturing of pharmaceuticals and a robust ecosystem of allied industries. The PLI scheme will incentivise the global and domestic players to engage in high value production.
- Telecom equipment forms a critical and strategic element of building a secured telecom infrastructure and India aspires to become a major original equipment manufacturer of telecom and networking products. The PLI scheme is expected to attract large investments from global players and help domestic companies seize the emerging opportunities and become big players in the export market.
- The Indian textile industry is one of the largest in the world and has a share of ~5 per cent of global exports in textiles and apparel. But India's share in the manmade fibre (MMF) segment is low in contrast to the global consumption pattern, which is majorly in this segment. The PLI scheme will attract large investment in the sector to further boost domestic manufacturing, especially in the MMF segment and technical textiles.
- The growth of the processed food industry leads to better price for farmers and reduces high levels of wastage. Specific product lines having high growth potential and capabilities to generate medium to large-scale employment have been identified for providing support through PLI scheme.

- Large imports of solar PV panels pose risks in supply-chain resilience and have strategic security challenges considering the electronic (hackable) nature of the value chain. A focused PLI scheme for solar PV modules will incentivise domestic and global players to build large-scale solar PV capacity in India and help India leapfrog in capturing the global value chains for solar PV manufacturing.
- White goods (air conditioners and LEDs) have very high potential of domestic value addition and making these products globally competitive. A PLI scheme for the sector will lead to more domestic manufacturing, generation of jobs and increased exports.
- Steel is a strategically important industry and India is the world's second largest steel producer in the world. It is a net exporter of finished steel and has the potential to become a champion in certain grades of steel. A PLI scheme in Specialty Steel will help in enhancing manufacturing capabilities for value added steel leading to increase in total exports.<sup>v</sup>

The 21<sup>st</sup> century belongs to India. Since India got independence from the British in 1947, its

achievements have been great in every field. Now, for almost three decades India is in a steady growth trajectory and is aiming to become a five trillion economy. To achieve this milestone, India has to put emphasis on its manufacturing sector and expand its consumer base with locally produced and manufactured goods. Initiatives of the current government like AatmaNirbhar Bharat and 'Vocal for Local' have very vital role to fulfill India's dream. It's a duty of every citizen of this country to give its best to achieve it.

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