

Vocal For Local To Global: Opportunities For Women Empowerment In Self Reliant

India Serving The World Trade

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Introduction:

The COVID-19 pandemic apart from having a serious threat to life has disrupted the supply chain, disturbed the demand and supply, forestalled manufacturing due to lack of raw material, imbalanced the procurement process and destroyed the economy. The effect of the pandemic has drastically and negatively impacted businesses; and remains poignant over a prolonged period. The contagion threat continues to evolve and progress time and again, but amid this threat now is the time to reframe, restart, resilience, reimagination of the economic activities. With Unlock 1.0 the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India gave the mantra and vision of 'Vocal for Local'. Self-reliant in production fulfilling demands of our own markets through local (in country production) is the need of the hour. The self-reliance in economic services will reduce the import burden, bridge the gap of trade deficit and strengthen the economy.

The development of manufacturing and service sectors to support self-sufficiency and autonomy in demand-supply chain will open a Pandora-Box of opportunities for new businesses, startups, technological advancement, education, training, services, and employment across the boundary of the country. New sectors in economic activities will get parturition, bringing in modern technology and skill to work opening new avenues of economic prospects. Once we are able to cater to all our needs, new avenues of export to world trade will offer new markets amid the catastrophe. As a most trusted, quality-assured, economically feasible brand – "Made in India" is already established for the quality, assurance and technological upgrade. During the current crisis period, the economy with progressive leadership and business-friendly policies of the Government is all set to bounce back. The nation is all set to march ahead towards becoming a new economic super-power working on the mantra of 'Vocal for Local to Global'. There must be certain challenges we need to confront and overcome in the positive atmosphere created by the public and private factors in the country.

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The women workforce, businesswomen, women managers and entrepreneurs have to explore new job opportunities, avenues of businesses and economic advancement during this switch over. The female gender across the business activity and income groups are welcome in this evolution phase to grab the opportunity and excel towards the significant goal of humankind ‘– *Women Empowerment*’.

Objectives:

This research paper aims to explore the affirmative side of Indian movement of self reliance and self sufficiency, in a very different manner without disconnecting with rest of the world trade, but producing in excess to our domestic need serving the riding demand in world trade. The paper finds how the new world will leverage this opportunity to attain gender parity, providing the female gender in our society gender equal economic opportunity in an egalitarian society.

Research methodology:

The research paper is based on secondary source of data referring to books, e-journals, periodicals, magazines, e-newspapers, general websites, articles, research papers, conference proceedings, Government records, data and statistics of departments; as the study is relatively new the statistics provided by the Government has been referred. Qualitative, descriptive and phenomenology methodology has been followed by the researcher, which is based on the hypothesis that *‘pandemic has stressed the economy, but amid the crisis, there exist window of opportunity through Atmanirbharbharat and boost in production as the world economy has suffered harshly and hence need for cost effective new production system has grossly emerged, and India has the capabilities to excel this prospect. Women in India has been given the platform of equal opportunity in todays social condition and Government initiatives. This Covid-Age opportunity in world trade will serve as tool for affirmative action for the Indian women towards an egalitarian society.’*

Description:

The present economic reconstruction and restart call is a moment of time, where the Indian consumer needs to support the local ‘desi’ Indian companies, so that they get the required stimuli of demand to bounce back and recover the economic stress post COVID-19 pandemic and slowdown. The ‘Vocal for Local to Global’ is a theme, and the Indian dream to achieve ‘self reliant’ and ‘self sufficient’ in the present situation to cater all our demands and needs

across industries. This will reduce the Ex-Im trade disparity, deburden the economy and reduce the trade deficit of India. The Indian autarky; the characteristic of self-sufficiency and survival or continuation of activities without external assistance but it is not a disconnect from international trade. The 'Indian Atmanirbharbharatabhiyan in trade' means that India will be independent and self-sufficient for our needs and we will serve the world, and export the extra production bringing in earnings from foreign trade and export.

Vocal for Local initiative supported with the reformative economic, fiscal stimulus and government policies is an opportunity to strengthen Brand India, manufacturing sector, MSMEs, startups and business houses. The Indian entrepreneurs and business leadership have proved their presence, acumen and standard as best among the world leaders. The Indian are among the CEO's of Fortune 500 companies, and this has become the normal standards in the last decades. The Indian women have also proved their mettle along with men in international trade, services, politics and industries. The feminine gender in India has also demonstrated their leadership skills and business acumen successfully led various startups, leading organizations in global trade.

The Indian executives have to become vocal for their local products, to promote them in local market but also be proud to promote their local offering in global market. The manufacturing and production industry has to gear up, utilize technical advancement, fiscal reforms and start producing their brand under the nationalistic banner banking upon the brands national identity associating it with proud, nationalism, local benefits alongwith international standards. The surplus production output should be capable to be marketed across the globe and meet the industry specifications, standards and global demand.

The current crisis of corona pandemic has presented before us the importance of local manufacturing, local market, local distribution and local supply chain for undisrupted and continuous local supply to the local demand. The local supply chain distribution network is also supportive in low cost manufacturing and offering better quality maintaining the international standards at an affordable cost. The local production has saved the demand supply equilibrium during the pandemic when the supply chain has been completely damaged and disoriented. 'Vocal for Local is not just an another need or another government initiative but it is a gratitude and our responsibility also'. Another step forward in this scheme is the

initiative by the online trading platforms or E-carts to mention the country of origin as part of the product description, proudly differentiating the 'Made in India' offers.

At this juncture when the country and economy is trying to emerge from the dark shadows of the pandemic and successful lockdowns which has reduced the rate of infection successfully, the message of '*Vocal for Local*' and 'be self reliant' is much appreciated by the Indian markets. This is further preparing for another wave of any such crisis, economic slowdown or shutdown due to this pandemic and or any other such global threat. The mantra is not isolation from the world or rejecting products from the international market but to become self reliant in own demand and produce further to export in international arena. The fight against the global pandemic COVID-19 is a joint effort of the Indian Government, Private Entities and the Citizens of the country. As responsible citizens we observed the social distancing and lock down measures. Now in restart strategy the citizens will follow the social distancing measures and promote awareness of 'Made in India' brand by standing behind the Government's campaign 'Vocal for Local' and bold reformative action and policy roll outs.

The local market for processed food industry is largely owned, operated and managed by woman, women 'Self-Help groups' etc. The national policy and affirmative action post COVID-19 to provide financial help in different size and amount to different player will certainly fuel the required thrust for economic and social empowerment. Women will be trained and will take bold decision managing their business and local production. The competition from multi-national companies to these small women groups, producing locally towards the local taste and fill will be eased and the women will have more opportunity in this current situation. The women from every social strata and economic setup will be beneficial during this reformative phase of Indian economy and hence the dream of egalitarian society is within reach.

The women need to advance them to meet the new age requirement of successful entrepreneurship such as social media marketing, technology based production, better use of resources for effective measure in quality assurance and cost control. The female in India are half of the total population, mostly engaged in unorganized sector and hence they are most vulnerable to the economic impact of the present pandemic and economic breakdown. The global position of women is different from the Indian counterpart. The social setup in India for women has achieved remarkably in terms of gender empowerment and social equity.

The present pandemic has actually put the growth in the area of gender parity in fear of being washed off, but the new initiative of the government is very futuristic and fertile to achieve the golden goal of humanity. The bold reformative step of movement through ‘Make in India’ further progress under the ‘Vocal for Local to Global’ and the Indian women will certainly update themselves with modern technological advancement, business knowhow, train their mind to business setup, utilise their acumen to mitigate risk and perform quietly towards a better future.

There is a need for government initiatives to be framed with affirmative gender lens and take necessary positive framework in favor of women to provide them an equal platform to perform in the modern awakening of local production to cater local demand and further break the boundary to achieve self reliance. The movement does not stop here with isolation but goes further to serve the global needs and demands as a cheaper alternative of cost effective international standard goods.

The Indian women are the warriors of Indian dream to become global manufacturing hub, and an economic superpower finding the positive aspect of the current pandemic and an opportunity in the crisis. They will be the startups, business owners, leaders, industry the faces and the workforce of new Indian hub of production, which will be self reliant on its needs of manpower, finance, leadership, technology, research and development and raw material and subsidiary. The ‘Make in India 2.0’ will provide opportunity for local startups and small and medium enterprises to serve the parent companies by producing the need for subsidiary manufacture. This subsidiary manufacturing will make Indian industry ‘self reliant’ and ‘self sufficient’ at the same time reducing the cost of production and it will present a bouquet of opportunity before the male and female of the country to take initiative and ride the wave of industrial empowerment in the field of agriculture, allied agriculture production, defence production, finance, medical equipments, automobile, pharma and many more.

Interpretation and Analysis :

The ‘Vocal for Local’ is a welcome reformative and bold initiative of the Government in India, backed by a series of fiscal measures to support the same including finance, re-finance, SOPs, training programmes, ease of business, controlled and verified FDIs and reduced interest rate, etc. The initiative is applauded by the industry as well as the citizens and is

getting good coverage and better response. The ability of looking beyond the dark cloud and finding an opportunity amidst the crisis which the global, international and world economy is facing, is really commendable. The further bold, reformative and supportive fiscal, business model of packages acted as catalyst and the Indian economy has shown good progressive response during the restart phase. Women have been harshly hit among the economic sector in her diverse role and dual responsibility during the crisis in India as in any other country, But the reformative action has provided them equal lucrative opportunity to excel their own dreams and aid to the global dream of “Vocal for Local’ to take this further as “Vocal for Local to Global”. The ultimate target is to achieve the dream of a society with equal status, opportunity and empowerment for our women.

The Government initiatives are very bold, futuristic and optimistic aligned to achieve the desired goal of self-reliant India. But self-reliant India will remain a dream; unless half of the population, which has suffered since ages and remains oppressed and treated as second class citizens in their own country are given affirmative edge over the male counterpart. It is disheartening that the unlock initiatives lacks the affirmative action for women guaranteed through article 15(3) of the Fundamental Rights of the Indian Constitution and aspirations of the goal of equality enshrined in the Preamble for the female gender as well as obligations of the State laid down in the Directive Principles of State Policy towards the feminine gender and Fundamental duties to be observed by the citizens of India towards the fairer sex. There is a burning need to encompass the fundamental principles of women empowerment enshrined in the Indian Constitution by the framers and founding forefathers of the Constitution of India and especially by the Father of the Indian Constitution, Dr. Babasaheb Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar.

Suggestions:

The bold reforms of the government should be knitted around the women empowerment concept and to affirmative action and reservation in favor of women in all roles of startups, business leaders and workforce. The scheme for financing, training, startups, industry mapping should be framed with gender positive lenses giving advantageous position to women, encouraging more and more participation of women in the mainstream ideology of “Vocal for Local to Global”. The Indian citizens should also participate and give preference to women led business in their choice of products, rather rightly put promote the products manufactured by local women. The industry leaders private entities should try to source

women expertise among their own work force with business acumen, talent and ability to take and mitigate risk to lead the subsidiary for auxiliary item production.

Conclusion:

The Covid-19 has presented insecure, uncertain and slowest economic condition before the global community. The Indian leadership and political will has effectively mitigated the risk of and controlled the spread in a phased manner. The growth of infection is delayed considerably and hence effectively managed the situation. The Indian political leaders and industry has unveiled the curtain of uncertainty of pandemic crisis on economy to show a ray of hope in the darkness. They have identified the positive aspect of the global slowdown and hence looked further for a self-reliant, self-sufficient India outreaching the global export market with industry expertise, international standards and cost effective alternative. The industry commitment, government schemes and fiscal measures alongwith the technical, trained and hardworking citizens will certainly lead the country to prosperity. A combined effort in the positive direction will make the 'Vocal for Local to Global through Women Empowerment a success in the international economy. This effort will certainly rejuvenate India to a Global Economic Super Power with a feather of an egalitarian society in its cap'.

“The era of the Single Savior is over. What is needed now is joint action, combined effort, collective co-creation”

- Neale Donald Walsch²

²American author of the famous series “Conversations with God”.