

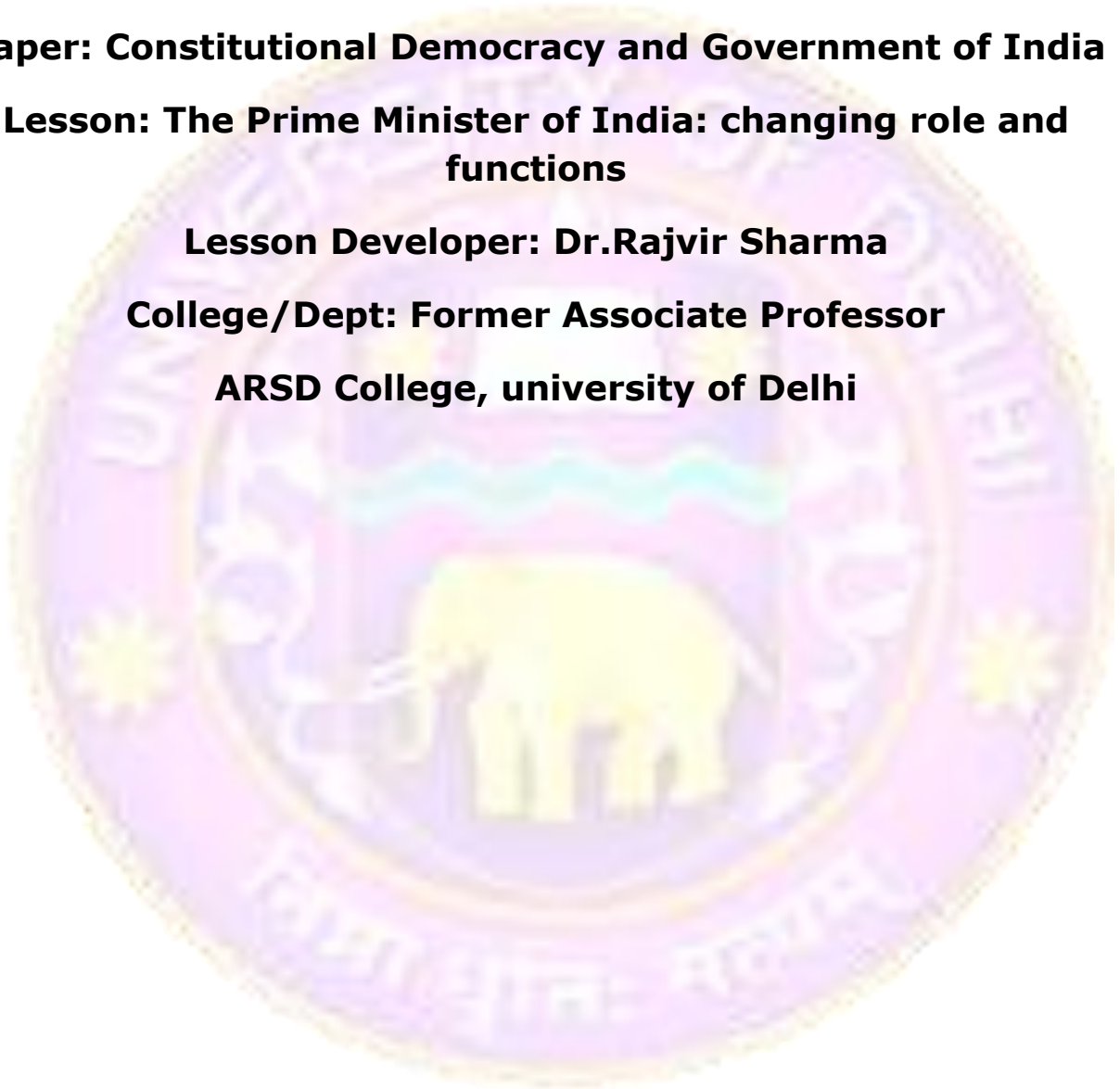
Paper: Constitutional Democracy and Government of India

Lesson: The Prime Minister of India: changing role and functions

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Prime Minister plays a very crucial/critical and, sometimes, a very decisive role under the constitutional scheme of government in India. He is the Head of the government (the council of ministers), the leader of his party, a representative and a leader of the nation, a crisis manager, a source of policies and nature of governance, a link between the cabinet and the president, a driving and directing force of the government and a source of motivation and morale of the civil service as well. He is often compared with the prime minister of great Britain and sometimes even with the president of the USA in terms of the powers, functions and position he enjoys. Therefore, he is also described by many scholars concerned with Indian government and politics as a constitutional office vested with a pivotal role and responsibility in ensuring an efficient, effective and responsive government and administration. He is obliged to uphold and strengthen Indian federal system and work for the unity and integrity of the country as cementing force and making efforts to evolve and practice consensus on contentious issues between the centre and the states. He is at the helm of foreign affairs of the country and concludes several treaties and agreements with other countries. One can, therefore, legitimately repeat some of the epithets used to describe his functions, powers and position in that he is the corner stone of the cabinet arch; he is the captain of the ship and prime mover of the government.

His powers and functions can be categorized briefly as follows:

1. Functions in relation to the president of India
 2. Powers and functions in relation to the council of ministers
 3. His role as the Head of the government – coordination, monitoring, control and evaluation.
 4. His role in the formulation and implementation of foreign and defence policy of India
 5. His role as a source and as a means of administrative reforms
 6. His functions and role in the context of India's federation- planning, development, law and order, cooperation and coordination and conflict resolution.
 7. Prime Minister as the leader of the party and as leader of the nation.
1. Prime minister and the president: The relationship between the president and the prime minister is clearly laid down in the constitution; it has also been shaped by

conventions and customs. It is well known provision of the constitution that president shall appoint the prime minister after the general elections to the Parliament or in between if the government falls down on account of the loss of majority support of the Lok sabha or a prime minister resigns from his office before completing his term of 5 years or the office falls vacant on account of the death of the incumbent. Conventionally and also in line with the spirit of the constitution the leader of the party with absolute majority in the Lok sabha is invariably called by the president to form the government. In case of a fluid political situation with no political part securing absolute majority, the president may exercise his discretion in matter of appointing the prime minister. This is what happened in 1989, 1991, 1996 and 1998. The president called upon the leader of the largest single party to form the government in all these cases. For instance, after the 1989 elections, Rajiv Gandhi as the leader of the congress, the largest single party in the Lok sabha, was invited by the president to form the government and after his refusal, he invited V P Singh, the leader of the next largest party to form the government and was asked to prove the majority on the floor of the House which he was able to do. In 1991 also, when no political party secured absolute majority on its own, the president invited P V Narsimha Rao, the leader of the largest single party, the congress, to form the government and prove the majority on the floor of the House. The same convention was repeated in 1996 and 1998 when the president invited the leader of the B J P, the largest single party and appointed Atal Bihari Vajpayee as prime minister. Though in 1998, the president insisted on the prior submission of the letters of support as a witness to majority to the BJP in the Lok sabha. Vajpayee submitted the letters of support and was made the prime minister by the president. In 1999, the leader of the pre-election coalition called the national democratic alliance, A B Vajpayee was made the prime minister by the president since that coalition commanded absolute majority in the parliament. In 2004, the leader of a post election coalition, the United Progressive Alliance, Dr. Man Mohan Singh was invited to form the government as no political party was in an absolute majority. In 2009, the president had no other option but to appoint Dr. Man Mohan Singh as prime minister because the UPA was successful to get majority of seats again in the elections to the Lok Sabha. The action of the president was supported in all the above cases except the one in 2004 when the propriety of recognizing the post election coalition for the purpose of formation of the government was questioned. It was stated that many of the parties that were part of the post election UPA were fiercely opposing each other in the elections and the voters voted for their candidates on the basis of that oppositional assessment of the parties. The recognition of any such alliance would tantamount to the betrayal of the electorate and to that extent would be undemocratic.

Secondly, it may be said that a post election coalition is generally an opportunistic alliance and has the seeds of illegitimacy. Another pertinent question in this regard is that whether the question of the majority of the largest single party or of the coalition should be settled on the basis of outside support of a party or parties to the government and if so would it not give rise to the politics of manipulation and also the tendency to separate power from responsibility. This situation arose in 1989 when V P Singh proved his majority with the outside support of the BJP and the CPM and again in 2004 and 2009 with the outside support to the UPA by the CPM and others like SP and BSP. Such like coalitions may not be good for a stable and effective government. Therefore, it is desirable that any issue of majority support of a coalition for the purposes of formation of the government should be determined only on the basis of the list of allies prepared to be the part of the government and which has been able to prepare a common agenda of governance. The outside support by any political party should not be considered, in other words, for deciding the question of majority support.

The second situation for the exercise of discretionary power to appoint the prime minister arises when the government falls down before the completion of the term of five years. For example, the Morarji Desai government fell down when it was reduced to minority after the split of the Janata Party caused by Charan Singh who walked out of the party with 100 MPs and formed his own party. The president called the leader of the next largest party, the congress to form the government which not only refused to do so but also extended outside support to charan singh in case he was made the prime minister. The Janata party staked his claim again on the ground that it still was the largest single party even after the split and should given another opportunity to form the government. Meanwhile Charan Singh also staked claim to form the government. The president asked the leaders of both the parties to submit the list of their supporters to him so as to enable him to take a decision. But suddenly, he invited Charan Singh to form the government without waiting for the leader of Janata party to submit his list. Such a decision on the president was perceived not only as unfair to the janata party but it was also seen as immoral and undemocratic, even though not unconstitutional. This step was interpreted as encouragement to the politics of defection, horse trading and a factor contributing to political instability. Similar opinions were expressed by the opposition, the press and the people when Chandra Shekhar, after he caused a split in the party led by V P Singh in parliament and walked out of the government with 40 MPs, was appointed prime minister by the then president. Such acts of the president might be technically correct, but lowers down high political standards, norms and values and dents the process of upholding and practicing ethics in politics. The

defectors should not be appointed as prime ministers. It is more preferable to order fresh elections if alternative government with a leader of the next largest single party or coalition is not possible to form.

In so far as the dismissal of the prime minister by the president is concerned, it is a well established convention that the prime minister remains in office till he commands confidence of the parliament, i.e., a prime minister having the majority support can not be ousted by the president from his office. This was clearly established when the then Attorney General of India advised Gyani Zail Singh against the dismissal of the then prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi on the ground that he failed to perform his constitutional duty to keep the president informed about the decisions of the cabinet regarding the affairs of the union. Contrarily, there is another opinion which states that the president is oath bound to promote, protect and defend the constitution and if in his opinion the prime minister is violating any of the provisions of the constitution, he shall be well within his rights take action to dismiss such a prime minister. However, the constitutional position is said to be against this view.

A small comment will be in place regarding the role of the prime minister in the election of the president. It is expected as per the constitutional scheme and the deliberations of the constituent Assembly that the president shall be an apolitical or non-partisan person and hence would not be elected on party lines. However, in practice, this assumption is belied after the emergence of competitive democratic politics and the decline of one party dominant system. The elections to the office of the president came to be contested first between the official and the opposition candidates and later as between the prime minister's candidate and the candidate fielded by the opposition. This was evident from the choices of official candidates in V V Giri, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, Gyani Zail Singh, and R. Venkat Raman. In some cases, when the prime minister was weak, it came out that the presidential candidate was chosen by the president of the congress party as, was the case of Pratibha Patil and Pranab Mukherji. It is clear that the prime ministers like Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi played a decisive role in installing persons of their own choice in the office of the president. The cases relating to the President's emoluments, allowances, privileges and official residence are also submitted to the Prime Minister.

2. Functions of the Prime Minister in relation to the Parliament and legislation:

The Prime Minister deals with several matters pertaining to the Parliament and legislation. The nomination of members to either House of Parliament gets special attention of the

prime minister as all such cases are submitted to him. The other subjects dealt with at the level of the Prime Minister are :

- a. Summoning or prorogation of the Houses of Parliament or dissolution of the House of the People.
- b. The President's address and messages to Houses of Parliament (Articles 86 and 108 of the Indian constitution).
- c. Disqualification of members of Parliament under Article 103.
- d. Amendment of the constitution (Article 368).
- e. Proposals under Articles 370 and 371

Additionally, the prime minister can also help the speaker in the maintenance of the decorum and discipline in the house of the people as well as the chairman of the Rajya Sabha in the performance of the same task. He is also the leader of the house to which he belongs.

3. Prime minister's relationship with the council of ministers.

The prime minister is the executive head of the government and plays a crucial role in the formation, sustenance and survival of the council of ministers. He is the heart and soul of the cabinet body. His unique relationship with the council of ministers has been envisaged under several provisions of the constitution of India. Article 74 states, "there shall be a council of ministers with the prime minister at the head to aid and advise the president who shall, in the exercise of his functions, act in accordance with such advice." Further, the court cannot inquire into the nature and content of advice of the council of ministers that might be solely dictated or influenced by the prime minister. Moreover, Art. 75 says that the prime minister shall be appointed by the president and other ministers shall be appointed by the president on the advice of the prime minister. The implication of this provision is often drawn to mean that the prime minister has tremendous discretion in the selection of the ministers which he/she can exercise on the basis of personal assessment or otherwise of the merits of the persons to be inducted into the cabinet. Thus, the prime minister stands apart in the conventional pyramid of power structure where in the president seems to be bound by the advice tendered to him by the head of the council of ministers except where he is authorized to make him reconsider an advice or to ensure that the advice is of the cabinet tendered in writing. Going by these provisions, one can say that the prime minister is in a decisive position in relation to the council of ministers. Is it really so? Does he enjoy unrestricted authority in the matters of appointment and allocation of portfolios to the

ministers? The answer is both yes and no. Technically it is his choice that makes or unmakes a minister. In practice, he is bound by several limitations. For instance, he will have to give representation to all the sections of the society in her cabinet- men, women, minorities and dalits, youth and the experienced, regional representation and the important and powerful leaders of his party. His position and status within his own party or his image within the coalition of which he is the leader also acts as a determinant of his choice of ministers and also the distribution of ministries to them. There have been prime ministers like Indira Gandhi whose authority was beyond any question and she was the sole authority to decide about the persons to be included in her cabinet, for how long a minister will remain in her cabinet, when any minister could be sent as chief minister in a state and when a chief minister shall be called by her to join her cabinet. She could reshuffle her cabinet any time to reward or punish ministers at will. This was possible for her to do because she was an unquestioned leader of his party within the Lok sabha and outside as she was the prime minister as well as the party president. This was largely true of the other prime ministers under the congress governments like Rajiv Gandhi or Narsimha rao who also commanded a dominant position within the party and the government. They also held both the positions of the president of the party and of the prime minister. It follows that the free power of the prime minister in the constitution of the council of ministers, distribution of the ministries among them and also their removal from the minister's job is linked with two important factors- the role and status of the prime minister within his party and within the government. For instance, if the position of the prime minister is under challenge or is subject to challenge from within the council of ministers or from the party, his power to select his team and distribution of the ministries among them would be accordingly limited. This is evident from several accounts of a number of scholars. For example, N V Gadgil states in his *Government from Inside* (1968,p. 142) that Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru had to include many names in his cabinet (N V Gadgil, C D Deshmukh, K Munshi,R R Diwakar, C H Bhaba and Shanmukhum Chetty) and had to exclude T T krinamachari from the cabinet because of the opposition of Sardar Patel.Gadgil also says that it was after the death of Patel that Nehru acquired unlimited authority to constitute his cabinet exhibited in the appointment of Krisna Menon in 1956 as a minister without consulting any one even though he was faced with the allegations of being involved in the Jeep Scandal case and the public accounts committee of the parliament has recommended an enquiry against him. Patel himself had to be given the post of the deputy prime minister and the ministry of Home Affairs not to the much liking of Nehru. Almost similar situation was faced by Lal bahadur Shatri when he became the prime mnster after the death of

Nehru.(Michael Brecher, Succession in India: A Study in Decision Making, (London,O U P, 1966,p 105) The Position of Morar Ji Desai and of V P Singh was no better in this regard. The story of Charan singh and Raj narain from their removal to re-induction into the cabinet is all a known secret. So was the case in the allocation of portfolios.(TOI, March 23, 1977,p.1; Tribune, July 11, 1978,p.4) In coalition environment this power of the prime minister gets further diluted as he has to go by the choice of ministers made by his allies in the government instead of exercising independent choice regarding appointment of ministers or the distribution portfolios. Many ministers, for instance, had to be not only included in the list of council of Ministers by Man Mohan singh despite the criminal charges pending against them (Lau Yadav, Sibu Soren, Taslimuddin etc.) and the port folios were also a matter of bargain than the will of the prime minister between the congress and the coalition partners.The national and popular image of the prime minister as a strong and decisive leader and his unquestioned position within the party gives him unlimited powers to include or exclude any one leader of the party or the coalition from the ministry. This became evident when Narendra Modi excluded many senior leaders of the party, like LK Advani, Murli manohar Joshi, Shanta Kumar, Kalyan singh from the cabinet by applying the principle of age of 75 or more as the criterion. Even the ministers' portfolios were exclusively decided and allocated by him and the the principle of small government was implemented without being under much pressure of the party or the coalition. This was so because BJP has majority of its own in the parliament and can dictate and assert its leadership. Similarly, it remained a known secret that the Man Mohan Singh took time in removing ministers like sibu soren and A Raja from the cabinet despite the demand by the opposition inside and outside the parliament. Such examples are there in numbers specially during the prime ministership of Man Mohan Singh from 2004 to 2014. That Man Mohan Singh failed to get the finance minister of his choice and the chair person of the UPA, Mrs Sonia Gandhi foisted Pranab Mukherji on him as the finance minister and that too without consulting the prime minister.(Sanjay Baru, Accidental Prime Minister: the making and unmaking of Man Mohan singh,2014, Penguin).

Another question that pertains to the prime minister- council of ministers' relationship is whether the the prime minister can remove a minister at will. Normally the answer is in the affirmative. It is the duty of the prime minister to enforce the principle of collective accountability, integrity, efficiency and loyalty of the minister/s. If he thinks that a minister is faulting on any of these grounds, he is free to ask him/her to tender resignation from the cabinet. If a minister does not listen to the advice of the prime minister, he can advise the president to withdraw his pleasure from him/her and dismiss from the council of ministers.

This power of the prime minister flows from his prerogative to appoint the ministers under Art. 75 of the constitution. However, in reality, his hands might be tied with some practical limitations. For instance, it might be difficult for him to remove the very popular grass root leader of his party or the minister from a party in partnership of the government as coalition without the consent from the leader of that party. Prime ministers have adopted another path of getting rid of inconvenient or unwanted ministers from the cabinet by undertaking reshuffle of the cabinet. In recent political history of India, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Man Mohan Singh took recourse to this route either to change the portfolios of their ministers or to drop them from the council of ministers. At the same time the minister/s may also resign on their own if they feel to be unable to be in agreement with the policies of the government or the leadership of the prime minister. Some ministers may be removed under the pretext of strengthening the party organization by putting them in charge of some organizational work. However, such a step may be in accordance with the power centre other than the prime minister as was the case in the UPA run and Man Mohan Singh Headed government.(2004-2014) Some organizational office holders could be asked to exchange roles with the government and vice-versa. Thus, in theory he acts as a creator, a sustainer and a destroyer of the council of ministers, in practice, he is bound by several constraining factors in the exercise of his authority in the constitution and dismissal of his council of ministers as well as in the allocation of business to his team. Further, the role of the prime minister in relation to the council of ministers is shaped by whether the prime minister is the prime minister in his own right or is just an accidental, nominated, selected occupant of the office. That is whether he/she enjoys freedom to act or there is another parallel power centre outside the government or inside the government. The real test is whether the loyalty of the ministers is to the prime minister or to the other power centre. It came out, for instance in the book written by Sanjay Baru, *The Accidental Prime Minister: The making and unmaking of Man Mohan Singh* and in another book by P C Parakh, the former Coal Secretary, that the prime minister acts merely as an executor of the decisions of the other power centre (Mrs Sonia Gandhi) instead of performing the role of the leader or real head of the executive. The position of the prime minister is further compromised if he/she becomes a willing partner in the process of downgrading the role and functions of the prime minister. as was the case during UPA-II rule from 2009-2014. It is evident from the style of leadership of the prime minister, Narendra Modi right from the formation to the allocation of work among the ministers of the Union and later his emphasis on ministers domain and focus definition in ensuring a fast, accountable, responsive and efficient

governance. He has placed in an unequitable manner his agenda of good governance before the council of ministers as well as the bureaucracy of the country.

Other important matters that receive special attention of the prime minister are:

- a. All relevant files submitted by the planning commission for the approval/clearance/comment of the prime minister since he is the chairman of that body.
- b. Important defence related issues.
- c. Decorations, both civilian and defence, where presidential approval is required.
- d. All important policy issues.
- e. Proposals for appointment of Indian Heads of Missions abroad and requests for grant of agreement for Foreign Heads of Missions posted in India.
- f. All important decisions relating to the cabinet secretariat.
- g. Appointments to state administrative tribunals and the central administrative tribunal, UPSC, Election Commission, appointment of members of statutory/constitutional committees, commissions attached to various ministries.
- h. Policy matters relating to the administration of civil services and administrative reforms.
- i. Special packages announced by the prime minister for states are monitored in the P M O and periodical reports are submitted to the prime minister and
- j. All judicial appointments for which presidential approval is required.
- k. Appointment, resignation and removal of the Attorney general of India.
- l. Appointment, resignation and removal of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.
- m. Appointment, resignation and removal of Governors of states and Administrators of the Union Territories of the status of Lieutenant Governors.
- n. Appointment, resignation and removal of Judges of the High Courts for States..
- o. Establishment of Inter-state council.
- p. Appointment, suspension, resignation and removal of the chairman and members of the Finance Commission.
- q. Appointment, resignation and removal of the chairman and members of the Commission to report on the administration of the scheduled areas.
- r. Appointment, resignation and removal of the chairman and members of the Commission on Official Language of the Union.
- s. Proclamation of emergency under Articles 352, 356 and 360 and other provisions arising out of such proclamations.

- t. Declaration of commencement or cessation of a state of war.
- u. Appointment and removal of Ambassadors, Ministers, Charge d' Affairs and other high dignitaries accredited to the foreign countries.
- v. Grant of refusal of agreement for persons proposed to be accredited as Heads of foreign diplomatic missions/ High commissions and declaring them persona non grata
- w. Messages to Heads of foreign countries.
- x. Appointment, resignation and removal of chairman and members of any other statutory commissions and important Ad Hoc commissions.
- y. Appointment of Indians to important posts on executive and other organs of international bodies such as the I M F and the international bank
- z. Delegations to International, including the commonwealth Assemblies and conferences.

Besides these matters, the prime minister also plays a significant role in the appointment of the CVC, The Lok Pal, the chairman and the members of the national human rights commission, national commissions for women, the child rights , the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes and for the other backward classes. It can be concluded from the above that the prime minister exercises key role and authority in the matters of appointment, resignation and removal of a large number of constitutional and statutory officials and bodies. He is the chairman of a number of advisory/selection committees on whose recommendations the president is supposed to act.

4. Prime Minister's role as the Executive Head of the Government: Coordination, Monitoring, Control and Evaluation.

Prime Minister is described by several students of Indian politics and government in different ways going by the role he/she plays in the exercise of his authority as the head of the government. It is known that the P M supervises the entire work and functioning of the council of ministers and provides guidance and direction to the ministries and departments of the government as and when required by them or as and when he feels they require his intervention. For example, the commandments issued by the prime minister, Narendra Modi, to his colleagues on the purpose and perspectives of government and governance, goal driven governance, people oriented governance, avoiding feudal culture and review of ministers' performance on regular basis of 100 days , to begin with are the indicators of the authority attached with the office of the Prime Minister. He can act as the presidential head if he/she so chooses or is so capable of is the message of the actions and decisions

taken by him in the first 15 days of his premiership beginning from 26th May, 2014. The P M presides over the meetings of the cabinet and several committees of the cabinet responsible for decision making in the defined areas of governance. He also exercises control and asserts by way of coordinating and monitoring policies through the secretaries of the government of India or the Prime Minister's Office or the cabinet secretariat and several policy advisory committees/groups or commissions constituted by him for the purpose. Cohesive decision making by making it almost mandatory for all important policy matters to be decided or cleared by him become imperative. The overall overseeing of the policies by the prime minister helps reduce or minimize any policy flip-flop and cut delays. The decision of the prime minister to reduce the levels involved in decision making to four is another example of reiteration of the prime minister's role in ushering in administrative reforms including the procedural ones. He made it very clear that the decisions shall be taken by the ministers in the knowledge or with the approval of the Prime minister and that GOM or EGOMs approach is being dispensed with was declared by the 15th Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi.. That he has the authority to call for any files which has policy implication also refer to the same role and function of the prime minister vis-avis the ministers.. Thus crucial decisions may carry the stamp of the authority vested in him and specified in the general rules of transaction of business. The policy initiative may be had through the following committees/ councils constituted by the P M for the purpose of formulation, advice, monitoring and evaluation of policies in different sectors relating to the economy, society and the world.:

Prime Minister's national Council on Skill Development: The council is concerned with (1) the laying down overall broad policy objectives, financing and governance models and strategies relating to skill development; (2) reviewing the progress of schemes and guide on mid-course corrections, addition and closure of parts or whole of any particular programme/scheme and (3) coordination of public/private sector initiatives in a framework of collaborative action.

Similarly, the Prime Minister constituted another very important committee under his chairmanship in the energy sector policy area with ministers of Finance, Power, Petroleum and natural Gas, Coal and non-conventional Energy Sources, Deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, Chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, National Security Advisor, Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary to the PM as members. The committee is serviced by the P M O and Energy division in the Planning Commission facilitates any policy analysis required by the committee. The committee coordinates

preparatory work on Energy policy and security issues; Identifies key areas requiring energy policy initiatives so that the overall objectives of economic development, energy security and energy efficiency are met; monitors vulnerabilities that directly impinge on energy security aspects and outlines the follow-up action needed for implementing identified policy priorities.

Prime Minister is the chairman of Biofuel Coordination Committee whose members include deputy chairman of the planning commission, and the ministers of New and renewable Energy, Rural Development, Agriculture, Environment and Forests, Petroleum and natural Gas and of the Ministry of Science and technology. This committee is one the high powered inter ministerial coordination and review.

Prime Minister's Council on Climate change is another example of the role of the prime minister in coordination, control and review of the working and performance of various ministries. This council coordinates national action plans for assessment, adaptation and mitigation of climate change; facilitates inter ministerial coordination and guides policy in relevant areas.

Prime Minister as the chairman of National disaster Management Authority (NDMA) discharges significant functions in the field of policy prescription, implementation, coordination and assessment of implementation. NDMA is the apex body responsible for laying down policies, plans and guidelines for disaster management and for coordinating their implementation and enforcement throughout the country.

Prime Minister's national council on India's Nutrition Challenges, headed by the Prime Minister himself, is involved in policy direction to address India's nutritional challenges; review of programmes for nutrition on quarterly basis and in effective coordination between ministries which all have a sectoral responsibility for the challenges of nutrition. Its importance can be grasped by the nature of its membership that includes the ministers in-charge of the ministries of Finance, HRD, Agriculture, Women and Child Development, Rural Development, Agriculture, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Health and Family Welfare, Information and Broadcasting, Panchayati Raj, Urban Development, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister(Member, convenor), Dr Prema Ramachandran, Director, Nutrition Foundation of India, Dr. Arun Gupta, Breast Feeding Association Dr. Rohini Nayyar Dr. rani Bang, Gadchiroli and Sachin Pilot, Member of Parliament(15th Lok sabha). The secretaries of the above mentioned ministries are the special invitees to the meeting of this committee.,

The most significant constitutional mechanism to assist in decision making in the government of India is the cabinet Secretariat whose political Head is the Prime Minister. It secures inter-ministerial coordination, ironing out differences/ disagreements between and among ministries/departments and evolves consensus through the instrumentality of the standing/adhoc committees of Secretaries. Through this mechanism, new policy initiatives are also promoted. It is he who can carry out the vision of the prime minister regarding administration, policy priorities and their implementation. For example, prime minister Narendra Modi made it clear to the bureaucracy including the cabinet secretary that he believed in quick reflexes and nippy decision making, quick resolution of peoples' grievances, leveraging modern technology and develop systems and processes for effective monitoring of governmental matters. This means that the prime minister can establish the importance of team work at the level of both the cabinet and of the administration. The official/secretaries are made to register that they were free to communicate with the prime minister with new and creative ideas and also the issues impeding the progress of decision making or their implementation. The meeting called by the cabinet secretary, Ajit Seth, of the secretaries to take steps to implement the principles and ideas enunciated by Narendra Modi (Times of India, June, 8,2014) are indicative of how an activist and energetic prime minister can prove to be a prime mover of the government and administration to bring in good governance.

P M O is another source of promotion, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of government policies and programmes underlining the minister in the areas of policy. Several expert committees and groups in the PMO serve as the source and instrument of policy. The prime minister through the mechanism of the PMO resolves the differences between two or more ministries. For instance, the prime minister intervened to resolve the conflict between the finance ministry and the trade ministry and referred the four critical trade policy issues to the prime minister's economic advisory council out of the differences on 12 key issues between the two ministries. When the matter was brought before the prime minister, decision was taken on 8 of them. The matters that were referred to the economic advisory council included –proceeds from sale of duty entitlements passbook scheme(DEPB) licenses; exemption of service tax for export oriented units(EOUS); extending deemed export benefit to domestic tariff area units and the introduction of a 'sunset' clause for EOUs.

Having said that the prime minister is playing a key role in the field of policy coordination, monitoring, control and evaluation, it might be pertinent to point out that there have been

developments in the UPA rule during 2004 -2014 that have undermined this role. For instance, the establishment of and the assertion by the national Advisory Council in the areas of legislation, policy and programme formulation in the government has pushed the prime minister to the back bencher's position and itself emerged as the frontline agency in directing and guiding the ministries in their respective policy domains. The examples in the areas of financial inclusion, food security, MGNREGA and welfare programmes can be taken as the evidence of the dominant position of this Council over and above the PM and the cabinet. Another example encroaching upon the powers of the prime minister in this respect is the constitution of a number of Empowered Group Of Ministers constituted by the PM from time to time to perform the role of final arbiters of policy and its evaluation. These panels were not only seen as usurping the powers of the PM and the cabinet, they also were responsible at times for policy paralysis in the government and also as implementers of the wishes of the second centre of power besides the PM. Sanjay Baru remarks that the NAC was often dubbed as shadow cabinet. Similarly, PC Parakh points out that "after the PM's approval we received a note from the PMO enumerating the possible problems in moving to the open bidding of coal blocks..This shows who the real boss was?" That PM failed to control the ministers and to ensure accountability in governance is brought out by Sanjay Baru who writes, " PM Man Mohan Singh's approach of turning a blind eye to the misdeeds of his ministers, keeping mum on the implementation of MGNREGA and refusal to take briefings from the intelligence agencies raise serious questions about the interests that were working outside the government." A disengaged prime minister in the matters of policy and economic reforms loses the position of an effective first among equals as well as his legitimate acceptability among the colleagues in the cabinet further eroding his position. His approach to taking the path of permissiveness or least resistance instead of banging the heads together makes him a non-existent prime minister or it leads to a situation of policy grid lock. The example of the faceoff between the then home minister, P Chidambaram and Nandan Nilekani is enough to explain this phenomenon of the personality of the then prime minister, Dr. Man Mohan Singh. (The Adjustment Prime Minister by TN Ninan, Sunday times of India, New Delhi, May 4, 2014)

Prime minister and his role in policy making/ review and monitoring specially in the field of foreign policy and defence:

Prime ministers of India have been the source and or inspiration of several policies in India specially the foreign policy, the defence policy, the economic reforms policy and industrial and trade policy. As stated in the above , the prime ministers of India have been the key

figures in the matters of policy right from their making to their implementation. But the areas of foreign affairs and defence and security have been the once attracting the special attention of almost all the prime ministers. Even the weakest prime ministers like Dr. Man Mohan Singh have also shown that they must be taken seriously in matters like signing Indo-US nuclear Deal. The approach of the first prime minister of India, Nehru, was clearly in favour of having the last word on matters of foreign relations and policy. He played a decisive role in world affairs and gave a thrust to India's policy of Non-Alignment and neutrality. The prime minister of 2014 made it very clear to every one that foreign policy and defence and security issues can not be directed and finally decided without him. The decision to invite the SAARC countries to the swearing in ceremony of the new prime minister and then playing the front role in the meeting with each one of them was indicative of the prime minister's approach in this aspect. His decision that no minister would go abroad in the scientific delegations, that he is deciding the priority areas in the relooking of relations with USA, China, Pakistan and Japan apart from other neighbours of India also implies the same conclusions as stated herein. This suggests that even though, there would be a foreign minister in Modi's cabinet, the major role in the determining, evaluation and monitoring shall belong to the prime minister. The foreign minister may be playing a subsidiary, supplementary or a follow up function in the process. The matters of defence and security are at the centre of prime minister's table and is dealt with by and through the help of the National security advisor, the Cabinet committee on security and joint intelligence committee as well.

5. Prime Minister and India's federal system:

The framers of Indian constitution envisaged a federal system for India in which the governments at the center and the states would have a defined role them respectively. This system also visualized a centre-state relationship that shall function in a cooperative, supportive and complementary manner the centre was given some extraordinary powers to deal with situations of emergency in the country and the states were expected to follow the centre as prescribed under the constitutional provisions. The centre was supposed to assist the states in matters of finance, legislation and administration. Thus the centre and the states were seen as partners in governance and development by the fathers of the constitution. However, over the period of time there appeared some imbalances in the functioning of these relationships and a number of irritants caused frictions between the two sets of government particularly, these were more visible in the financial and administrative relations. Let me mention here that the prime minister was vested with a number of powers

and responsibilities in ensuring the smooth working of the Indian Federation. He was made the chairman of the planning commission of India; the chairman of the national development council and of the inter-state council. Besides that he is also the chairman of the national disaster management authority and many more such institutions that have relevance for the states as well. He presides over the chief ministers' conference and over the conference of governors. He addresses the conferences of the Panchayati Raj Ministers and several other such conferences in which the representatives of the states are participants. The purpose here is to share the concerns of the centre on major issues of national and state significance and arrive at some common approach to tackle the challenges and the problems. It is the attitude and approach of the prime minister that can not only remove the irritants but can also generate a new culture of confidence, trust, partnership and cooperation for the development of the country collectively in general and fight against poverty in particular. For instance, the 15th prime minister of India, Narendra Modi has made it a part of the agenda of his government to provide time bound and quick response and resolution of matters submitted by the state governments to the centres clearance and/or approval. The system delays on this count extending upto years and decades should end was the message of this prime minister to all the concerned ministries of the union. Such an approach would not only create a friendly environment of working relations, it would also put an end to the feelings and demands for more autonomy and at time separation.

6. Prime Minister as the leader of the Party and the nation:

It may be mentioned that the relationship between the government and the party is an organic one. Though there is a role differentiation between the two, the government is tied with the party in so far as it is entrusted with the responsibility to translate party's policies and programmes committed to people at the time of elections in the manifesto into reality. It is the performance on those commitments that the image of the party and of the government are determined. It is on the grounds of performance that governments and the parties loose power. But ultimately, the governmental performance is related with the qualities and drive of the prime minister to instill a sense of purpose in the government and the party who shall have to work together to achieve the goals. We have seen in the past that the parties have won or lost the elections on the basis of the public image of the prime minister and his ability to lead the party and enforce unity and discipline therein. This was true in case of the congress as well as the BJP. As the leader of the party he plays a significant role in defining the agenda of the party,; he is key to selection of the candidates

for the party posts and also for the elections. Nehru to Indira Gandhi to Rajiv Gandhi to PV Narsimha rao, the trend is well established. When this status of the Prime Minister is compromised, it leads to decline in his position, power and ultimately the election, as it happened in the case of Dr. Man Mohan Singh who was given a secondary place in party and governmental functioning and choices. It was the leadership of AB Vajpayee which led to the victory of the party in the elections and it worked well till the chasm between the organization and legislative wing became wide. Modi has understood the importance of the role and relationship between the prime minister and the party and therefore eyed on the leading and decisive role in the selection of the party president in place of the then president and the then home Minister, Rajnath Singh. Modi started acting as the de facto president of the party when he began to call meetings of the general secretaries for not only instructing them to implement the wishes of the people by acting as a bridge between the government and the people but also sought their views on the choice of the party president. It is true that Rajnath Singh was also present in that meeting.

The prime minister is also the leader of the nation. The people of the country look towards the prime minister to steer clear the nation in times of crisis and emergency. Nehru lost his charismatic appeal after he failed to visualize the threat from China and lost the 1962 war with that country. Indira Gandhi added to the confidence and trust of the nation when she not only assured them to fight against poverty but also won the war with Pakistan in 1971. She also lost the charismatic appeal as soon as she failed to keep her promise of removing poverty and, on the contrary, violated the constitutional and human rights of the people during internal emergency imposed by her in 1975. Lal Bahadur Shastri assumed the leadership role and was able to inspire confidence of the nation when he won war with Pakistan in 1965. AB Vajpayee became a charismatic leader by raising new hopes of the people and leading new economic reforms to usher in the integration of India on a larger scale with globalization and liberalization. India became not only a nuclear state, but he added to the numbers of the neo rich class that is the middle class. He put India on the economic map of the world. His charisma also faded when his party could not spread the message and achievement of India Shining. Again, Narendra Modi inspired and stirred new hopes and aspirations among the different sections of Indian society about the future India and became an icon of Indian population. Moreover, the prime minister represents the nation in world summits and enters into treaties and agreements with the other members of the world. Being the leader and representative of the country, he earns and carries the trust and confidence of the world community. Any other prime minister following him respects the agreements and treaties executed by the predecessor. By being the leader of

the nation, he represents the entire population and takes decisions in the interests of the whole nation. He does not act merely in the interest of the party and its workers, to say it otherwise.

Conclusion:

The preceding analysis suggests that the role of the prime minister in India is wide and varied. Accordingly his position is also determined by the constitutional factors and by traditions, conventions, personal and the political factors He/she can be as powerful as the president of USA and quite weak as well sometimes allowing the ministers to play their independent role even at the cost of the image of the prime minister. He may be merely first or even second among equals or the CEO depending on the facts and circumstances of the case. He may act as the master of the team or he may be reduced to the position of a silent spectator or collaborator of what other ministers or governmental players are doing. The case of Dr. Man Mohan Singh can be taken as a representative sample of the latter role while the case of other congress Prime ministers(Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Even Narsimha Rao) and of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Narendra Modi can be cited as examples belonging to the CEO category. The personal traits including charismatic qualities, leadership styles, the nature of composition of government (One party or coalition), clarity of vision and decisiveness, relations between the party and the prime minister, the location of dominant source of power, his control and relationship with the bureaucracy and his/her proactive approach can be taken as the major determinants of his role and position in the government and politics of India. These factors will also impact his role and position in the world politics. On the other hand, if a prime minister, willingly or unwillingly outsources his leadership and authority, it causes governance by accident and makes the institutions incidental.

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