

WOMEN'S POLITICAL EFFICACY AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

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Abstract

The sense of efficacy develops with opportunities for participation which democratic systems provide. Effective participation of the people is an indicator of true democracy. The family, peer group, membership of various associations and political parties help in developing the sense of efficacy. As the official and associational affiliation help in developing the sense of efficacy, the absence of these may also hinder it. In any system educated persons being efficacious, feel that they have the capacity to mould the environment. More often education and socio-economic status are not related. Persons with higher socio-economic status have self-confidence. Politics in the present day society is mainly a skill controlled area. Thus, political efficacy and personal control are closely related, individuals having personal control perceive the political system to have great influence on their socio-economic and other personal pursuits. For them firstly, the political system is the only source from which they can get certain benefits; secondly, the decisions of the political system may also be viewed as interfering their various pursuits and then thirdly, they have an obligation to be concerned with the political process.

Economic empowerment of women refers to employment and income generation through training and skill development with the main objective of making women economically independent and self-sufficient. This can be achieved by organising Self Help Groups, confidence building, acquirement of new skills leading to self-employability so that woman can pursue vocations of their choice and capabilities thereby attaining their social economic betterment. Though official data helps us to understand the role and position of women in the labour market and assess the quality of their employment but increased work participation among women is equated with improvement in their economic status; occupational diversification is held to reflect better opportunities, migration from rural to urban areas is considered bad and even casualization; mechanisation is said to lead always to marginalisation of female workforce, and wage-employment (income) implies more autonomy.

Keywords: Economic Empowerment, Women, Political efficacy.

1. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Economic Empowerment has three basic mechanisms of understanding viz., multi-dimensional, it is *social*, and also a *process*. It is multi-dimensional, in that it occurs within sociological, psychological, economic, and other dimensions. Empowerment also occurs at various levels, such as individual, group, and community. Empowerment, by definition, is a social process, since it occurs in relation to others. Economic Empowerment is a process that is similar to a path or journey, one that develops as one works through it.

Other aspects of empowerment may vary according to the specific context and people involved, but these remain constant. In addition, one important implication of this definition of empowerment is that the individual and community are fundamentally connected. Empowerment of women also implies avoidance of crimes and atrocities against women and improvement in their education, health etc. Improvement of the status of women and their access to family planning services, make a triple contribution to sustainable development such as they make their own contribution to the quality of life and absolute eradication of poverty, they contribute to economic growth, by raising the quality and skills of the workforce and slowing down population growth thus reducing the burden on the environment which will improve sustainability.

In India during Eighth Plan (1990-95), recognized the role and contribution of women in development, adopted the strategy to ensure that 'benefits' of development from different sectors do not bypass women and special programmes were implemented to complement the general development programmes. Two new schemes, which were introduced during this period, were Mahila Samridhi Yojana and India Mahila Yojana. The other major developments during this plan period were setting up of National Commission for Women and National Credit Fund for Women known as Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, and 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments wherein one-third of seats of rural and urban self-governing institutions were reserved for women. The Government declared its commitment to the development of 'every child', which was manifested in the two National Plan of Action adopted in 1992, one for the Children and the other exclusively for the Girl Child.¹

1.1 From Women in Development to Gender Development

At the strategic level, the Women in Development (WID) approach focused on women as a group and sought to address the exclusion of women from the development process. It emphasised that if the development would only incorporate and include women's productive capacity, it would be much more efficient. Empowerment of women was thought to be the only way to ensure their participation in their own development and this, in turn, is possible only when the concentration is small with an effective local level development vision. Thus, at the execution level, it favoured non-governmental initiative which it was thought could bring in more of the participatory approaches, focused on small-scale women-only projects, to assure participation and prevent male domination. At the level of political struggle, an autonomous movement of women has been projected as the only possible way to achieve more power to the women. In this understanding, the crucial feature has been the attack on the idea of the traditional understanding of the domain of private and Public in which women's work, as well as life, has been compartmentalised

2 POLITICAL EFFICACY OF WOMEN

There is a near unanimity among scholars about the unprecedented contribution of Gandhi in bringing large numbers of women into politics. They may differ over the degree of Gandhi's radicalism with regard to women's issues and her position in society, but they all agree that it was the Gandhian way of politics that ensured mass participation of women in the nationalist movement.²

Political efficacy refers to the Person's belief that political and social change can be effected or retarded and that his efforts alone or in concert with others can produce the desired behaviour on the part of political authorities.³ Political efficacy and political participation are closely related. It is the efficacious person who is likely to participate and involve in political activity. The close link between efficacy and participation has been confirmed by Almond and Verba state, irrespective of autocratic or democratic socialization experiences, the well-educated person feels more politically competent than the less educated individual.

The sense of efficacy develops with the opportunities for participation. The democratic system provides opportunities for participation. Effective participation of the people is an indicator of true democracy. Therefore, the institutional set-up plays a major role in developing the sense of efficacy. The family, peer group, membership of various associations and political parties help in developing the sense of efficacy. As the institutional and associational affiliation help in developing the sense of efficacy, but whatever may be the system educated persons, being efficacious, feel that they have the capacity to mould the environment. More

¹ Goel, Aruna (2009). "Women Empowerment Myth or Reality". Deep & Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.p-18

² Kumari Amita (2016). "Gandhi and the Woman's Question: Paradoxes and Resolutions". University Research Journal Social Sciences, Humanities and Commerce. Vol. 1. No.1. January – June , 2016. Sido Kanhu Murmu University, Dumka, Jharkhand. Pp 1-14.

³ International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, Vol. 1, p.225. and also see Kalbagh, Chetana (Ed.) "Women and Development", (1992) Panda S. (Chapter) "Women's Involvement in Politics in India". Discovery Publishing House ., New Delhi. P110.

often than not education and socio-economic status are related. A person with higher socio-economic status is related. Persons with higher socio-economic status have self-confidence. They have personal control as well as control over the external environment.⁴

2.1 The outlook of Political Representation of Women

The implementation of gender quotas has been one of the foremost changes to women representation in the last two decades in India. It represents a "fast track" political measure that aims at solving women's political exclusion from politics. In addition to increasing women's representation in the legislature, quotas may signal the inclusion of women in the political sphere, which would have an influence on mass level attitudes and behaviour.

There was a myth regarding women that they can never fare well in business, as they are emotional, they work with their heart, not head, women will not be able to travel long distances, but the tables have turned now and today's women are confident, powerful, knows how to act when to act as a softer side but is not carried away, they know business, they understand the success ladder and financial market and they keep themselves updated technologically as well as professionally and achieve their targets. In the last three decades, women have made great progress in terms of entrepreneurship and education. With the progress of women, men feel a threat their status, because women tend to have the masculine traits in business as they climb up the ladder of success, career-oriented women do well and manage their life accordingly so thanks to the innovation of social media, women are now self-employed educated and are flourishing and earning a status. Women have also successfully vanished the myth of being in the kitchen and taking the role of homemaker. Women are born leaders and have turned their skills into power, with being greatly educated and technologically well-equipped have carved a niche for themselves, by doing this one woman inspiring other women, which leads to woman empowerment on the social platform⁵

A word "Shevolution" was designed by Lesley Abdela to depict what requirements to happen, to bring about social orders where women's and men's abilities work similarly, and political framework at that point produces approaches and programs that are reasonable for both women and men. This would mean taking a gander at each procedure, approach, each action and program, based on how it addresses the issues of women and men. Work should aim to (i) encourage more women to come forward and take an active role in politics at local, regional municipal, and national levels ; (ii) train potential women candidates and their campaign teams in the skills and understanding of democratic politics this includes candidates for parliament, as well as local regional and municipal government and mayoral candidates ; (iii) help change the culture and systems in political parties and the media to help to become 'women –friendly'; (iv) increase public awareness about the importance of including women at all levels of decision-making in politics; (v) help build and develop non-party-aligned NGO groups to ensure a continuation of our activities for getting more women elected to parliament and local councils, and as mayors. These groups, working with women and men in media, NGOs, and political parties, would continue the promotion of parity democracy⁶.

Strategy makers in India, worldwide advancement organizations, and global monetary foundations are slowly going to the acknowledgement that just and sustainable economic improvement relies upon women being allowed to settle on choices at a standard with men at all levels of society. Specifically, it is fundamental to have more women in political authority if women's sensual orientation interests are to be progressed. On the off chance that authority is male-ruled, masculinity inclinations in dispersion and control of assets will remain, and women will keep on being more defenceless against monetary neediness and social underestimation. Many development interventions that aimed to promote the empowerment of women focused on women's leadership at household and community level. For example, countless development projects aim to promote women's participation in decision making at the community level, while others focus on the economic empowerment of women leaders of households. Attempts have been made to increase women's autonomy within male-headed households by promoting their involvement in income generation, and resources have been poured into projects and programmes which aimed to promote women's participation in community-level decision-making and to alleviate the poverty of women household heads and their dependents. Notwithstanding, improvement strategy and practice educated by a guarantee to 'empowering' women have not been centred around advancing women's leadership at the level of the state and national establishments.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Viswam, Deepa and Jethwani, K Pooja; (2018) "Rise of women Entrepreneurs on Social Media", Third Concept, January, 2018, New Dehi, Pp10

⁶ Lasley Abdela.(2000) "From Palm tree to Parliament : training women for political leadership and public life". Caroline Sweetman (ed.) Women and Leadership. Oxfam GB., UK. Pp.16

Subsequently, the present notoriety of advancing women's power as an improvement objective has proclaimed a move towards subsidizing various types of exercises. Strategies for endorsing women's leadership focus either on building the capacity of women themselves or on overcoming the structural barrier that they face.

2.2 Building Women's Capacity for Leadership

A growing number of international and national development organisations have started to support to support training courses that aim to promote 'women's leadership'; chiefly through stressing the importance of education, and of skills- and assertiveness-training for some this is merely another example of taking apolitical issue and neutralizing it through providing a technocratic response. While education/training cannot be expected to lead to women accomplishing leadership positions in parliament good-quality education does play a key role in building women's capacity to become leaders in society education is required that inspires Independent; critical thought nurtures self –confidence and provides young girls with an idea of what they might become. National Policy for Empowerment of Women initiated a strong platform for action with definite goals, targets and a time frame. (See Fig..1)

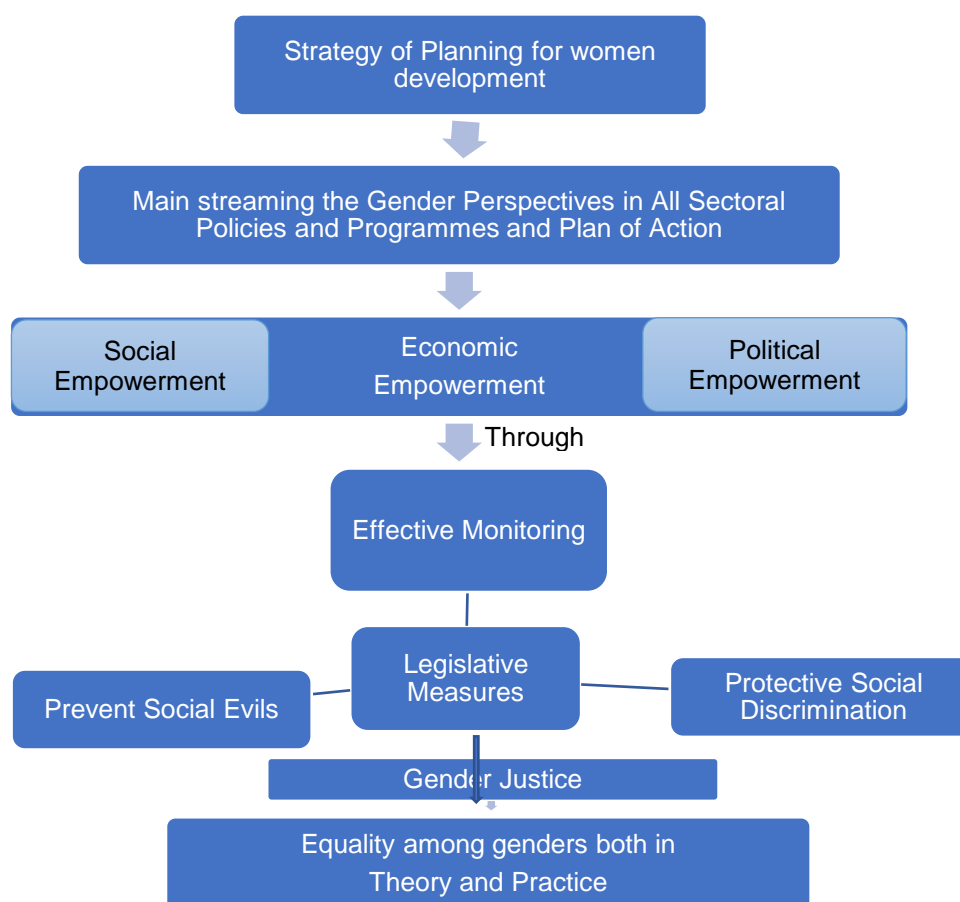


Fig. 1 Source: Aruna Goel. *Women Empowerment: Myth or Reality*

2.3 Defeating the Structural Barriers

A key structural barrier to women's leadership is the absence of authorised equivalence. Until the point that each national lawful framework implements women's spot keeping pace with men, women will keep on being peasants. Violence and mental terrorization will continue to be the ultimate barrier to women's leadership at all levels of society from the family unit to state. Women require laws that declare their full citizenship and authorize their rights. A technique that means to defeat basic boundaries in male-one-sided organizations is a governmental policy regarding minorities in society (also known as positive discrimination) which hosts been received inside political gatherings in a few nations and by a few nations and by a few administrations. Enlistment systems enrolment methods are created with the point of reviewing an irregularity of people at senior levels.

2.4 Collusion – Building: Women's Organizations and 'Change Specialists'

In perspective of the enormous trouble that women have in entering authority position in governments and administrations through the ordinary methods, numerous women activists advance their worries by campaigning and battling outside standard government and bureaucratic structures. The accomplishment of the international women's development in the course of the last two and half decades is especially amazing a result of two things. To start with, women's associations contrast to a great degree generally in their points and plans. There is no single arrangement of 'women's interests' a direct result of the distinction between women by class, ethnicity, race, religion etc. Aggregate activity relies upon consenting to vary on a few issues, keeping in mind the end goal to encourage a shared objective. Second, this aggregate activity has been embraced even with the endeavours of moderate powers, to detail the procedure by undermining the rule of erotic orientation correspondence.

2.5 What is the Unlike about Women's Leadership? And Sustainable Development:

Clearly, a large portion of the pioneers of mankind ought to be female on the grounds of value alone, on the grounds that women make up a large portion of humankind. The link between personal identity and leadership style is a complex one. There is no guarantee that women leaders will endorse gender equality, there is also no guarantee that male leaders will not do so. Bureaucratic and democratic principles dictate that leaders should represent the interests of others, even when these interests are at odds with their own.

Significant consideration has likewise been given throughout the years to the issue of hierarchical structure. Some contend that a type of governmental issues that is really vote based and aware of the privilege to self-assurance should dismiss bureaucratic hierarchical structures for level, co-agent structures. However, it is to a great degree hard to conceive a substitute. For sure, there is extensive confirmation from women and men who work in level hierarchical structures that formal types of strength and control are supplanted by casual structures – resulting in a 'tyranny of powerlessness'⁷.

3 WOMEN IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP ROLES IN INDIA

There are still fewer women than men leaders in contexts where leaders are elected, but in a number of countries, in the past two decades, the number of women elected to local councils or national parliament has increased.

In India, the 1993 Panchayat Raj Act created one million elected women members of local councils and chairs of local council committees. The Indian state has taken a few activities other than presenting a few protected arrangements for women. Towards this undertaking, the 73rd Amendment has been presented in the Constitution of India to guarantee the portrayal of ladies in different statutory neighbourhood assortments of self-government. The arrangements of 73rd Amendment Act incorporated that :

- Not less than one-third of the seats be reserved for women (including that of Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes) and these may be allocated by rotation of different constituencies of a Panchayat.
- In a proportion to the total population of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) to the population of areas, seats will be reserved for SCs and STs. There would be reservation for women in these seats allotted to SCs and STs.
- Not less than one-third of the total number of seats for the offices of the chairpersons at each level would be reserved for women. This would be pivoted among various Panchayats at each level – Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad.
- In count, there are certain general structures, which could be taken benefit of by women, such as through elections for membership and Sarpanch (President) posts, at the local (Gram Panchayat) as well as the intermediary level (Panchayat Samiti).
- It was left to the diverse states to accommodate bookings for enrollment of to the post of the executive, to a part having a place within reverse classes, in the event that they did.

All the state governing body were coordinated to alter their separate Panchayat enactments to affirm the Constitutional change inside one year. Every one of the states went along and embraced new Panchayat

⁷ Molyneux, M. (1998), 'Analysing women's movements', in Jackson, C. and R. Pearson (eds), *Feminist Vision of Development: Gender Analysis and Policy*, Routledge.

enactment inside a year by April 1994⁸.

The Bill for 33 per cent reservation of women in Parliament and State Legislatures was presented in Lok Sabha (lower house) in 1996 for the first time. It was presented on September 12, 1996, talk about it was slowed down and the following day it quickly alluded to a Joint Select Committee. The principle protest was the prevention of reservation for women in minority and the retrogressive gatherings, particularly the OBCs (Other Backward Classes). Some vital highlights of the Bill were as under:

- 33% seats to be reserved for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.
- One-third of these to be reserved for SC/ST women.
- 181 Lok Sabha seats to be rotated by a draw of lots.
- The bill is not to apply to State/Union Territories where seats reserved for SC/ST is less than three. So it will not apply in 10 States/Union Territories.

However, such changes have not been without a strong women's movement in the country. There have been certain landmarks in the history of women's struggle in India. The Committee on the Status of Women in India in 1975 has come out with its report "*Towards Equality*". After several decades of struggle, the *National Perspective Plan for Women's Development 1998-2000* was formulated in 1988. *The Shramshakti Report* also appeared in the same year. The National Commission for Women came into effect by an Act of Parliament to investigate and examine all matters relating to the safeguards provided for women under the Constitution and other laws⁹.

The Indian State in view of its commitment to various international conventions specially the Mexico Plan of Action 1975, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979, the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategy 1985, the Beijing Declaration as well the Platform of Action 1995 has designed a National Policy for Empowerment of Women in 1996. The policy clearly stipulates that¹⁰:

- 1) Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom for women on equal basis with men to be equally ensured.
- 2) All forms of violence against women, physical, mental, domestic or social through recourse to customs, traditions and practices would be eliminated.
- 3) No discrimination would be allowed in law or practice against women in view of recognition that human rights and fundamental freedom are entitled to all women.
- 4) All forms of discrimination against and violation of the rights of girl child would be eliminated by undertaking strong measures including punitive ones.
- 5) The synergy of development measures would be designed for holistic empowerment of women.
- 6) Women's active participation in the decision making is to ensure the achievement of goals of equality, development and empowerment.
- 7) Policies, programmes and systems are to be established to ensure mainstreaming of women's perspective.
- 8) Gender sensitisation programmes would be conducted on regular basis for all sections of society.
- 9) Media to be used to portray a positive image of girls and women.
- 10) For eradication of poverty and ensuring provision of women's basic needs, several programmes are initiated to :
 - a. Ensure food security,
 - b. Arrange for housing and shelter
 - c. Provide equal education
 - d. Devise a holistic approach to women's health,

⁸ Kaushik, S, 1995, Women and Panchayati Raj, Har Anand, New Delhi.

⁹ IGNOU, (2010), "Women and Constitutional Their Impacts Mandate: Comparative Perspective", Global Debates and their Impacts, Ch.10. , Pp 165-175 also, see www.egyankosh.ac.in

¹⁰ Ibid

- e. Formulate macro-economic and social policies by institutionalising women's participation in economic development, and
- f. Arrange support services like child care facility etc., to enable women to participate effectively in development processes and to provide special attention to the needs of women in providing safe drinking water, sewage disposal and sanitation.

- 11) Women's perspective would be reflected in policies and programmes for ecosystem management.
- 12) Budgetary provision to be enhanced in the programmes relating to women.
- 13) Non-governmental organisations to be involved in the formulation and implementation of all policies and programmes affecting women.
- 14) International, regional and sub-regional cooperation for the empowerment of women are encouraged through sharing of experiences, exchange of ideas and technology and networks of institutions and organisations through the bilateral and multilateral arrangement¹¹.

3.1 The Obstacles to the Leadership of Women: Men's and Women's View:

Stereotyped presumptions are frequently behind choices not to rebuild the political field to suit women's needs or endow women with positions of authority.

For a huge number of years, legislative issues and open life have basically been seen as 'a man's amusement'. Stereotyped presumptions are frequently behind choices exclude women. Systems are capable impacts which exist between men with shared intrigue and foundations. What're more, customary male pioneers, including the boss and religious pioneers, impact the decision of political competitors. It was not women's readiness to be incorporated at all levels of basic leadership in political and open life which was missing, yet reasonable applicant choice techniques. The men don't acknowledge women in the gathering list. In India, it is steadily changing as governments and NGOs attempt to expand the number of women in legislative issues and public affairs.

The assessment of men is women don't have status, certainty, pride or a situation in the public eye inside which she can stand and protect her rights'; and key obstruction women confront is the strategy for picking applicants. Women are viewed as mothers and careers and are not more often than not found in basic leadership positions at the group level.

4 CONCLUSION

The issue of women empowerment is thus very complex and multidimensional. Besides, providing rights and creating awareness does not solve the problem of women. The development programmes and policies, which aim at women empowerment, should categorize women based on their age, caste, class, region, education etc., as they are not a homogeneous group which aims at empowerment.

Studies conducted in several parts of the country show that (a) representation of women in the PRIs has been significantly increased (as the 33% reservation has been made mandatory), (b) women's participation in the PRI meetings has also increased in spite of resistance from conservative forces, and (c) in most of the cases women's decision on the various affairs of the PRIs are influenced by the male members of their family. Over the years, the PRIs have emerged to be as bureaucratic as the state bodies. The local power lobby uses all of its manipulative tactics to retain their influence.

Over the last fifty years or so the governmental structure of the State has remained the same with a considerable continuity with the colonial past. Though the various policies are formulated and reformulated for the social development and empowerment of women, the agencies for the implementation for the same have remained unchanged. And accordingly, there have not been any qualitative changes in the status of women of these groups in the society. The marginalised groups of the society in general and the women of these groups, in particular, have articulated the art of their resistance against domination and disempowerment through various collective initiatives within these governmental structures, and at times against the State. The process of empowerment in actual terms aims to demolish the structure of subordination.

There are three agencies of development which are regarded as important in the struggle for women's rights. These are the individual, the state and the community. All these should play a role in ensuring the well-being

¹¹ Ibid

of a woman and the development of her capabilities and her freedom. But it has been argued that while development focusses on technology and training of men, the economic work of women is never accounted for and was considered non-consequential. All ideas of development usually work against women, increasing inequalities and depriving them of whatever control they had over the resources of the family and community. As a result of this criticism, the United Nations decided that there should be a conscious effort to involve women in development and give them access to the formal sector of the economy. This was the Women in Development (WID) approach. To this was added a multitude of feminist movements showing the negative impact of the work done by the state or multinational agencies on the women at the local level. These experiences were transferred at the theoretical level and began to be referred to as the Gender and Development (GAD) paradigm. It advocated a look at the decision-making structures of development which were structured along patriarchal lines and often based on western models incapable of taking into account the concerns of the non-western women.

To ensure empowerment of women, their participation in their own development, focus on small-scale women-only projects to avoid male domination and in recent years the need to investigate relationships among gender ideology, women's subordination and operation of social, economic and political power. GAD has been focusing on men and women in relation to one another.

To solve the numerous difficulties confronting us all, the world needs to be able to draw from the whole pool of abilities accessible to it- both women and men. Women are under-spoken to in a choosable position in legislative issues and open life all through the world at all levels. Getting a couple of more women chosen or delegated to administration and basic leadership positions isn't sufficient if the frameworks and political culture are still essentially intended for men. It isn't sufficient just to prepare women as pioneers without additionally chipping away at changing negative demeanours towards women pioneers with respect to political gatherings, governments, the media, and people in general. The working society and frameworks of political gatherings and governments need to mirror this adjustment in demeanours. Administration preparing and improvement can assume a fundamental part in rectifying the lopsided characteristics that exist in control structures both nationally and internationally.

Still, the new 'voices' being heard now seem to be ushering in a new era of more inclusive politics and development

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