

Reservation Policy and Women's Participation in Grass-roots Politics: A Study of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Bankura District, West Bengal

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Abstract: *The political reservation policy for women in India has been a significant step toward promoting gender equality in governance. This study examines the impact of the reservation policy on women's participation in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Bankura District, West Bengal. The study focuses on the level of political engagement, decision-making roles, challenges faced, and socio-economic determinants influencing participation. Data were collected using structured interviews and questionnaires from elected women representatives (EWRs) across selected gram panchayats. The study reveals that while reservation has increased women's numerical presence in local governance, active participation is influenced by socio-economic status, education, social norms, and party support. Policy implications suggest the need for capacity-building programs, awareness campaigns, and institutional support to enhance meaningful participation of women in grassroots politics.*

Keywords: Reservation Policy, Women Empowerment, Grass-roots Politics, Panchayati Raj Institutions, Bankura, Political Participation