

## **Empowerment at the Grassroots: Impact of Participatory (in) Equalities in Policy Formulation and Recognition and Redistribution of Women at the Grassroots in India**

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**Abstract :** Borrowing from Kabeer's framework of empowerment, participation of women at Panchayat level politics (grassroots level of politics in India) has been conceptualized as a resource in the study and the impact of the same in influencing the policies at the grassroots as an agency. The study attempts to examine such intricacies in the dynamics of participation and policy formulation at the Panchayat level and to assess its overall impact in altering the recognition and redistribution of women. A conscious attempt has been made to go beyond formal politics and consider participants of the informal political processes as subjects of the study. Primary surveys were conducted for data collection in 4 Panchayat villages (from Jalpaiguri district in West Bengal) of which 2 wards from each were selected based on the nature of reservation of the panchayat seats. In-depth interviews with the Panchayat members and an approximate of 80 voters from each of the villages were conducted. This has been further analyzed with the aid of appropriate statistical tools and narratives. Preliminary findings show that women from vulnerable sections tend to participate more in the political process since it offers them a means of negotiating with their vulnerabilities however in case of its impact on policy formulation, the effect of women's participation does to appear to be as profound.

**Keywords :** recognition, redistribution, political participation, women

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