

ROLE OF MICROFINANCE ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A STUDY IN SOME SELECTED AREAS OF MANIKGANJ DISTRICT

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**ROLE OF MICROFINANCE ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A STUDY
IN SOME SELECTED AREAS OF MANIKGANJ DISTRICT**

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This is to certify that the research work entitled, “**Role of Microfinance on Women Empowerment: A Study in Some Selected Areas of Manikganj District**” conducted by **AEYNUN TASNIM RINTA** bearing Registration No. **18-09141 (July-December/2020)** under my supervision and guidance in the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **MASTER OF SCIENCE (M. S.) IN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY STUDIES** in the Faculty of Agribusiness Management, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka 1207, Bangladesh. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or diploma.

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ROLE OF MICROFINANCE ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A STUDY IN SOME SELECTED AREAS OF MANIKGANJ DISTRICT

ABSTRACT

Microfinance programs are being considered as an important development strategy all over the world especially in developing countries like Bangladesh. The aim of the study is to identify the effectiveness of microfinance program. Main objectives of the study were to determine the socio-economic status of women borrowing microfinance, to identify their decision-making ability and measure of women empowerment at household level and also identify the credit related problems in the study area. This study was conducted in Manikganj Sadar upazila and Satoria upazila under Manikganj district. The population for the study covers the residents who have been engaged with microfinance activities and lives in this locality. A total 60 women beneficiary from Grameen Bank, BRAC and ASA were selected by using purposive sampling technique. Thus, 60 women beneficiaries constituted the sample of the study. A well structured interview schedule was developed based on objectives of the study for collecting information. Data collection was started in 1st June, 2020 and completed in 30th July, 2020. Women empowerment index was constructed by following average method and frequency distribution with the help of SPSS to find out the effectiveness of microfinance on women empowerment. The findings of the study reveal that the socio-economic condition and empowerment status of the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance was not so good. Only 18.3% respondents utilize the loan money herself and the other 81.7% respondents give the money to their husband. In the study area microfinance services only help the respondents to improve their decision-making ability but in other empowerment issues most of the respondents were empowered at low level. Thus, it can be summarized that in the study area the effectiveness of microfinance program towards women empowerment was not in a satisfactory level.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASA	: Association for Social Advancement
BB	: Bangladesh Bank
BBS	: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BDT	: Bangladeshi Taka
BKB	: Bangladesh Krishi Bank
BRAC	: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CDF	: Credit and Development Forum
DPC	: Development planners and consultants
<i>et al.</i>	: and others (at elli)
GB	: Grameen Bank
GOB	: Government of Bangladesh
HSC	: Higher School Certificate
MFI	: Microfinance Institutions
MF-NGO	: Microfinance Non-Government Organization
MIE	: Microfinance Information Exchange
NCB	: Nationalized Commercial Banks
NGO	: Non-Government Organization
No.	: Number
PCB	: Private Commercial Bank
PROSIKHA	: Proshikkhan Shikkha Karmo
RAKUB	: Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank
SAU	: Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
SPSS	: Statistical Package for Social Science
sq. km.	: Square Kilometer
SSC	: Secondary School Certificate
Tk.	: Taka
UNIFEM	: United Nations Development Fund for Women

Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Advantages and access to the resources among men and women vary all over the world. The negligence of women is negatively affecting the economic and social development as half of the population is left out of the development process. There are so many factors that prevent women from progress. They also face risk and constraints to involve in income generating activities. Things are not easy for women in male dominated countries. Women receive less education than men. As a result of it so many issues arise like illiteracy, joblessness, early marriage and family violence which keep them away from greater progress. This lower standard of women is not only because of the tradition or culture but it is attached in political, financial and social structure which needs to be changed. Moreover, to maintain a family women's contribution is a must. They have to do variety of work which is completely cost free. Their contribution is not accepted as manual labor. As most of the women do not earn money they are financially and socially dependent on male members of their family (Nabahat, 2014). Traditionally, women have been marginalized and vulnerable members of society. Basically, to achieve sustainable development in family and also in society a women's role is as important as a men's role. However, they are not enjoying the same opportunities as men in many ways. As reflected in Table 1.1, the gender gap in Asia remains wide with the exception of the Philippines and Sri Lanka. While China and Vietnam are catching up fast, Bangladesh has made significant strides if one compares the nation with its South Asian neighbors. It also outshone all Muslim countries (Islam & durga, 2011).

Therefore, microfinance often target women. For many women microfinance is the only tool to empower as many microfinance institutions target only women for changing their social status toward improvement. They offer low interest rate and no collateral for easy taking loan. As poor people can't take loan from commercial bank because they are unable to provide high collateral or some deposit. This constraint is actually triggered out the poverty level. This is where the plan of microfinance plays a vital role to improve the status of women as well as the underprivileged.

Table 1.1 Gender Gap Rankings, 2015

Country	Overall Rank	Overall Score*
Iceland	1	0.8276
Philippine	9	0.7579
Sri Lanka	16	0.7402
China	60	0.6907
Vietnam	71	0.6802
Singapore	84	0.6664
Indonesia	92	0.6580
Bangladesh	93	0.6526
Maldives	99	0.6482
Malaysia	100	0.6467
Japan	101	0.6445
Nepal	110	0.6213
Jordan	113	0.6182
India	114	0.6151
Korea	115	0.6146
Egypt	126	0.5862
Iran	128	0.5839
Turkey	129	0.5828
Saudi Arabia	130	0.5651
Pakistan	132	0.5458

Source: 'The Global Gender Gap Index 2015', The Global Gender Gap Report 2015, World Economic Forum, Geneva, Switzerland.

Note: *scale of 0 to 1, 0 = inequality, 1 = equality. This ranking is based on five criteria: economic participation, economic opportunity, political empowerment, educational attainment and health and well-being.

The meteoric rise of microfinance and the rapid expansion of the apparel industry helped Bangladesh's female population enormously in terms of their employment and other economic opportunities. While the apparel industry offers direct employment, mainly women, microfinance helps create self-employment for millions of women, particularly in the countryside. As can be seen in Table1.2, the penetration of microfinance is very high in Bangladesh. The figures in the Table do not provide a complete picture but they give some indications about the state of microfinance penetration in South Asia

Table 1.2 Microfinance Penetrations in South Asia

Country	Number of active borrowers, 2015, in million	% of women borrower	% of working age population under microfinance coverage	Gross loan portfolio US\$, 2015
Afghanistan	0.3	69	2.1	113.2 million
Bangladesh	21.6	92	22.0	2.1billion
India	16.2	95	1.1	2.5 billion
Pakistan	1.1	71	1.1	162.9 million
Sri Lanka	1	59	4.0	288.8 million
Nepal	0.6	98	3.4	101.8 million

Source: Microfinance Information Exchange (MIE), 2015

Note: This table is based on the number of microfinance institutions (MFI) reporting to the Microfinance Information Exchange. Figures in parentheses show the number of reporting MFI in the respective countries. For time-series data, see www.mixmarket.org/.

1.2 Microfinance

The concept of microfinance is generated by the Noble-Prize winner Muhammad Yunus, supports the financially underprivileged people by giving them with the necessary loan to open an enterprise and work toward financial independence. These loans are special for its different features. It allows poor people to take loan without collateral and offer lower interest rate that may be given by creating a group or individual. Basically, the gestation period of repaying loan keeps short like weekly or monthly basis. However, the interest rates sometimes very high due to the risk of default (Barbara, 2017).

The term microfinance includes microcredit, micro-savings and microinsurance etc. Microfinance institutions offer small loans and credit to the marginalized or small business owners to assist them to run their business successfully and get financial benefit. MFI provides these services as most of the poor people can't obtain traditional loan from commercial banks as they demand high collateral (Davis, 2017).

Microcredit means small size supervised loan with no collateral. The origin of microcredit has a link with several organizations founded in Bangladesh especially Grameen bank. The founder of Grameen Bank, Dr. Muhammad Yunus start the

project of giving small loan to the poor at low interest rate in small town. The Grameen bank was followed by organizations such as BRAC, ASA, PROSHIKHA and so on. The impact of microcredit was so vast that now it is followed by all over the world especially in the developing countries and quickly became a popular weapon for economic development (Dewan A.H. Alamgir, 2009).

Micro-savings schemes are also apart of microfinance umbrella. They enable the borrowers to have some savings which will benefit them later. Microfinance also encompasses microinsurance and provides insurance to the borrowers with lower rate and lesser premium. (Mia, 2016)

Basically, microfinance is a category of banking service provided to unemployed or lower income individual or group who otherwise would have no other access to financial services. It is a type of financial services targeting poor people and small business who lack conventional banking services. Microfinance comprises microcredit, the provision of small loans to poor clients. It provides savings, checking accounts, insurance and other services. The aim of microfinance service is to reach excluded customers especially poorer population, socially marginalized or geographically more isolated so that they can be self-sufficient (Dewan A.H. Alamgir, 2009).

1.3 Women Empowerment

Empowerment is the process that creates power in individual over their own lives, societies and in their communities. People are empowered when they are able to access the opportunities available to them without limitation or restriction such as in education, profession, society and lifestyle. Empowering women means the process of giving women control over their choices and access to the opportunities and resources that allow them to flourish. Women's empowerment is the most crucial point to be noted for the overall development of a country (Nabahat, 2014).

World Bank defines empowerment as 'the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Empowerment encompasses the steps of improving the social value of women through education, raising awareness, literacy and training'.

Malhotra (2002) constructed a list of the most commonly used dimensions of women's empowerment, drawing from the frameworks developed by various authors in different fields of social sciences. Allowing for overlap, these frameworks suggest that women's empowerment needs to occur along multiple dimensions including: economic, socio-cultural, familial/interpersonal, legal, political, and psychological. Basically, women's empowerment enabling women to take life-determining decisions and process for women to redefine gender roles that all men and women should have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

1.4 Importance of Microfinance on Women Empowerment

The term microfinance is standing for poverty alleviation, financial support to micro entrepreneurs, gender development etc. The aim of microfinance is to work for poorespecially rural areas to raise their income levels and improve living standards. Microfinance institutions (MFI) are financial institutions that offer financial and non-financial products and services to the poor especially poor women. NGOs started credit program in mid-eighties and their activities increased noticeably higher after 1990 (CDF, 2000). With the increasing number of collateral free micro credit disbursement by MFIs, some Nationalized Commercial Banks (NCBs), and Specialized Banks like BKB and RAKUB have been encouraged to provide a considerable amount of their rural credit to the poor without security. However, the amount is much less compared to the deposit mobilization from the rural sector of the country. Today, some of the Private Commercial Banks (PCBs) have also started direct and linkage programs with NGOs. Total loan disbursement (cumulative) by these four kinds of institutions till December 2012 was taka 434.55 billion; of which disbursement under Government program was taka 37.77 billion (8.69%), Grameen Bank disbursed taka 154.11 billion (35.46%), other Banks and MF-NGOs disbursed taka 78.41 billion (18%) and taka 164.26 billion (37.80%) respectively (figure-1.1).

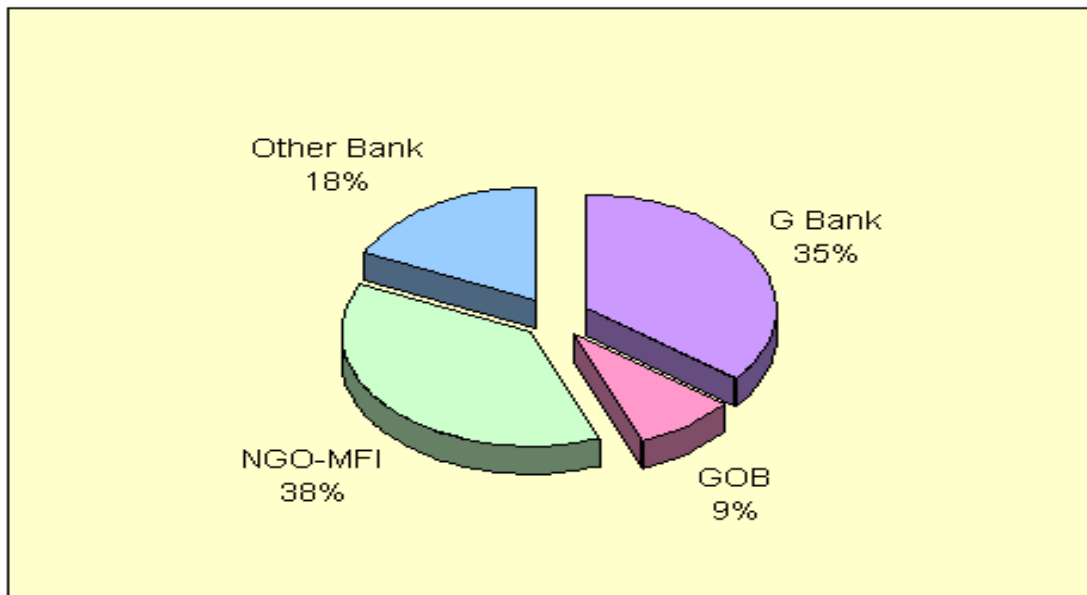


Figure 1.1: Institution-wise Cumulative Loan Disbursement

Source: IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM), 2012

Women entrepreneur program is one of the major programs of microfinance institution. It gives financial products and services to the needy poor women. The concentration on women's empowerment through microfinance enlightens the meaning of gender relations in policy development sector more significantly than ever before. It is unforgettable that women play a vital role in the development of today's growing world. This is the reason why women empowerment is so important. Microfinance is a powerful weapons to self-sufficient the marginalized especially the poor women at world level specially in developing countries. Microfinance activities provide them the way to empower themselves and can alleviate poverty. Microfinance services bring women empowerment by positively influencing women's decision-making power in their family and also improve their overall socioeconomic status.

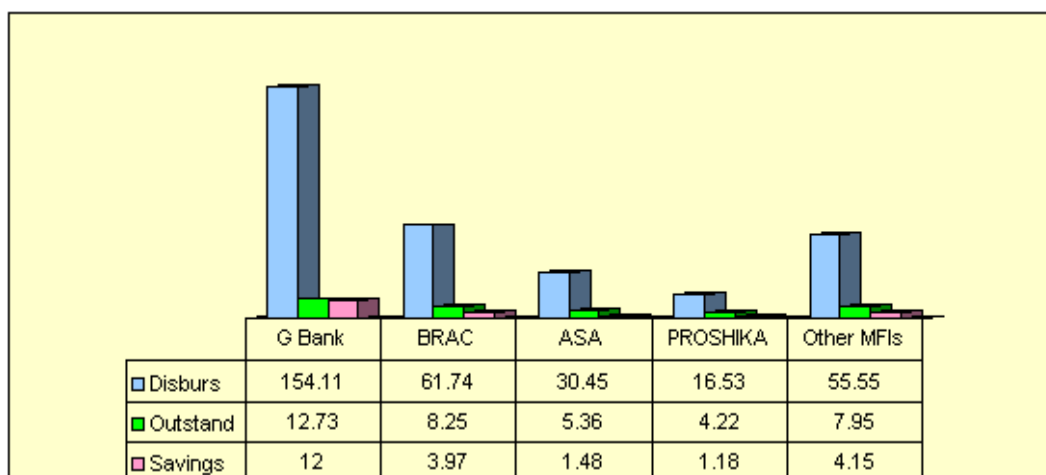


Figure 1.2: Top Four MFIs in terms of Disbursement, Outstanding loan and Savings in billion Tk.

Source: Credit and development forum (2012)

About 90% of the borrowers of those MF-NGOs are from rural area and only 10% are from urban area. These MF-NGOs disbursed taka 262.83 billion with outstanding loan amount of taka 30.51 billion. The outstanding amount of micro-finance extended under government program is taka 7.46 billion, the outstanding balance of Grameen Bank is taka 12.73 billion and that of other banks is taka 7.95 billion. Grameen Bank, BRAC, ASA and PROSHIKA are top four MFIs in terms of loan disbursement, outstanding loan and saving mobilization (Figure-1.2).

Microfinance plays a significant role in developing the social status of women as it has a close relationship with development strategies and poverty alleviation especially in a developing country. In our country most of the women are the poorest of the poor so to empower themselves financial support is very crucial. Here microfinance work so that they can enjoy greater financial security which allows them to become more empower in household and society. Thus, microfinance successfully works to bring gender equality and develop sustainable livelihood and better working environment for women. It is clear that a financially independent woman is an asset for her family. Naturally, women have sacrificing mind. They think first for her family and children before herself and spend greater portion of their income on their family needs such as children’s nutrition, education, healthand clothing along with all the necessities. That’s why MFI targets women by arguing that their repayment record and behavior is more satisfying than men. Only the access of finance can’t empower women but the

collaboration with the access to material like money, wealth, family support, human, education and social resources can empower them. To bring all these dignities microfinance works very well. But now a day's some argument arises about the role of microfinance towards their development programs. The causal link among microfinance outreach, poverty alleviation and women empowerment are depicted in figure 1.3

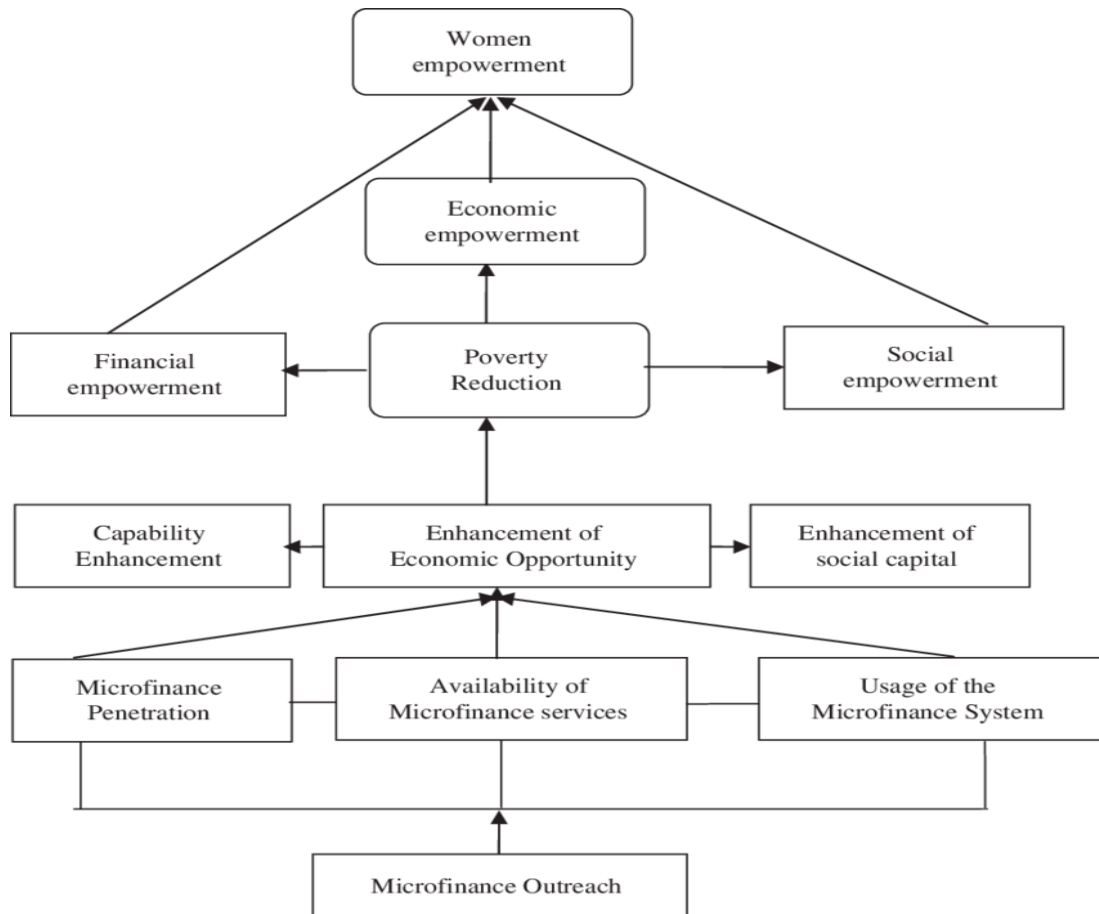


Figure1.3: Causation between microfinance outreach and women empowerment.

Source: Laha & Kuri, 2014.

1.5 Problem Statement

Bangladesh is a developing country where approximately 49.43% people are women (World Bank, 2019). The country has a relatively conservative and traditional society where women are in a disadvantageous position. Generally, women are remained inferior to male in almost all aspects of their lives. Most of the women specially, rural women are controlled by the traditional rules and they had limited access to

education, health care, productive services, market etc. Women are still paid less in the job sector as a result they earn less than a man. They normally do not have easy access to credit or other financial services.

To empower women microfinance program is one of the best programs as it works remarkably all over the world especially in developing country. Microfinance's aim is to accomplish their potentiality to empower women specially those who are faced with inequality. In Bangladesh there are so many MFIs provide financial and non-financial services to women so that they can start their own business or support their family.

The aim of the study is to observe the status of women in various aspects of women empowerment and find out the relationship between microfinance and women empowerment among the study area. Disliking of female entrepreneurs belong in our society because of some unconventional cultural norms or social perspectives. On the other hand, microfinance program is well known all over the country and many women take microfinance but it is the burning issue that the loan money is not utilizing by the women herself rather the money is used by their husband or male member of their family so here women are only the medium of taking loan. Moreover, women face different kind of problems in the time of accessing and utilizing the loan money. These issues are hampering main motive of microfinance program to achieve women empowerment. To explore the reality research should be constructed. In my study area so many women are engaged with microfinance program but the number of researches in this topic is not available.

1.6 Justification of the Study

Microfinance is a well-known form of financing especially for poor women in rural areas. The present study is an effort to highlight the recent picture of role of microfinance on woman empowerment in some areas of Manikganj district. Now a day's so many NGOs provide microfinance program among women all over the country. So, it is important to justify the effectiveness of their activities. In this regard research needs to be done. As the aim of the study is to observe the status of women in various aspects of women empowerment and find out the relationship between microfinance and women empowerment, I took this research which may be of great

help in better knowing the socio-economic status of women. The study is significant as it pursues the role of microfinance on women empowerment in terms of decision-making ability, freedom of mobility, ability of utilization of loan money as enterprise running capacity, purchasing power and economic independence etc. On the other hand, there are so many constraint issues such as higher interest rate, lower gestation period, burden of collateral, difficult process of taking loan etc. which make problem in time of accessing loan. Another aim of this research is to find out the problems that the female borrowers of microfinance face in accessing and utilizing the loan money. In the study area research on this topic is not available so I found it important to hold a research on the topic of the role of microfinance on women empowerment. The result of this study will provide information to policy makers of government, production economists and extension workers. All the information would help them in policy making.

1.7 Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the study:

- i. To know the socio-economic status of the female borrowers of microfinance;
- ii. To analyze the role of microfinance in decision making and measurement of women empowerment at domestic level;
- iii. To identify the problems that they face in accessing and utilizing microfinance services

1.8 Outline of the Study

This thesis contains a total of nine chapters. The chapters have been organized in the following sequence. Chapter 1 contains introduction of the thesis. The literature review is presented in chapter 2. Methodology of the relevant study is presented in chapter 3. A brief discussion about the study area is included in chapter 4. Chapter 5 contains the details of socio-economic characteristics of the female borrowers of microfinance within the selected area. A brief of the decision-making ability of the respondents and a women empowerment index is constructed based on different empowerment issues in chapter 6 to measure the impact of microfinance on women empowerment. Chapter 7 contains the problems that the female borrowers of

microfinance are facing at the time of accessing and utilizing the loan money. Lastly, the summery, conclusion and recommendations are discussed in chapter 8.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the literature reviews of some relevant literature related to role of microfinance on women empowerment. It will help to understand the method and cause-effect relationship of past and present research work on microfinance and women empowerment. It also assists to pick the appropriate analytical technique to solve the problem correctly. In order to put this research in an appropriate frame work some of the existing foreign literature and research carried out in Bangladesh would be reviewed, which will be very supportive in this study and will lead to a new track to analyze the impact of microfinance on women's empowerment more accurately.

2.2 Women Empowerment and Microfinance

Hashemi et al. (1996) in an earlier study of Bangladesh also concluded that women's participation in credit organizations increased their mobility, ability to make small as well as large purchases, and a say in household decision making.

However, in an earlier study (**Goetz and Gupta, 1996**) concluded that 63 per cent of women in Microfinance exercised either partial or no control over loan use as most of the women's loans were utilized as well as controlled by male members in the households of Bangladesh.

Mayoux (2001) indicates that credit is very important to women's significance to improve their household income, and also improve their status and independence. It is realized that the practice of taking microfinance enhance women empowerment. But utilization of loan money alone is not easy for a woman in less developed countries as the society is male dominated. Most of the women give the loan money to their husband or male member of their family instead of starting a small business alone. Though the credit is sanctioned in the name of women but it is actually taken and utilized by men or other male members of the family. Behind this the cultural aspects of society works and make constraints to start a business to get benefit from it. As women give most of their time in household chores, they cannot give proper attention in earning income.

Cheston and Kuhn (2002) is illustrated that microfinance works for women empowerment. They also explain that only giving credit is not sufficient to bring women empowerment properly but if these programs are properly designed then they can play their role appropriately. They defined that empowerment is all about change, power and choice, but its capacity can be determined in the perception of the socio-economic background that ensure women's choices.

Mahmud (2003) examined the impact of microcredit on women's empowerment using a longitudinal study on the evaluation and monitoring of microcredit programs in rural Bangladesh which covered nearly 2,000 households in 91 villages (80 were program villages, and 11 were non-program villages) of 22 rural thanas (sub-districts) of Bangladesh. He found only limited effect of women's participation on access to resources education, employment and mobility but substantial improvement on their agency regarding access to income and intra-household decision making which further enhanced their welfare.

Parvin et al. (2005) conducted a research in Dumuria Thana (sub-district) of Khulna district taking 80 samples of 6,000 beneficiaries of microcredit to examine the women's empowerment. The authors employed three indicators of empowerment: participation in household decision making, control over income and access to assets. The results revealed by the study indicate that women's participation level in decision making for children's education and the marriage-related matter remains more or less the same before and after joining the microcredit program. However, after being involved in microcredit program women's earnings significantly increased their capability to express their opinion and make the decision for meeting personal needs, buying household assets, availing treatment and recreational facilities independently. The study also found that women had no full control over their personal earnings. With regard to access to assets, the study found no significant improvement in the level of empowerment of women. This study is based on only three specific elements of empowerment; it should have considered other elements of women's empowerment too.

Basu (2006) this paper tries to attempt to study how a women's tendency to investment projects can be linked to her desire to raise her bargaining position in the households. Women empowerment is examined with respect to control of saving,

control over loans, control over purchasing capacity and family planning in some sample household in Hooghly district of West Bengal. This is an empirical study based on 100 SHG members in the Hooghly district. The empirical findings show that the empowerment of women is established in weak form using the above indicators.

Hoque and Malhotra (2009) is concluded participation of women in micro-credit organization leads to increase in family decision making and the study found institutional participation, media exposure and family land holdings as important determinants of women empowerment.

Singh (2009) mentioned that microfinance had been established as an effective tool for self-determination of women in the rural areas of Bangladesh. Most of the rural women of Bangladesh have a relatively low status and their financial situation is also very pathetic as compared to men. Microfinance plays a significant role to overcome this situation. The study stated improvement in living standard, self-confidence and decision-making power of female clients that led to their empowerment.

Ashraf et al. (2010) is revealed that impact is more on women than male clients and thus women's say in household decision making improves regarding small as well as large purchases, desire for number of children, personal use, recreation and schooling for children and so on.

Bhusal (2010) describes that the relationship between microfinance and women empowerment is much closed. Microfinance program helps to increase the freedom of mobility, self-confidence and self-dependence among women, yet there was not any considerable improvement in securing better economic support.

2.3 Concluding Remarks

The above reviews indicate that most of the studies related with the impact of microfinance and women empowerment. It is very necessary to find out the actual role of microfinance program to bring women empowerment. The previous studies were used as a helpful tool to conduct the present study. The previous studies represent women empowerment in general but now situation has changed and many other issues arise that can create constraint for women empowerment. The present study takes ten different empowerment issues and decision-making related characteristics along with problems of accessing and utilizing loan money for

examine the effectiveness of microfinance. However, in this view point, the present study is different as the aim of the study is to identify the socio-economic status, the decision-making ability, measure of women empowerment and problem of accessing and utilizing the loan money of the female borrowers of microfinance. Here a women empowerment index also made by analyzing different issues. This study will help the future researcher and policy maker to take updated information about microfinance and women empowerment.

Chapter III

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter represents all the sequential steps to drag out the result of the research properly. It included the following topics such as selection of the study area, sources of data, selection of samples and sampling techniques, selection of study period, processing of data and analytical techniques.

3.2 Selection of the Study Area

Manikganj district was selected for the study as microfinance program is a very common issue there. The population for the study covers the residents who have been engaged with microfinance activities and lives in three selected villages of Manikganj Sadar upazila and Saturia upazila. The village named Barahirchar was selected from Manikganj Sadar upazila and the villages named Kamta and Janna was selected from Saturia upazila. The microfinance beneficiaries were randomly selected, as they were supposed to be engaged with microfinance program and could answer the questions.

The reasons for selecting this study area are given below:

- ❖ Availability of MFIs
- ❖ Many people of the selected areas take microfinance services
- ❖ Easy accessibility and good communication facilities as the researcher belong from Manikganj district.
- ❖ People of the selected areas are close to the researcher so it was expected to get well co-operation from the selected respondents.

3.3 Sources of Data

Primary and secondary data was collected for the present study. The study was mainly a survey research, so it was mostly dependent on primary data. The primary data was collected from women in selected areas who took microfinance from the MFIs such as Grameen Bank, BRAC and ASA. There were some other local MFIs named Beez Shamiti, Katigram Gono Kolyan Shamiti from where some of respondents took loans. On the other hand, secondary data was collected from different journals, studies, thesis paper, SAU library and other internet sources. Similarly, secondary

data was also collected from office files of microfinance institution which was available in internet.



Figure 3.1: Map of Manikganj District (Source: Banglapedia).

3.4 Selection of the Sample and Sampling Techniques

Microfinance borrowers were the respondents of primary sources of data for this study. Total 60 samples were taken from the selected area. From each village 20 samples were taken by following purposive sampling technique. The list of the respondent was made by the help of the regional office of BRAC, ASA and Grameen Bank.

3.5 Preparation of the Survey Schedule

Preparation of survey schedule is a vital point of this study. A structured interview schedule was prepared to collect necessary data from respondent in such a way that all the relevant information could be easily collected within the shortest possible time. Both openended and close ended questionnaire were used. The interview schedule

was pretested for judging their suitability. After pretesting, the schedule was confirmed.

3.6 Collection of Data

To cover the objectives of the study, necessary data were collected from relevant respondents by interviewing them by following the pretested interview schedule. Generally, most of the respondents do not keep proper records of their activities. Thus, it was really very difficult to collect actual data as a result the researcher need to depend on the assumption of the respondents. Before starting the final interview, it is necessary to give respondents a clear concept about the aims and objectives of the study. It is also important to make them feel easy to talk and ensure them that all the information will keep confidential. The questions were asked one by one in a simple manner and all the information were recorded to the interview schedule. After taking all the answers interview schedule was checked and verified to be ensured that all the data had been correctly filed. To avoid errors, data were collected in local units and used specific code for most of the data. This farther converted to the necessary unit to run the analysis. Data collection period was 1st June to 30th July, 2020. Secondary data were collected from different publication, literatures, thesis papers and internet sources throughout the time.

3.7 Editing and Tabulation of the Data

All the collected data were recorded and summarized carefully. Microsoft Excel programs and SPSS program were used for data entry and also for data analysis. Information was initially collected in local units and it was converted to standard unit in the time of analysis. The data was also converted to the specific code which was pointed before to run the analysis. Finally, to satisfy the objectives of the study a few relevant tables were prepared according to necessity of analysis.

3.8 Analytical Techniques

Data were analyzed with the aim of satisfying the objectives of the study. Both descriptive and statistical analysis was taken for analyzing the data.

3.8.1 Socio-Economic Characteristics

Tabular technique of analysis was usually used to find out the socio-economic status of the respondents. It is easy in calculation, largely used and understandable. Simple

measurements like average, percentage, arithmetic mean were taken into account through descriptive analysis.

3.8.2 Measurement of Decision-Making Ability

The assessment of decision-making power is determined by the ten-household decision making questions which was answered by the respondents, and also considered that providing microfinance by the selected microfinance programs enable them to influence in household decision making. At first frequency and percentage of respondents under each question was computed then an empowerment index was made based on the decision-making related question. To find out respondent's empowerment condition through the decision-making questions answered by '1' standing for a 'Yes' answer and '0' standing for a 'No' answer, and every 'Yes' answer indicate that the decision taken by women herself, while every 'No' answer indicates the women have no rights to take the decision by whom herself but was taken by husband or male counterpart. Using the method to measure empowerment index, the average empowerment index is 0.50. Women respondents who are more empowered and this empowerment level is greater than the average level of empowerment which was 0.50, while the no empowerment level remains below the average level of empowerment (0.50).

The ranking of women empowerment is considered as follows

Group	Average Empowerment
Empowered	>0.50
Not Empowered	<0.50
Average	0.50

Source: Siddique, 2008

3.8.3 Measurement of Women Empowerment Index

Microfinance programs, the most popular development program in Bangladesh today and one that is believed to have strong conceptual links to 'Women Empowerment'. Microfinance actually originated with the aim of empowering women no doubt it is sometimes called 'women finance'. Nevertheless, even gender literature of donor agencies imposing the financial sustainability approach itself anticipates that programs will:

- ❖ Significantly increase incomes from women's own activities;
- ❖ Enable women to have a choice over use of income from loans and activities generated by loans;
- ❖ Enable women to negotiate improvements in their well-being within the household;
- ❖ Give women access to support networks which enable them to protect their individual and collective interests at the local and macro-levels.

The present study finds that, the measurement of women empowerment through microcredit programs, where credit program participation on women has yielded contrary result for 'low empowerment or no empowerment' and positive result for 'high empowerment or medium empowerment'.

Empowerment measured through measuring the extent of women empowerment and making empowerment index. The measurement of the extent of women empowerment was built on the empowerment issues based on the respondent's narratives by asking empowerment questions from the questionnaire. Ten different issues were identified of women empowerment through microfinance. The respondents' responses high, medium, low or no empowerment to the empowerment related questions asked them. All of the answers were designed according to the number and percentages of the respondents' response with the individual question.

To ascertain the best empowerment issues, Women Empowerment Index (WEI) was computed by following average method and frequency distribution with the help of SPSS. Ten different issues were identified of women empowerment through microfinance. The microfinance receivers empowered different extent of empowerment strategies against different empowerment issues through microfinance. The selected issues were presented in rank order.

A Women Empowerment Index (WEI) was computed for each issues of empowerment through microfinance by using the following formula (Siddique, 2008):

$$\text{Women Empowerment Index (WEI)} = E_N \times 0 + E_L \times 1 + E_M \times 2 + E_H \times 3$$

Where,

E_N = No Empowerment

E_L = Low Empowerment

E_M = Medium Empowerment

E_H = High Empowerment

In Women Empowerment Index (WEI) through microfinance each different empowerment issues could range from 0 to 180, where the scores towards 0 indicating lowest women empowerment and the scores towards 180 indicating highest women empowerment through Microfinance. Then a rank order table was made where the ranking measures the degrees of empowerment based on selected empowerment issues. The construction of 'Women Empowerment Index' was based on this ranking procedure.

3.8.4 Problem Findings

Tabular technique of analysis was usually used to find out the problems they are facing in the time of accessing and utilizing the loan money. Simple measurements like average, percentage, arithmetic mean were taken into account through descriptive analysis.

3.9 Limitations

During the period of the data collection the researcher faced some problems those are given below:

- Most of the respondents felt uneasy to give the answers of the questions. They thought that the researcher might use the information against their interest. It was so much time consuming to make them feel easy.
- The respondents do not keep records of their financial activities and day to day expenses. So, the researcher had to depend upon their memory. Sometimes they did not want to give the actual answer of loan and income related question related question.
- The respondents were usually busy with their work at daytime. So, the researcher sometimes had to do a second visit to meet them.

Chapter IV

Description of the Study Area

4.1 Introduction

Description of the study area is an essential part of the study because it provides a clear concept about the study area to know the respondent's level of living and the key features of the study area. This chapter includes population, location, area, educational, occupational status, physical features and information about NGO. This information is important for better understanding about the facts and findings of the research.

4.2 Location

The selected samples are located in three villages' of Manikganj district named Barahirchar, Kamta and Janna. The village Barahirchar is from Manikganj Sadar upazila and Kamta and Janna from Saturia upazila. Manikganj Sadar upazila is located in between 23°42' and 23°55' North longitudes and in between 89°58' and 90°07' East longitudes. It is bounded by Saturia upazila on the North, Nawabganj (Dhaka) and Harirampur upazil as on the South, Singair and Dhamrai upazil as on the East, Harirampur and Ghior upazilas on the West. Where, Saturia upazila is located at 23.5925°N 90.0231°E. It is bounded by Nagarpur and Dhamrai upazil as on the north, Manikganj Sadar upazila on the south, Dhamrai upazila on the east, Daulatpur (Manikganj) and Ghior upazilas on the west. The Locations of the Upazila are presented in the Map 4.1 and 4.2 respectively. (BBS, 2018)

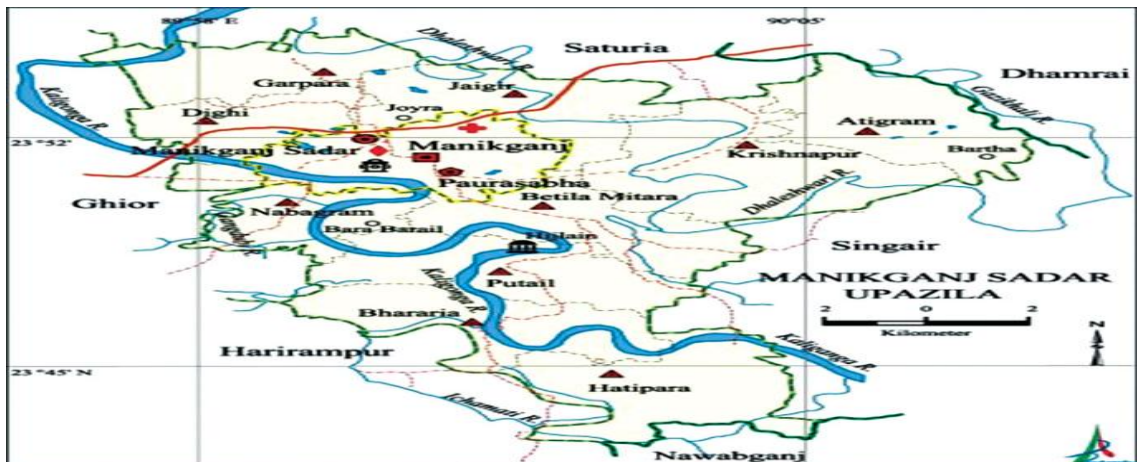


Figure 4.1: Map of Manikganj Sadar Upazila (Source: Banglapedia).

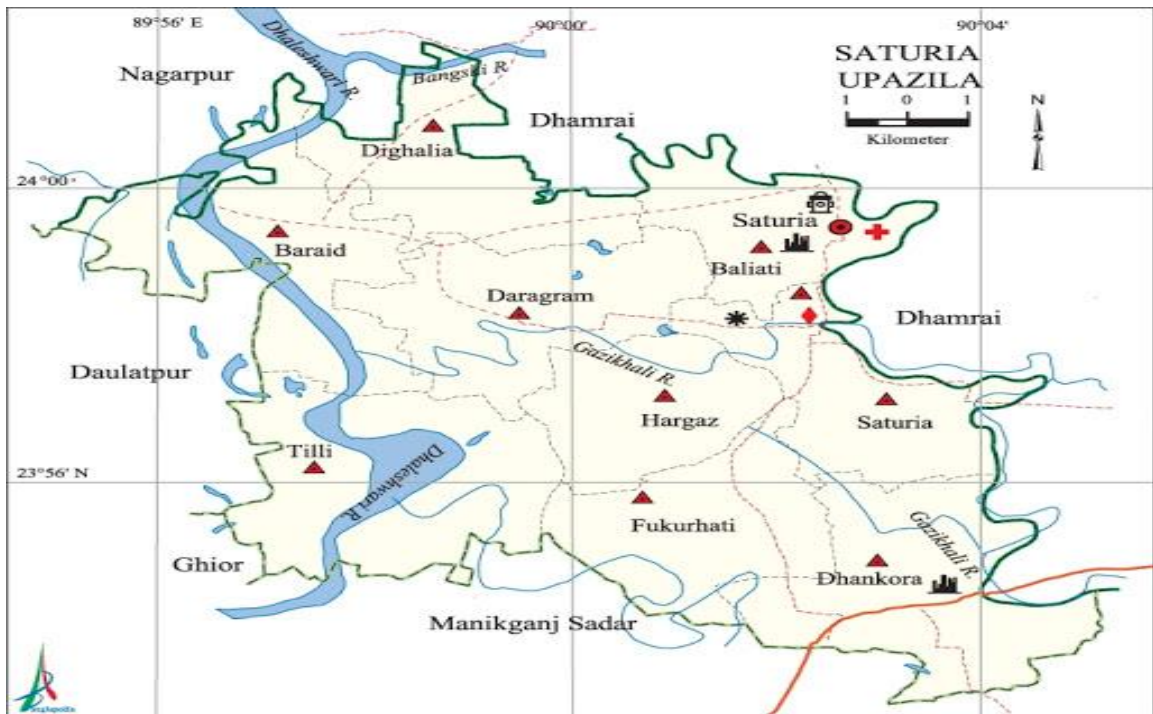


Figure 4.2: Map of Saturia Upazila. (Source: Banglapedia)

4.3 Area and Population

The area of Manikganj Sadar upazila is 214.81 sq km. The total population of Manikganj Sadar upazila is 261662 of which male 130842 and female 130820. Muslim comprise 232407 of total population, Hindu 29170, Buddhist 33 and other 52. The area of Saturia upazila is 140.12sq km. The total population of this area is 155137 of which male 78147 and female 76990. Muslim comprise 141852 of total population, Hindu 13269, Christian 8 and other 8. Most of the people live on Agriculture, business and services. In Manikganj Sadar upazila around 83,343 people are unemployed and in Saturia upazila around 44,070 people are unemployed (BBS, 2018).

4.4 Educational and Occupational Status

Literacy rate and educational institutions average literacy rate of Manikganj Sadar upazila is 51.57%; male 56.66%, female 46.54%. Educational institutions: college 9, law college 1, B.ED college 1, PTI 1, vocational institute 1, secondary school 43, primary school 107, kindergarten 30, madrasa 13. The main occupations of this area are agriculture, industry and services where 42.4% people engaged with agriculture, 12% with industry and 45.4% with services. On the other hand, literacy rate and

educational institutions average literacy rate of Saturia upazila is 36.90% male 42.89%, female 30.87%. Educational institutions: college 5, secondary school 15, primary school 77, kindergarten 10, madrasa 3. Main sources of income in Saturia upazila are agriculture 59.45%, non-agricultural laborer 4.50%, industry 1.72%, commerce 12.86%, transport and communication 3.26%, service 7.48%, construction 1.58%, religious service 0.15%, rent and remittance 1.38% and others 7.62%. (BBS, 2018)

4.5 Transport, Communication and Marketing Facilities

There is a close connection among economic development and transportation, communication and marketing facilities. As Manikganj district is located near the capital city Dhaka, it has an excellent transport system and is well connected by highways linking to all the district of Bangladesh. But railways and water ways are not well established in Manikganj district. The following tables show the different transportation and communication facilities of Manikganj Sadar upazila and Saturia upazila.

Table 4.1: Length of metalled, semi metalled and unmetalled road

Upazila	Metalled road (kilometer)	Semi metalled road (kilometer)	Unmetalled(kacha) road (kilometer)	Total
ManikganjSadar	106	21	499	625
Saturia	95	15	350	460

Source: BBS, 2018

Table 4.2: Number of bridges, baily bridge, culvert, pool, shako and others

Upazila	Bridge	Baily bridge	Culvert	Pool	Shako	Others
ManikganjSadar	55	1	94	0	5	10
Saturia	130	5	95	40	150	20

Source: BBS, 2018

In both Manikganj Sadar upazila and Saturia upazila railway transport facilities are not available and water way facilities are not good. There is no steamer/launch station exist in this two upazila. People mainly use to travel by road. Manikganj Sadar upazila has 15 bus stands where Saturia sadar upazila has 8 bus stands (BBS, 2018).

Marketing facilities are also well developed in this area. Under Sauria upazila there are so many hats, bazars and fairs. Hats and bazars are 30, fairs 4, most noted of which are Sauria hat, Hargaz hat, Daragram hat, Baliati bazar, Khanirtek bazar, Dhankora bazar, Janna bazar, Gopalpur bazar, Char Tilli bazar, Dhulla Shiva mela, Tilli Baishakhi mela and Kalu Shah mela. On the other hand under Manikganj Sadar upazila there are also hats, bazaars and fairs: hats and bazaars are 28, fairs 12, most noted of which are Joyra cattle market, Tora Biltu Smriti hat, Dautia hat, Atigram hat, Barail hat, Barahi hat, Ghosta hat, Manikganj bazaar, Beutha bazaar, Barahi bazar, Kattigram bazar, Bus-stand bazaar, Betila bazaar, Manikganj Bijoy mela, Manikganj Rath mela, Betila Rash mela, Sivabari mela, Panjankhara Baishakhi mela, Garpara Imam bari Maharram mela and Krishnapur Nimai Chand mela (BBS, 2018).

4.6 Health and Sanitation

In Sauria upazila sources of drinking water tube-well 94.52%, tap 0.77%, pond 0.15% and others 4.56%. Sanitation 46.67% of dwelling households of the upazila use sanitary latrines and 49.07% of dwelling households use non-sanitary latrines; 4.26% of households do not have latrine facilities. Health center upazila health complex 1, union health center 6, family planning center 3. On the other hand, in Manikganj Sadar upazila sources of drinking water tube-well 95.81%, tap 0.65%, pond 0.25% and others 3.29%. Sanitation 55.87% of dwelling households of the upazila use sanitary latrines and 44.66% of dwelling households use non-sanitary latrines where 3.47% of households do not have latrine facilities. Health centers are upazila health complex 1, mother and child welfare center, satellite clinic 1, community clinic 11, family planning center 10 (BBS, 2018).

4.7 Non-Government Organization

The activities of Non-Government Organizations play a prominent role in improving the overall condition of a country. The aim of an NGO is to provide a better life for marginalized community and needy people. Most of the NGO provide micro loan to women as they are working with the aim of establish women empowerment. In Manikganj district so many microfinance Institutions work for the betterment of the poor people. The most common MFIs in both Manikganj Sadar Upazila and Sauria Upazila are Grameen Bank, BRAC, ASA, PROSHIKA etc. They provide microfinance to women and agricultural credit to farmer at a reasonable interest rate.

There are some other local NGO named Beez Samiti, Gonokolyan Samiti, Jagoron Samiti etc.They also provide microloans to the poor people specially women.

However, the above description gives a short view of overall physical, educational, occupational, structural and socio-economic status of Manikganj Sadar upazila and Satura upazila.

Chapter V

Socio-Economic Profile of the Female Borrowers of Microfinance

5.1 Introduction

The recorded observations in accordance with the objective of the study were presented and probable discussion was made of the findings with relevant interpretation under this chapter. The chapter content in five (5) sections. The first section deals with the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance. The second section deals with the selected agricultural productivity related characteristics. The third section deals with the selected accessibility to land characteristics of the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance. The fourth section deals with the selected access to credit characteristics. The fifth section deals with the selected access to extension services characteristics.

5.2 Socio-Economic Characteristics

For assess the role of microfinance on women empowerment of the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance various interrelated socio-economic characteristics were collected under the present study. However, the selected salient features of respondents' female borrowers of microfinance such as age, level of education, family size, earning members, occupation of the respondents, sources of family income female borrowers of microfinance, monthly income of respondents' spouse, monthly expenditure of respondents' family, monthly income of the respondents' that might be greatly influences the role of microfinance on women empowerment by the female borrowers of microfinance.

5.2.1 Age Distribution of the Respondents

The age of the female borrowers of microfinance have been varied from 25 to 60 years with a mean and standard deviation of 38.20 and 8.89, respectively.

Table 5.1 Respondents according to their age

Age category	Percent (%)
20-30 years	43.3
31-45 years	47.7
Above 45 years	10
Average age distribution (Year)	38.20

Source: Field survey.2020

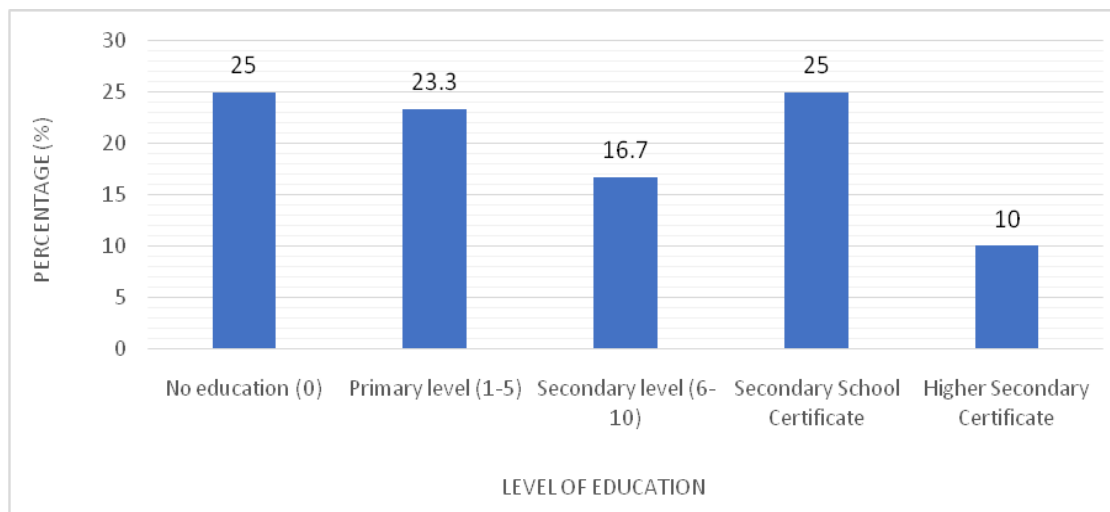
From Table 5.1 it was revealed that the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance were classified into three age groups: up to 20-30 years, 31-45 years and above 45 years. Out of total respondents' female borrowers of micro finance 43.3 percent belonged to the age group 20-30 years, 47.7 percent belonged to the age group 30-45 years and only 10 percent belonged to the age group above 45 years. Data also indicates that majority of the respondents were in the most active age group of 31-45 years. The active age respondents were generally more involved in different income generating activities (IGAs) and for that they communicate with microfinance providing organizations and received loan for different interventions.

5.2.2 Level of Education of the Respondents

The level of educational scores of the female borrowers of microfinance ranged from 0 as no education to Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC). Based on the educational scores, the respondents were classified into five categories such as 'No education' (0), 'Primary level' (1 to 5), 'Secondary level' (6 to 10), 'Secondary School Certificate', Higher Secondary Certificate. The distributions of the respondents according to their level of education are presented in figure 5.1. The figure shows that respondent under no education and Secondary School Certificate category constitute the highest proportion (25.0 percent) followed by primary level (23.3 percent). On the other hand, the lowest 10.0 percent in Higher Secondary Certificate followed by Secondary level category 16.7 percent. Education broadens the horizon of outlook of anyone and expands his/her capability to analyze any situation related to empowerment. An educated person is likely to be more responsive to the facts, ideas, technology and information of women empowerment. Total 65 percent of the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance were belonged to non-educated, primary or secondary

level group. It implies that the illiterate and lower educated group were more credit constraint as a result they were likely to receive microfinance services. Microfinance can make them economically solvent and enable them to take part to their family income. Whether they borrow for themselves or their husbands they share the burden together.

Fig: 5.1: Education levels of the respondents



5.2.3 Family Size of the Respondents

Family size of the respondent' female borrowers of microfinance ranged from 3 to 7 with the mean and standard deviation of 4.28 and 0.865, respectively. According to family size the respondents were classified into three categories viz. 'Up to 3 members', '4-6 members' and 'Above 6 members'. The distribution of the family size is presented in Table 5.2.

Data in Table 5.2 indicate that containing 4-6 members size of family constitute the highest proportion (81.6 percent) followed by up to 3 members size 16.7 percent and only 1.7 percent respondents had above 6 members in the family. Such finding is quite normal as per the situation of Bangladesh as the national average family size is 4.2 (BBS, 2018) and the average family size of the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance were found to be 4.28 which were quite similar with the average family size of the country.

Table 5.2 Distribution of respondents according to family size

Family size	Percent (%)
Up to 3 members	16.7
4-6 members	81.6
Above 6 members	1.7
Average	4.28

Source: Field survey, 2020

5.2.4 Earning Members and Occupation of the Respondents

Earning members in the family of the respondents are categorized by 1 member, 2 members and 3 members. On the hand, occupation of the respondents is categorized between housewife and service holder. The distribution of the respondents according to the number of earning members in the family and occupation is presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Distribution of the respondents according to the number of earning members of the family and occupation

Selected characteristics	Categories	Percent (%)
Number of earning members	1 member	63.3
	2 members	30.0
	3 members	6.7
Types of occupation of the respondents	House wife	81.7
	Service holder	18.3

Source: Field survey, 2020

Considering earning members in table 5.3 it was revealed that the most of the respondent (63.3 percent) female borrowers of microfinance have only 1 earning member followed by 2 earning members have 30.0 percent and the lowest (6.7 percent) have 3 earning members. In the context of occupation of the respondents in Table 5.3, the highest (81.7 percent) were housewife, whereas only 18.3 percent of the respondent female borrowers of microfinance were service holders.

The findings of the study reveal that most of the family of respondents contained only 1 earning member and 81.7 percent respondents were house wife so they do not earn money. This situation influenced them to take microfinance services so that they can contribute to their family income.

5.2.5 Distribution of the Respondents According to the Sources of Family Income

In this study the researcher includes the source of family income, as 81.7 percent respondents were house wife and only 18.3 percent respondents were service holder. As most of the respondents were house wife, they usually give the loan money to their husband and their husband utilized the money by adding it to the family income. Family income of the respondents' female borrower of microfinance was depending on various types of income activities. Such as agriculture, business, employment, labor service, rent, fixed property and other services. Distribution of respondents according to the household income source is presented in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Distribution of the respondents according to the sources of family income

Source of family income	Percent (%)
Agricultural labor, Services	1.7
Agriculture	15.0
Agriculture and Allied activities	1.7
Agriculture,Business, Employment	1.7
Agriculture, Employment	20.0
Agriculture, Rent	1.7
Business	23.3
Business, Agriculture	1.7
Business, Employment	11.7
Employment	20.0
Employment, Fixed property, Rent	1.7

Source: Field survey, 2020

From Table 5.4 considering the source of family income around 23.3 percent were involved in business followed by agriculture, employment (20.0 percent), employment (20.0 percent), agriculture (15.0 percent) and business, employment (11.7 percent), whereas the lowest (1.7 percent) sources of family income were agricultural labor, service; agriculture and allied activities; agriculture, business, employment; agriculture, rent; and employment, fixed property, rent (Table 5.4).

5.2.6 Monthly Income and Expenditure

Monthly income of the spouse, monthly income of the respondents and family expenditure of the respondents were classified into different categories. Table 5.5 shows the distribution of respondents according to their monthly household income and family expenditure.

Table 5.5 Distribution of respondents according to their monthly household income and family expenditure

Selected characteristics	Categories	Percent (%)
Monthly income of the respondents' Spouse	Upto TK.12,000	30.0
	TK.12,001-TK.24,000	41.7
	Above TK.24,000	28.3
Average monthly income of the respondents' spouse	TK.19116.67	
Monthly income of the respondents'	No Income	81.7
	Upto TK.4,000	6.6
	4,001-TK.8,000	10.0
	Above TK.8,000	1.7
Average monthly income of the respondents'	TK.966	
Monthly family expenditure of respondents'	Upto TK.8,000	11.7
	TK.8,001-TK.16,000	63.3
	Above TK.16,000	25.0
Average monthly family expenditure of respondents'	TK.14033	

Source: Field survey, 2020

In Table 5.5 the data revealed that having TK.12001-24,000 monthly income of the respondents' spouse constitute the highest proportion (41.7 percent), while the lowest proportion (28.3 percent) earn above TK.24000 and 30 percent respondent's spouse income were up to TK.12000. The average monthly income of the respondents' spouse is TK.19116.67.

Considering the monthly income of the respondents, it was found that the highest proportion (81.7 percent) of the respondents' have no monthly income followed by 10.0 percent earn TK.4001-TK.8000, while the lowest proportion 1.7 percent respondents earn above TK.8000 and the other 6.6 percent respondents earn up to TK.4000. The average monthly income of the respondents' is TK.966.

In the context of monthly family expenditure of the respondents' it was observed that the highest proportion (63.3 percent) were spend TK.8,001-TK.16,000 per month

while the lowest proportion (11.7 percent) of the respondents spend up to TK.8,000 per month and the other 25 percent respondents spend more than TK.16,000 per month. The average monthly family expenditure of the respondents' is TK.14033.

From the above discussion it is quite clear that the monthly income of the working respondents was not so high moreover 81.7 percent respondents have no income that means they were dependent on their spouse income. On the other hand, the average monthly income of the respondents was not satisfactory in compared to average monthly expenditure. For extra earning and to boost family income microfinance is a good option for the rural woman. So, this income and expenditure situation influenced the respondents to take microfinance services.

5.3 Agricultural Productivity Related Characteristics

To find out the role of microfinance on women empowerment of the respondents' various agricultural productivity related characteristics were collected under the present study. However, the selected salient features of respondents' female borrowers of microfinance were reason of involving in agricultural productivity and types of enterprises.

5.3.1 Reasons of Involving in Agricultural Productivity

As per the response of the respondent female borrowers of microfinance, there are so many reasons behind involving in agricultural productivity. As 81.7 percent respondents were dependent on their family income and many of the respondent's family were involved with agricultural activities for earning income, so it is important to know the reasons of involving in agricultural activities. Table 5.6 represents different categories of reasons of involving in agricultural productivities.

Table 5.6 revealed that the highest 58.3 percent respondents have no involvement in agricultural productivity, whereas 18.3 percent respondents were involved in agricultural productivity to produce food for household consumption, for livelihood; 11.7 percent involved to produce food for household, to supplement income; 10.0 percent were involved for livelihood, to supplement income, to produce food for household and only 1.7 percent the lowest respondents were involve to supplement income.

Table 5.6 Distribution of respondents according to reasons of involving in agricultural productivity of their family

Reason of involving in agricultural productivity	Percent (%)
No involvement	58.3
For livelihood, to supplement income	10.0
To produce food for household consumption, for livelihood	18.3
To produce food for household consumption, to supplement income	13.4

Source: Field survey, 2020

5.3.2 Type of Enterprises

Respondents, whose family was involved with agriculture, mainly produce vegetable/maize/ rice/ mustard over the seasons. Some of them were also engaged with livestock and poultry farming. But most of the respondents were not involved with agricultural activities so they didn't response with the relevant questions. Table 5.7 shows the distribution of respondents according to the name of enterprise.

Table 5.7 Distribution of respondents according to the name of enterprise

Name of enterprice	Percent (%)
Not responding	58.3
Livestock	1.7
Poultry	1.7
Vegetable, Livestock	1.7
Vegetable/Maize/Rice/Mustard	36.7

Source: Field survey, 2020

Considering the name of enterprise, the highest (36.7 percent) respondents were involved with vegetable/maize/rice/mustard cultivation enterprises, only 1.7 percent were involved in livestock; poultry; and vegetable, livestock enterprises, respectively (Table 5.7).

5.4 Accessibility to Land Related Characteristics

For evaluate the role of microfinance on women empowerment of the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance various accessibility to land related characteristics were collected under the present study. The 3 selected salient features respondents'

female borrowers of microfinance such as owner of the land and the way of acquiring land; size of cultivable land; and total cost of production respondent female borrowers of microfinance are presented below.

5.4.1 Owner and the Way of Acquiring Land

Table 5.8 Distribution of respondents according to the owner of the land and the way of acquiring the land

Selected characteristics	Categories	Percent (%)
Source o ownership of the land	Not responding	58.3
	Father	1.7
	Husband	40.0
The way of the acquiring land	Not responding	58.3
	Allocated	25.0
	Inheritance	11.7
	Purchase	5.0

Source: Field survey, 2020

Table 5.10 revealed that the highest 40.0 percent respondent's land were owned by her husband and only 1.7 percent land were owned by father. In considering the way of the acquiring land the highest (25.0 percent) referred that it was allocated, whereas 11.7 percent acquire it as inheritance and only 5.0 percent purchase the land.

5.4.2 Size of Cultivated Land

The distribution of the respondent female borrowers of microfinance to their size of cultivated land is presented in Table 5.9. The size of cultivated land of the respondent female borrowers of microfinance ranged from 7 decimal to 264 decimals with a mean and standard deviation of 106 and 71.80, respectively. Based on the size of cultivable land, the respondents were classified into three categories. These categories were upto 85 decimals, 86-170 decimals and above 170 decimals. Table 5.9 indicates that 85-170 decimalsof cultivated land holder constitutes the highest proportion (18.3 percent) followed by up to 86 decimalsof cultivated land holders were 13.3 percent, whereas the lowest 5.0 percent hold above 170 decimals of cultivated land. On the other hand, 61.7 percent respondent female borrowers of microfinance were not response for this question as they were not involved with agricultural activities.

Table 5.9 Distribution of respondents according to the size of cultivated land

Size of cultivated land	Percent (%)
Not involved with agricultural activities	61.7
Up to 85 decimals	13.3
86-170 decimals	18.3
Above 170 decimals	6.7
Average land size	106 decimals

Source: Field survey, 2020

5.4.3 Total Cost of Production

Table 5.10 Respondents by the total cost of production

Information about the cost of production	Percent (%)
Not involved with agricultural activities	58.3
Up to TK.1,50,000	16.7
TK.1,50,001-TK.300,000	18.3
Above TK.3,00,000	6.7
Average cost of production	TK.1, 93,040

Source: Field survey, 2020

Considering the total cost of production (Table 5.10), it was revealed that 58.3 percent respondent female borrowers of microfinance have no reply because they were not involved in agricultural activities. Among the respondent 18.3 percent replay that their total cost of production was within TK.1,50,001-3,00,000 and 16.7 percent seems that it was up to TK.1,50,000, whereas 6.7 percent respondent female borrowers of microfinance reply that the cost of agricultural production was above TK.3,00,000 Table 5.10 shows that the average cost of production is TK.1, 93,040. Microfinance is a good option which can help to arrange the necessary amount of money for agricultural production. This is one of the important reasons to take microfinance services.

5.5 Access to Credit Related Characteristics

To assess the role of microfinance on women empowerment of the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance different access to credit related characteristics were composed under the present study. As per the methodology all of the respondents having experiences of credit obtaining. The 5 selected salient features respondents' female borrowers of microfinance such as last time credit obtained, year

of involvement as a member of MFI, amount of loan money receive, times of repay and by whom the money is utilized are presented in Table 5.11.

Table 5.11 Salient features of the selected access to credit related characteristics of the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance

Selected characteristics	Categories	Percent (%)
Last time credit obtained(Years)	1 year	86.7
	2 years ago	5.0
	3 years ago	5.0
	4 years ago	3.3
Membership with MFI(Years)	Last season	8.3
	1 year	1.7
	2 years	8.3
	3 years	15.0
	4 years	10.0
	5 years	8.3
Amount of loan money receive(BDT)	Upto 1,50,000	70.0
	1,50,001-3,00,000	23.3
	Above 3,00,000	6.7
Number of loans repay(Times)	1 time	18.3
	2 times	10.0
	3 times	13.3
	4 times	10.0
	5 times	10.0
	5 times more	38.3
Who utilize the loan money (Person)	By the respondent	18.3
	By the spouse of respondents	81.7

Source: Field survey, 2020

Considering the response of the respondent female borrowers of microfinance, on last time credit obtained. Table 5.11 shows that the highest 86.7 percent respondents received credit within 1 year followed by (5.0 percent) 2 and 3 years ago and only 3.3 percent respondents received credit from MFI 4 years ago.

Table 5.11 also revealed that the highest 48.3 percent respondents were the member of MFI for 5 years more followed by 3 years long (15.0 percent) and 4 years long (10.0 percent), and 8.3 percent in last season, 2 years long and 5 years long, respectively, whereas only 1.7 percent have been involved for 1 year.

Considering amount of loan money received by the respondent female borrowers of microfinance ranged from BDT 10,000 to 5,00,000 with the mean and standard deviation of 134,917 and 116,264, respectively. 42 respondents receive the loan

money up to TK.1,50,000 where 14 respondents receive the loan money ranged within TK.1,50,001-TK.3,00,000 and the other 4 respondents receive the loan money above TK.3,00,000. So, highest number of respondents (70 percent) receive the loan money up to TK.1,50,000 and lowest number of respondents (6.5 percent) receive the loan money above TK.3,00,000. It reveals that repaying lower amount of money is easier than repaying higher amount of money as most of the respondents repay the loan money more than 5 times.

Considering the number of loans repay, the highest 38.3 percent respondents repay the loan 5 times more followed by 1 time (18.3 percent) and 3 times (13.3 percent), while only 10.0 percent have been able to repay 2 times; 4 times; and 5 times, respectively (Table 5.11).

Table 5.11 also shows that only 11 (18.3 percent) respondents' the female borrowers of microfinance use the loan money by herself and the other 49 (81.7 percent) respondents give the loan money to their husband and the money is used by the spouse of the respondents.

5.6 Access to Extension Services Related Characteristics

For the development of the rural poor extension service can play a vital role. Access of proper training, proper knowledge about modern technology and agricultural methods are very important for sustainable development in agricultural sector. Extension services are mainly responsible for giving these facilities to the rural poor. To measure the role of microfinance on women empowerment of the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance different access to extension services related characteristics were collected under the present study. The following table shows different important features of the selected access to extension services related characteristics of the respondents.

Data in Table 5.12 indicate that the highest (63.3 percent) were aware to extension service in the area, whereas the rest (36.7 percent) respondents' female borrowers of microfinance have no awareness to extension services. Considering the extension agents organize training programs for female entrepreneur responses 100 percent answered no such type of training program that eventually organized by extension agents. On the other hand, responses to the attended any entrepreneur training

program the highest (86.7 percent) never attended any training program and only the lowest (13.3 percent) received entrepreneur training program. Among the respondents who never received any training on entrepreneur, 55.0 percent want to receive training, whereas 31.7 percent have no interest for receiving any training. Considering benefits from training of the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance 13.3 percent want to know about technology and get input.

Table 5.12 Salient features of the selected access to extension services related characteristics of the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance (In Percent)

Selected characteristics	Yes	No
Awareness to extension service in the area	63.3	36.7
Organizing training programs for female entrepreneurs	00	100.00
attending any entrepreneur training program	13.3	86.7
Want to receive training program	55	45
Benefits receive from training	13.3	86.7

Source: Field survey, 2020

5.7 Concluding Remark

This chapter signifies the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance. The findings of analysis clearly apprise the socio-economic characteristics from each other in respect of age distribution, education level, occupation, income, expenditure, land size, credit history and extension service.

Chapter VI

Role of Women in Decision-Making and Empowerment through Microfinance

6.1 Introduction

Microfinance programs mainly target women and their activities are mostly designed for the betterment of poor women by giving them the environment under which they can easily take loan. Which is quite impossible in the commercial banks as taking loan from these banks are not so easy especially for the poor women. This presupposes that microfinance actually originated with the aim of empowering women no doubt it is sometimes called ‘women finance’.

Decision-making is always an important part of social setting. Women have important contribution in almost every aspects of the society. The participation of women in decision-making process is an essential precondition for the elimination of poverty and upholding women empowerment. In Bangladesh, so many attempts have been made to assess about the participation of women in decision-making process at household level. Microfinance program is one of them. Microfinance institutions work with the aim of establishing decision-making ability of women.

6.2 Decision-Making Related Characteristics

To assess the role of microfinance on women empowerment of the female borrowers of microfinance different decision-making related characteristics were collected under the present study and presented in Table 6.1. In Table 6.1, considering the empowerment to take decision about different issues within the household, the highest (98.3 percent) replay yes, whereas the lowest (1.7 percent) answered no. In the issue of taking decision to work for earning income, the highest (76.7 percent) answered no, while the lowest (23.3 percent) answered yes. Considering the issue to take decisions on saving, borrowing and investment the highest (80.0 percent) replay yes and the lowest (20.0 percent) answered no. In response to take decision about the construction of house, the highest (73.3 percent) answered yes, whereas the lowest (26.7 percent) replay no. In the context of empowered to take decision about children's education, the highest (88.3 percent) answered yes but 11.7 percent answered no. Considering empowered to take decision about buying necessary good from market for family

without husband's permission the highest (51.7 percent) replay yes and the lowest (48.3 percent) answered no. In response to empowered to take decision about family planning, the highest (90.0 percent) answered yes but the lowest (10.0 percent) replay no. In the context of empowered to take decision about the treatment of family members, the highest (70.0 percent) answered yes and the lowest (30.0 percent) replay no. Considering the issue to take decision about visiting relatives and father's house without husband's permission, the highest (83.3 percent) answered no but the lowest (16.7 percent) answered yes. In response of empowered to take decision about family affairs, the highest (83.3 percent) replay yes, on the other hand 16.3 percent answered no.

Table 6.1 Salient features of the selected decision-making related characteristics of the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance (In percent)

Selected characteristics	Yes	No
Take decisions about different issues within the household	98.3	1.7
Takes decision to work for earning income	23.3	76.7
Take decisions on saving, borrowing and investment	80.0	20.0
Take decisions about the construction of house	73.3	26.7
Takes decision about children's education	88.3	11.7
Take decisions about buying necessary good from market without husband's permission	51.7	48.3
Take decisions about family planning	90.0	10.0
Take decisions about the treatment of family members	70.0	30.0
Takes decision to visit relatives and father's house without husband's permission	16.7	83.3
Take decisions about family affairs	83.3	16.7

Source: Field Survey, 2020

To find out respondent's empowerment condition through the decision-making questions answered by '1' standing for a 'Yes' answer and '0' standing for a 'No' answer, and every 'Yes' answer indicate that the decision taken by women herself, while every 'No' answer indicates the women have no rights to take the decision by whom herself

but was taken by husband or male counterpart. Using the method to measure empowerment index, the average empowerment index is 0.50. The empowerment index of empowered women is found to be 0.68 in other hand the not empowered women's empowerment index is measured by 0.32.

Table 6.2 Women empowerment index through decision making

Group	Average Empowerment
Empowered	0.68
Not Empowered	0.32
Average	0.50

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 6.2 revealed the result by following weighted average method, here women respondents who are more empowered and this empowerment level (0.68) is greater than the average level of empowerment which was 0.50, while the not empowerment level (0.32) of remain below the average level of empowerment (0.50).

6.3 Women Empowerment Related Characteristics

Women empowerment through Microfinance was assessed against 10 selected characteristics which are presented in table 6.3.

Table 6.3 shows that to take part in the family income 3.3 percent respondents were highly empowered, 15 percent respondents were moderately empowered, 43 percent were low empowered and 19 percent said they were not empowered. In case of purchasing capacity of necessary good for family 13.3 percent respondents were highly empowered, 45 percent respondents were moderately empowered, 40 percent were low empowered and 1.7 percent said they were not empowered. In case of enterprise running capacity, no respondents were highly empowered, 23 percent respondents were moderately empowered, 16 percent were low empowered and 60 percent said they were not empowered. In case of freedom of mobility 5 percent respondents were highly empowered, 33.3 percent respondents were moderately empowered, 61.7 percent were low empowered and there were no respondents who were not empowered. In case of freedom in expenditure 15 percent respondents were highly empowered, 40 percent respondents were moderately empowered, 43.3 percent were low empowered and 1.7 percent said they were not empowered. In case of ability

of participating in social and cultural activities 6.7 percent respondents were highly empowered, 48.3 percent respondents were moderately empowered, 45 percent were low empowered and there were no respondents who were not empowered in this case. In case of ability of understanding with husband 40 percent respondents were highly empowered, 45 percent respondents were moderately empowered, 15 percent were low empowered and there were no respondents who were not empowered in this case. In case of ability of get respect by the family members 16.7 percent respondents were highly empowered, 53.3 percent respondents were moderately empowered, 30 percent were low empowered and there were no respondents who were not empowered in this case. In case of ability of social value achievement 31.7 percent respondents were highly empowered, 41.7 percent respondents were moderately empowered, 26.7 percent were low empowered and there were no respondents who were not empowered in this case. In case of ownership of wealth, no respondents were highly empowered, 21 percent respondents were moderately empowered, 25 percent were low empowered and 53 percent said they were not empowered.

Table 6.3 Salient features of the selected issues of women empowerment through microfinance of the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance (In Percent)

Selected characteristics	High Empowerment	Medium Empowerment	Low Empowerment	No Empowerment
Take part to the family income (monthly)	3.3	15.0	71.7	19.0
Purchasing capacity of necessary good for family	13.3	45.0	40.0	1.7
Enterprise running capacity	00	23.3	16.7	60.0
Freedom of mobility	5.0	33.3	61.7	00
Freedom in expenditure	15.0	40.0	43.3	1.7
Ability of participating in social and cultural activities	6.7	48.3	45.0	00
Understanding with husband	40.0	45.0	15.0	00
Get respect by the family members	16.7	53.3	30.0	00
Social value achievement	31.7	41.7	26.7	00
Ownership of wealth	00	21.7	25.0	53.3

Source: Field Survey, 2020

6.4 Extent of Women Empowerment

Table 6.4 indicates that according to the responses of the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance the highest 37.50 percent respondents mentioned that they have low empowerment where as only 13.16 percent respondents said they are highly empowered. On the other hand, 36.66 percent respondents were empowered at medium level and 12.66 percent were totally not empowered.

Table 6.4 Extent of women empowerment

Group	Empowerment Score	Percent (%)
High Empowerment	79	13.16%
Medium Empowerment	220	36.66%
Low Empowerment	225	37.50%
No Empowerment	76	12.66%

Source: Field Survey, 2020

6.5 Women Empowerment Index through Microfinance

To ascertain the best empowerment issues, Women Empowerment Index (WEI) was computed by using average and frequency distribution method. Ten different issues were identified of women empowerment through microfinance. The microfinance receivers empowered different extent of empowerment strategies against different empowerment issues through microfinance. The selected issues are presented below in rank order. The rank order table was made by following the formula of computing women empowerment index which was described in the methodology part.

Table 6.5 represents rank order of the adoption of ten issues of women empowerment through microfinance. As per Women Empowerment Index (WEI) understanding with husband positioned the 1st, social value achievement in 2nd, get respect by the family members in 3rd, purchasing capacity of necessary good for family in 4th, freedom in expenditure in 5th, ability of participating in social and cultural activities in 6th, freedom of mobility in 7th, ownership of wealth in 8th, take part to the family income (monthly) in 9th and enterprise running capacity positioned in 10th.

Table 6.5 Rank order as per score of women empowerment issues through microfinance

Issues of women empowerment through Microfinance	Women Empowerment Index (WEI)	Rank
Understanding with husband	135	1 st
Social value achievement	123	2 nd
Get respect by the family members	112	3 rd
Purchasing capacity of necessary good for family	102	4 th
Freedom in expenditure	101	5 th
Ability of participating in social and cultural activities	97	6 th
Freedom of mobility	86	7 th
Ownership of wealth	67	8 th
Take part to the family income (monthly)	41	9 th
Enterprise running capacity	38	10 th

Source: Field Survey, 2020

6.6 Findings and Discussion

Findings of the study reveal that most respondents are empowered in decision-making issues. As most of the respondents said yes that they can take decisions about different issues such as household affairs, education of their children, construction of house, savings, borrowings, buying necessary goods, family planning, treatment of family members etc. But in case of work for earning income and freedom of mobility most of the respondents said no as they cannot take decision about these issues (table 6.1). By the opinion of the respondents, they are able to take decision because they are helping their husband economically by taking microfinance though most of the respondents were housewife. But the decision-making ability alone is not enough to prove women empowerment. There are many other issues which are also important to signify the role of microfinance on women empowerment. In case of other empowerment issues the findings shows that most of the respondents are low empowered (table 6.4). As 81.7% respondents were housewife and do not utilize the loan money herself, it is quite normal to not highly empowered in the issues such as take part to family income, purchasing capacity, freedom of mobility, ability of

participating social and cultural activities etc. Most of the respondents get medium or low empowerment in these issues and in case of enterprise running capacity and ownership of wealth most of the respondents said they are totally not empowered. (table 6.3) But if comparatively analyze the issues it can be showed that the respondents relatively improve their understanding with husband, achieve social value, get respect by the family members, get expenditure and purchasing ability as these issues get better scores. While the other empowerment issues such as ability of participating in social and cultural activities, freedom of mobility, ability to ownership of wealth, earning monthly income and enterprise running capacity etc. get comparatively lower scores (table 6.5). This indicates the empowerment capacity of the respondents not so good in these issues.

6.7 Conclusion

It can be concluded that microfinance services help to bring decision-making ability of the women in household level as it enables the female borrowers to economically help their husband as well as their family but in other empowerment issues the role of microfinance services is not up to the mark.

Chapter VII

Problems of Accessing and Utilizing Microfinance

7.1 Introduction

Rural poor women are incapacitated for various reasons, such as most of them are socially backward, illiterate and lack of resources. As poor people can't get sufficient knowledge, information and resources, they are weak socially and economically. Microfinance is one of the best tools to overcome these constraints. Though microfinance facilitate the borrowers, it has some problems too. Sometimes the management of microfinance seems very difficult for the poor women as in some case the fund fully miss-utilized and at the same time no authority is monitoring the utilization of fund. Further more; in this study it is evident that women face some problems at the time of accessing microfinance services such as high interest rate, collateral need for loans, difficult official facilities, insufficient gestation period and lack of training for women etc.

7.2 Selected Problem Findings

Female borrowers of microfinance faced various official problems when they received and utilized credit from any credit providing organizations (Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 Salient features of the selected problem findings of the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance

Selected characteristics	Categories	Percent (%)
Official difficult formalities	Required more number of installment	37.3
	High interest rate	35.7
	Difficult to fill up application form	27.0
Taking loan seems difficult	Yes	15.0
	No	85.0
Repaying loan seems rigid	Yes	23.3
	No	76.7

Selected characteristics	Categories	Percent (%)
Offering training facilities	Yes	0.00
	No	100.0
Want to receive training program	Yes	68.3
	No	31.7
Need to attach in a group as an MFI member	Yes	33.3
	No	66.7
Problems face with group members	Feel uneasy to cooperate	14.3
	Do not pay installment in time	8.5
	Leave MFI	10.5
Repaying loan seems burden	Yes	40.0
	No	60.0
Reasons of feel burden	High interest rate	16.0
	High family expenditure	14.5
	Insufficient gestation period	9.5
Have challenges in accessing and utilizing the loan	Yes	31.7
	No	68.3
Types of challenges	Lack of training	13.3
	Lack of knowledge	11.7
	Family burden	6.0

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The findings of the study revealed that the highest (37.3 percent) answered that need required more number of installment; whereas 35.7 percent mentioned they need to pay high interest rate and the lowest (27.0 percent) mentioned application form seems difficult to fill up.

Considering the process of taking and repaying loan difficult, the highest (85.0 percent) answered no, whereas the lowest (15.0 percent) mentioned yes in the process of taking loan in difficulty context. On the other hand, in the process of repaying loan, the highest (76.7 percent) answered no, while the lowest (23.3 percent) responded as yes in the process of repaying loan in rigidity perspective (Table 7.1). Total 100 percent respondent mentioned that no MFI offer any training for the female borrowers

of microfinance. And 68.3 percent respondents said they want to receive training program while 31.7 percent said no.

In mentioning the female borrowers of microfinance need to attach in a group as an MFI member the highest (66.7 percent) respondent mentioned no but the lowest (33.3 percent) answered yes (Table 7.1). In the context of problems that female borrowers of microfinance faced with the group members, the highest (14.3 percent) mentioned feel uneasy to cooperate, whereas 8.5 percent respondents said some members do not pay installment in time and 10.5 percent respondents said some members also leave MFI without notice.

Considering the response against repaying loan seem burden to female borrowers of microfinance, the highest (60.0 percent) answered no but the lowest (40.0 percent) replay yes. In mentioning burdening the highest (16.0 percent) answered insufficient gestation period for repayment whereas 14.5 percent said they need to pay high interest rate and around 9.5 percent answered they need to carry high family expenditure as a burden.

As mentioning that the female borrowers of microfinance have faced any challenge in accessing and utilizing the loan, the highest (68.3 percent) answered no, whereas the lowest (31.7 percent) replay yes. In considering the kind of challenge in accessing and utilizing the loan, the highest (13.3 percent) responded lack of training whereas 11.7 percent responded they have family burden and the lowest (6.0 percent) mentioned lack of knowledge.

7.3 Concluding Remark

However, from the above discussion the problems that the female borrowers of microfinance usually face in the time of accessing and utilizing the loan are quite clear. These issues make difficulties to easy accessing and utilizing the loan money. To get rid out of these problems Government as well as the MFIs should implement necessary policy.

Chapter VIII

Summery, Conclusion and Policy Recommendation

8.1 Summary

Women empowerment is considered to be one of the most important indicators of the socio-economic development of a state and society. Microfinance has long been associated with generating empowerment of women. Over 90% of the participants of microfinance organizations in Bangladesh are women. The rising demand for credit may seem to indicate the popularity of the program. Microcredit programs allow women to invest in income-generating projects. This scheme is intended to help women to become empowered. In reality this extreme viewpoint is not entirely accurate. Microfinance program have the potential to make a large positive impact for women when applied well and where there is a good match between the program and the customers need. At the same time there have been low or even negative effects. Findings of the study reveal both the positive and negative roles of microfinance.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are:

- ❖ To know the socio-economic status of the female borrowers of microfinance;
- ❖ To analyze the role of microfinance in decision making and measurement of women empowerment at domestic level;
- ❖ To identify the problems that they face in accessing and utilizing microfinance services.

The data were collected by the pretested questionnaire from Manikganj Sadar and Satura upazila under Manikganj district. The sample size was 60. All the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance took loan from Grameen Bank, BRAC or ASA. In this study both descriptive and statistical analysis were taken to drag out the result.

The socio-economic conditions of women are essential to assess the effectiveness of microfinance programs towards women empowerment. Socio-economic conditions of the women at household shows that, female borrowers of microfinance have been varied from 25 to 60 years, the education status and employment opportunity of

women in the study area were not so good. Most of the respondents in the study area were house wife and only a few women were service holder. The monthly income of the respondents and spouse of the respondents were on an average TK.966 and TK.19116 respectively. The findings of the study shows that the other facilities of household's were also not in satisfactory level in the study area and most of the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance do not utilize the money herself by doing any productive activities so they are economically dependent to their husband.

The impact of microfinance programs on decision-making ability at the household level of women have been measured by ten household decision making factors. An average empowerment index based on decision-making issues of women was constructed to measure the decision-making ability in the study areas. The average empowerment index of empowered women is found to be 0.68 in other hand the not empowered women is found to be 0.32. It reveals that the respondents of the study area were empowered enough to take decision at the household level. But only the decision-making ability is not enough to address the overall empowerment situation. That's why other empowerment issues through microfinance such as take part to family income, purchasing ability, freedom of mobility, enterprise running capacity, ownership of wealth and some other issues were taken in the study to address the overall empowerment situation in the study area. In this regard a woman empowerment index was made where the empowerment issues were categorized high, medium, low or no empowerment level based on the opinion of the respondents. Finally, a rank order table was constructed based on the selected empowerment issues.

Although considering the responses of the respondents' female borrowers of microfinance that the highest 37.50 percent respondents mentioned that they have low empowerment through microfinance program, whereas only 13.16 percent respondents said they are highly empowered and the other 49.32 percent respondents empowered either medium or no empowerment level. Lastly, the rank table shows the comparative status of the different empowerment issues. Here, understanding with husband get the highest score 135 and enterprise running capacity get the lowest score 38 out of 180 as each different empowerment issues could range from 0 to 180 where, 0 indicating lowest women empowerment and 180 indicating the highest empowerment through microfinance. So, it may be summarized that in the study area

microfinance programs help to bring decision-making ability but in other empowerment issues the role of microfinance is not in a satisfactory level.

Lastly, the study also addresses the problems that the respondents face in the time of accessing and utilizing the loan money.

8.2 Conclusion

Considering the level of women empowerment, it was revealed that the performance of microfinance programs in the study areas were not so satisfactory level as they only focus on giving loan money without focusing on their aim of alleviating poverty as well as empower women. It can be concluded that microfinance services help to bring decision-making ability of the women in household level as it enables the female borrowers to economically help their husband as well as their family but in other empowerment issues the role of microfinance services is not up to the mark. In the present study areas, there are some issues to be solved through microfinance program although profit margin is the dominant factor for the implementation of microfinance program in most of the organization. It is also believed that the solution to the problems of study areas will bring about a tremendous change toward economic development of poor household. Since the majority of respondents' female borrowers of microfinance is still living with low education level, low or without income and also minimum involvement in income generating activities. Here, the first and foremost effort should be eradicated illiteracy, proper monitoring upon the utilization of loan money, giving necessary training, access to land, credit and extension services among the members of MFIs. These facilities are important because without proper utilization of the loan money by doing some productive work it will not possible to empower the women borrowers entirely.

8.3 Policy Recommendation

Women empowerment is the wider area of the study. Main purpose of the study was to identify the empirical association between microfinance and women empowerment. For the proper execution of the microfinance program policy recommendation is important for both the government and non-government organization of microfinance to establish more effective activities for poverty alleviation as well as women empowerment.

On the basis of the findings the following recommendations have been made:

- ❖ **Minimize the number of installments:** From the general concept of microfinance, it is well known that the microfinance institutions provide collateral free loan. But in reality, the fact is totally different all the borrowers of microfinance need to provide compulsory collateral by paying more installments to take a loan in the study area. So, it is very important to take a policy that all the MFIs should provide their credit facilities without taking collateral.
- ❖ **Offer training program:** For proper utilization of the loan money offering agricultural or other kind of training program is very important. In the study area 100% respondents said that the MFIs do not offer them any kind of training program. It is one of the main reasons that the women can't develop their skill to run a business or doing something productive. So, both the GOs and NGOs should give emphasize to take a policy for giving training to the borrowers.
- ❖ **Proper monitoring:** Proper monitoring of the borrowers is very essential to secure the loan money. Most of the respondents give the loan money to their husband without investing in productive activities by her. So, for increasing business or enterprise among women, the MFIs should take a policy to ensure that the borrowers utilize the loan money by doing something productive and become economically independent.
- ❖ **Minimize interest rate:** High interest rate is one of the major problems. Most of the respondents said that they feel burden to give high interest rate. So, interest rate should be minimized.
- ❖ **Keep the process of taking loan easy:** Most of the borrowers of microfinance are less educated or illiterate that's why they sometimes feel difficult to give huge information or fill up the form during taking the loan. So, the MFIs should keep the process and formalities of taking loan easy for the borrowers.
- ❖ **Flexibility:** Microfinance program should maintain flexibility in every step with their borrowers. The relationship between the borrowers and employees of MFIs should be flexible and it is very important to keep some flexibility in loan repayment schedule as most of the borrowers are poor.

- ❖ **Extend gestation period:** Sometimes it is very difficult to repay the loan money in a small gestation period as most of the borrowers are poor women. So, the gestation period should be extended and also the cost of operating per unit of loan should keep lower.
- ❖ **Minimize group lending:** The process of group lending is not favorable for all because it is difficult to maintain always a good connection with all the members. Sometimes people feel uneasy to cooperate and some members often can't repay the loan in time or leave the MFI. So, it is more likely to give the loan individually and take some other precautionary method to secure the loan money.

These are all the policy recommendations for both the GOs and NGOs. Therefore, it is suggested, to develop a universal standard for enhancing women empowerment to motivate researchers to take up work in this field.

8.4 Limitations of the Study

This is a survey study based on the effectiveness of microfinance programs in the aspects of the empowerment of women. Although all types of steps and initiatives has taken to eliminate the errors and inconsistency of the study but the study is not free from its limitations which are mentioned as follows:

- ❖ Only 60 respondents of the beneficiaries from Grameen Bank, BRAC and ASA were interviewed for collection the information of the study and all conclusions were drawn based upon the responses of this number of respondents.
- ❖ For information about the study, the researcher depended on the data furnished by the selected respondents of the women beneficiaries of microfinance program during their interview.
- ❖ Most of the women borrowers were not educated and have limitations in providing different information. So, sometimes it was difficult to collect information. In some case respondents depended on their memories to answer most of the questions.

- ❖ The present study defines the relationships of some selected variables, but there are other variables that may have influence on women empowerment at household level through microfinance program.

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APPENDICES

QUESTIONNAIRE

ID #



**Department of Development and Poverty Studies
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka.**

**Title: Role of Microfinance on Women Empowerment: A
Study in Some Selected Areas of Manikganj District.**

General information:

Upazila:

Union:

Village:

A. Personal and socio-economic characteristics:

<u>Sl. No.</u>	<u>Question's/query</u>	<u>Response/ Answer</u>	<u>Code</u>
1.	Name		Mobile:
2.	Age	_____ Years	1=20-30 years, 2=30-40 years, 3=40-50 years, 4=50- above years
3.	Sex		1=Male, 2=Female
4.	Religion		1=Islam, 2=Hindu, 3=Christian, 4=Buddhist, 5=Other (Specify)
5.	Education level	_____ Schooling Years	1=No education, 2=Primary level, 3=Secondary level, 4=SSC,5=HSC,6=Others
6.	Household head		1=Father, 2=Husband, 3=Son, 4=Women herself, 5=Others (specify)
7.	No. of family members	1= 2= 3=	1= Male 2= Female
8.	Earning members:		
9.	Marital status		1= Married, 2= Single, 3= Separated 4=Divorced, 5= Widowed
10.	Occupation		1=Unemployed, 2=House wife, 3=Day labor, 4=service, 5=Student, 6=Others (specify)
11.	Spouse income	1 = Tk 2 =	1= 1000-5000, 2=5000-10000, 3= 10000-15000, 4=15000-20000, 5=

		3= 4= 5= 6= 7= 8= 9=	20000-25000 6= 25000-30000,7=30000-35000,8=35000-40000, 9=40000&Above
11.	Your income	1=Tk 2= 3= 4= 5=	1= 1000-5000, 2=5000-10000, 3=10000-15000, 4=15000-20000, 5=20000&Above
12.	Sources of income	1 = 2 = 3= 4= 5= 6= 7= 8= 9=	1= Agriculture, 2=Agriculture and allied activities, 3= Industrial/Agricultural labor, 4=Employment, 5= Business 6= Pension,7=Fixed property,8=Rent, 9=Others
13.	Annual Income	Tk =	1=50000-1,00,000, 2=1,00,000-1,50,000, 3=1,50,000-2,00,000, 4=2,00,000-2,50,000, 5=2,50,000 & above
14.	Expenditure (monthly)	1 = Tk. 2 = 3= 4=	1= Food 2= Education 3= Health 4= Others

B. Agricultural productivity:

<u>Sl. No.</u>	<u>Question's/query</u>	<u>Response/Answer</u>	<u>Code</u>
15.	Reason of involving in agricultural activities:		1=To produce food for household consumption,2=For livelihood,3=To supplement income,4=Others
16.	Name of enterprise		
17.	Level of satisfaction with the yield		1=Very satisfied, 2=Fairly satisfied, 3=Somewhat dissatisfied, 4=Not at all satisfied

18.	Getting surplus from yield		1=Yes, 2=No
19.	Selling the surplus		1=Yes, 2=No,
20.	Place of selling the product		
21.	Facing market related problems		1=Yes, 2=No
22.	If Yes, type of problems		1= low price, 2= distant place, 3= less consumers, 4= Others (specify)

C. Accessibility to land:

<u>Sl. No.</u>	<u>Question's/query</u>	<u>Response/Answer</u>	<u>Code</u>
23.	Owner of the land		1=Self, 2= Father,3= Husband,4=Son,5=Relative,6=Other
24.	The way of acquiring land		1=Allocated, 2= Inheritance, 3=Through marriage, 4=Purchase, 5=Other
25.	Size of the vegetable cultivated land		
26.	Total cost of production	Tk=	

D. Access to credit:

<u>Sl. No.</u>	<u>Question's/query</u>	<u>Response/Answer</u>	<u>Code</u>
27.	Any experience of credit obtaining?		1=Yes, 2=No
28.	(If yes) Last time credit obtained		1= 1 year, 2= 2 years, 3= 3 years, 4= 4years, 5= 5 years, 6= 5 years more
29.	Name of MFI		
30.	How long have you been a member of MFI?	1= 2= 3= 4=	1=Last season, 2= A year ago, 3=Two years ago, 4=Three years ago
31.	How many loans have you been able to repay?		1= 1 time, 2= 2 times, 3= 3 times, 4= 4 times, 5= 5 times, 6= 5 times more

32.	Size of loan	Tk=	
32.	Who utilize the loan money?	1= 2= 3=	1= Respondent herself 2= Respondent's spouse 3= others

E. Access to Extension Service:

<u>Sl. No.</u>	<u>Question's/query</u>	<u>Response/Answer</u>	<u>Code</u>
33.	Awareness to extension services in the area		1=Yes, 2=No
34.	Do the extension agents organize training programs for female entrepreneurs?		1=Yes, 2=No
35.	Have you attended any entrepreneur training program?		1=Yes, 2=No
36.	(if no) Would you want to receive training program?		1=Yes, 2=No
37.	(if yes) What type of benefits receive from training?		1= know how about technology, 2= get input support, 3= others (specify)

F. Control and Decision Making:

38. Do you think you are empowered to take decision about different issues within the household?

39. Do you think you are empowered to take decision to work for earning income?

40. Do you think you are empowered to take decisions on saving, borrowing and investment?

41. Do you think you are empowered to take decision about the construction of house?

42. Do you think you are empowered to take decision about your children's education?
43. Do you think you are empowered to take decision about buying necessary good from market for your family without your husband's permission?
44. Do you think you are empowered to take decision about family planning?
45. Do you think you are empowered to take decision about the treatment of your family members?
46. Do you think you are empowered to take decision about going relatives and father's house without your husband's permission?
47. Do you think you are empowered to take decision about family affairs?

G. Women Empowerment Through Microfinance:

<u>Sl. No</u>	<u>Question's/que ry</u>	<u>High Empowerment (3)</u>	<u>Medium Empowerment (2)</u>	<u>Low Empowerment (1)</u>	<u>No Empowerment (0)</u>
48.	Take part to the family income (monthly)				
49.	Purchasing capacity of necessary good for family				
50.	Enterprise running capacity				
53.	Freedom of mobility				
54.	Freedom in expenditure				
55.	Ability of participating in social and cultural activities				
56.	Ownership of wealth				
57.	Understanding with husband				
58.	Get respect by the family members				
59.	Social value achievement				

H. Problem Findings:

<u>Sl. No.</u>	<u>Question's/query</u>	<u>Response/ Answer</u>	<u>Code</u>
60.	What are the official difficult formalities of MFI that you feel?		1= need to give huge information, 2= application form seems difficult to fill up 3= need to put huge signatures, 4= need to give huge documents,5= formingof group is difficult, 6= need high collateral, 7= high interest rate, 8= others
61.	Does the process of taking loan seem difficult?		1= yes, 2= no
62.	Does the process of repaying loan seem rigid?		1= yes, 2=n o
63.	Does MFI offer you any training session?		1= yeas, 2= no
64.	Do you need to attach in a group as an MFI member?		1= yes, 2=no
65.	If yes, what problems do you face with the group members?		1= feel uneasy to cooperate, 2= sometimes difficult to reach, 3= don't pay installment in time, 4= migration of another place, 5= leave MFI, 6= others
66.	Does repaying loan seem burden to you?		1= yes, 2= no
67.	If yes, why you feel like that?		1= insufficient gestation period for repayment, 2= high interest rate, 3= high family expenditure, 4= others
68.	Are there any challenges you have faced in accessing and utilizing this loan?		1= yes, 2= no
69.	If yes, what kind of challenges?		1=lack of training to run a business,2= family burden,3= social and cultural

			barriers, 4= lack of sufficient knowledge and modern technology to run a business, 5= other
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