

Impact of Microfinance on Women Empowerment : A Study of Rural Gujarat

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Abstract

Microfinance is considered as an important financial service in many countries. The objective of this study was to evaluate the impact of microfinance on women empowerment. The paper aimed to judge the societal transformation through strategic interventions of microfinance in rural areas. A total of 384 women staying in rural areas of Mehsana and Navsari district were surveyed. Paired *t*-test was performed to analyze the situation before and after women joined SHGs for women empowerment on three contexts, that is, political, social, and economic on 12 variables. Paired *t*-test revealed a significant difference in women empowerment indicators before and after joining SHGs. The results of binary logistic regression revealed that with the increase in duration of membership by 1 year, the probability of empowering women on grounds of economic, social, and political empowerment increased by 9%, 14%, and 11%, respectively. The study can be used to empower women on the grounds of political, social, and economic conditions. The successful implementation of microfinance could lead to societal transformation in rural areas, especially for a country like India. It was suggested that the government and non-government organizations (NGOs) can work on microfinance services to empower women.

Key words : microfinance, self-help groups, societal transformation, rural area, women empowerment

JEL Classification : C12, D63, G21

Paper Submission Date : May 2, 2018 ; **Paper sent back for Revision :** July 14, 2018 ; **Paper Acceptance Date :** July 18, 2018

Microfinance is always perceived as finance for the poor. Among all the financial services, microfinance has its own place as it serves a specific segment of society. Normally, poor women are unable to take finance from banks or financial institutions quickly as they do not have any collateral security to take such funds. Moreover, they prefer to have a small credit amount for their business or other activities. Their need for money is again of a small amount in nature. In such a case for them, it becomes difficult to take finance from a bank or any other financial institutions. So, for such requirements, microfinance institutes are providing finance to the poor to carry on business and other activities. Smillie (2009) declared microfinance as a tool for women empowerment on various dimensions. The concept of microfinance services emerged in Bangladesh in the year 1976 where Mohammad Yunus played a key role in its implementation.

In India, the concept of microfinance services remains important for women empowerment (Pole, Asawa, & Shah, 2014 ; Sahu, 2015; Vijaykumar & Naidu, 2016). Microfinance is one of the key elements in women

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empowerment and rural development (Patel & Patel, 2012; Patel & Patel, 2017; Patel, Patel, & Patel, 2018). Microfinance contributes significantly in the development of rural areas (Das & Patnaik, 2015 ; Diro & Vadde, 2015; Sharma & Pati, 2015). Microfinance makes a significant impact on women empowerment. The present study aims to explore the impact of microfinance on women empowerment in rural areas of Gujarat. This study was conducted in March 2018.

Literature Review

The literature review was done using studies conducted in Afghanistan, Africa, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Mediterranean countries, Gulf countries, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and Tunisia.

Many researchers in the past studied microfinance as a strategy for women empowerment and revealed a positive outcome. Hunt and Kasynathan (2001) studied the impact of microfinance on women empowerment. The researchers carried out the study on women of Bihar and found microfinance as a strategy for political, economic, and social empowerment of women. Kabeer (2001) showed microfinance as an important strategy in women's empowerment in Bangladesh. Leach and Sitaram (2002) studied the importance of microfinance in the empowerment of shudra women in India. Researchers found significant impact of microfinance on the social empowerment of women. Elahi (2003) examined the impact of microfinance on women empowerment in rural areas. The researcher studied sudra women working in the silk-reeling industry and found that microfinance leads to economic empowerment of women. Swain and Wallentin (2007) studied the impact of microfinance on women empowerment. The elegance of the result lies in the fact that the group of SHG participants showed clear evidence of a significant and higher empowerment, while allowing for the possibility that some members might have been more empowered than others.

Ssendi and Anderson (2009) studied the impact of microfinance on the economic empowerment of women in Tanzania and found it to be significant. They revealed microfinance as an important strategy. Drolet (2011) found microfinance as an important strategy for women empowerment in Egypt. Torri and Martinez (2014) studied the impact of microfinance on women empowerment in India and found it to be positive. They revealed that microfinance is an important strategy for women empowerment. Sraboni, Malapit, Quisumbing, and Ahmed (2014) studied women empowerment from microfinance in Bangladesh and revealed its positive impact. Suprabha (2014) assessed microfinance as a tool for women empowerment through women entrepreneurship. They studied its impact in India and revealed a positive outcome. Ghosh, Chakravarti, and Mansi (2015) assessed women empowerment with respect to self-help groups in India. They found microfinance as an important strategy for social and political empowerment of women in rural areas. Othman (2015) studied women empowerment from microfinance in Malaysia and revealed a positive impact. Ullah and Khan (2017) studied microfinance as a strategy to women empowerment in Pakistan and found a positive impact. However, few researchers did not find microfinance as an important strategy for women empowerment. Kato and Kratzer (2013) studied the impact of microfinance on women empowerment on 454 women in Tanzania. The researchers found average impact and revealed that microfinance was not much significant for women empowerment. Mathur and Agarwal (2017) studied microfinance as a strategy for women empowerment and found it to be somewhat important. They found that microfinance did not lead to women empowerment in a significant manner.

Research Gap and Uniqueness of the Study

Looking at the past studies, the studies were done in different areas with respect to women empowerment or

development of women from microfinance services. Till date, many studies have been conducted by various researchers, but they considered women empowerment in general and not from different perspectives. In order to fulfill this gap, the present study was conducted to evaluate women empowerment from political, social, and economic perspectives.

The study is unique in terms of its research methodology. The present study has adopted a methodology to evaluate women empowerment from political, social, and economic perspectives. The study was conducted using binary logistic regression to determine the impact of microfinance on women empowerment from political, social, and economic perspectives in quantitative terms.

Research Methodology

The present study was done with the objective to evaluate the impact of microfinance on women empowerment. This study was carried out on women staying in rural areas of Gujarat. Here, women empowerment index was constructed by considering the variables given by Hashemi, Schuler, and Riley (1996) and Hoque (2005). The criteria to decide women empowerment for each of the variables works on the following condition : A client who secures score more than average is treated as “empowered,” whereas the respondent with score less than mean score or 0 is considered as “lacking empowerment.”

(1) Role in Decision Making : The involvement of women in decision making was evaluated on the basis of two decisions, that is, financial decisions and social decisions.

✎ **Financial Decisions :** The economic empowerment of women is measured with reference to two factors, that is, decision on taking loan facility and use of the loan taken. As women took loans for their household purposes and business purposes, financial decision making becomes an important factor to measure women empowerment with respect to this decision. Furthermore, the decision by women on the use of a loan is considered important in the dimension of decision making. If the respondent was taking financial decisions, she got 1 point, otherwise 0.

(2) Social Decisions : It is observed from the literature review that many researchers took the 'decision regarding education of children' as a variable to study women empowerment, but looking at the present scenario, the decision of the education of the girl child is taken as a variable to study women empowerment. Boys get preference for education as compared to the girl child in Gujarat [1]. So, the involvement of women in making decisions regarding education of girls is considered. Furthermore, the participation of women in the decisions about family matters or problems is taken into consideration to determine the participation level of women in social decision making. If the respondent was making social decisions, she got 1 point, otherwise 0.

(3) Physical Mobility : Physical mobility is concerned with moving in village market, gram panchayat [2], bank, collector's office, nearby hospital, and relatives houses (nearby and distant) without the support of anyone. Respondents were given 1 point for each place they visited and an additional point if they went there alone.

(4) Economic Situation :

✎ If a respondent earned through job or laborious work, she got 1 point, otherwise 0. If a respondent ran a business venture and earned, she got 2 points.

✎ Two points were given if she controlled her own income and only 1 point was given if it was controlled jointly.

No point was given if she had no control over her own income.

✎ If a respondent had cash in hand, she got 1 point, otherwise 0. If a respondent had more than ₹ 1000 as cash in hand, she got 1 more point.

✎ If a respondent had a bank or post office account, she got 1 point, otherwise 0. If a respondent made a transaction with bank or post office once in a year, she got 1 point, otherwise 0.

(5) Participation in Political and Other Forums :

✎ If a respondent had voted for any political body in the last election, she got 1 point, otherwise 0.

✎ If a respondent had participated in campaigning for a political candidate for gram panchayat during the last election, she got 1 point, otherwise 0.

✎ If a respondent had contested elections in the last 3 years, she got 1 point, otherwise 0. One additional point was given if she had contested elections for the position of ward member, 2 additional points for sarpanch/samiti sabhya/any position in a cooperative society, 3 additional points for the position of block chairman/zilla parishad member, and 4 additional points if she had contested for the zilla parishad president [3].

✎ If a respondent had attended the palli/gram sabha [4] meetings in the last 3 years, she got 1 point, otherwise 0. Another additional point was given in each case if the work for the issues raised by her was in progress/completed.

✎ If a respondent was a member of any village/government committee, she got 1 point, otherwise 0.

(6) Self - Confidence : The respondent got 1 point if she was able to :

✎ Handle a sum of money ;

✎ Perform basic calculations ;

✎ Travel alone to the nearest town/district headquarters ;

✎ Going alone for medical treatment of self/children ;

✎ Address the forum/dealing with members in the society ;

✎ Resolve a family dispute.

She got 2 points in each case if she was confident enough and 1 point for having less confidence (she could manage, but with some difficulty). No point was given if she expressed her inability.

(7) Public Interaction : Respondents got 1 point each for interaction with sarpanch [5], PDS [6] dealer, anganwadi worker [7], ANM health worker, teacher, banker, post-office personnel, and government officer in the last 2 years. If the respondent did not have any interaction with such persons in the past 2 years, she got 0 points.

(8) Ability to Make Small Purchases :

✎ The respondent got 1 point if she purchased small items (cooking oil, spices, vegetables, etc.) for her daily food preparation.

✎ The respondent got 1 point if she purchased small items for herself (hair oil, soap, bangles, etc.).

✎ One additional point was given if the respondent made any purchases from her earned money.

(9) Ability to Make Large Purchases : The respondent got 1 point if she purchased kitchen vessels (colander, ladle, rolling pin, and tamis), 2 points for purchasing clothes of children, 3 points for purchasing own clothes. She got 1 more point if she purchased all these things without the permission of her husband.

(10) Participation in Public/Civic Protests : The respondent got 1 point if she participated (alone or along with others) in any action involving :

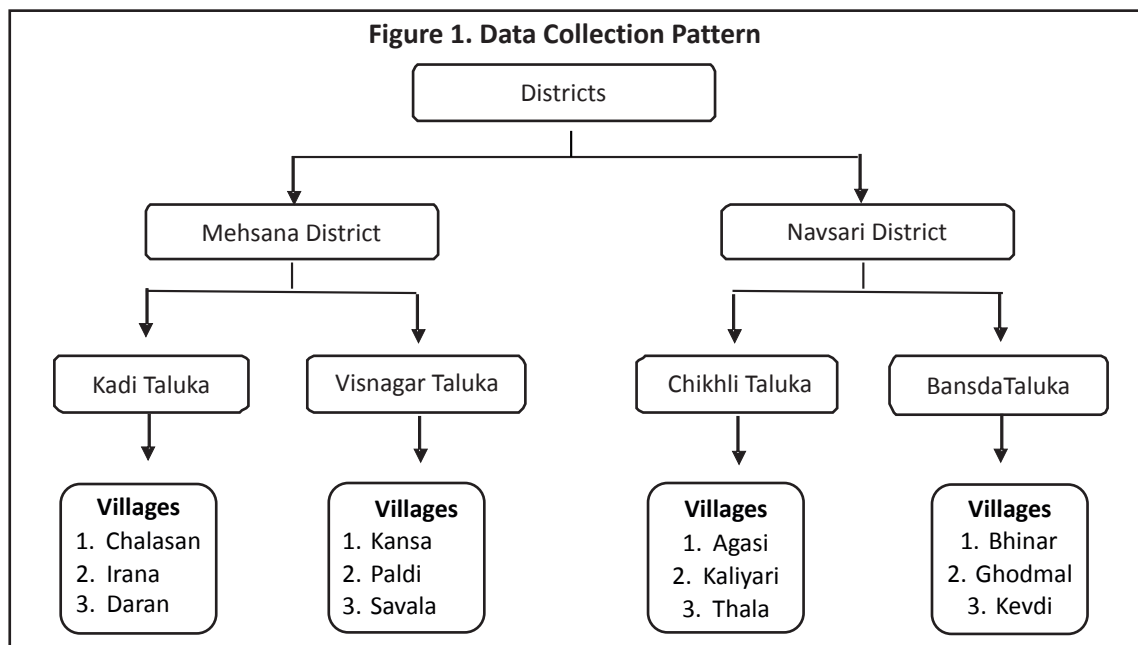
- ✎ Protesting or stopping a man from beating his wife.
- ✎ Protesting or stopping a man from divorcing or abandoning his wife.
- ✎ Ensuring fair wages for work performed by herself/family members/other workers in the village.
- ✎ Ensuring payment of the correct prices for products sold.
- ✎ Protesting against the misuse of relief goods.
- ✎ Protesting against liquor consumption or approaching government officials to solve problems.

(11) Development Programmes : If the respondent had awareness about the development programmes run by the government, she got 1 point. If the respondent participated in the development programmes run by the government, she got an additional 1 point.

(12) Able to Run a Small Business : If the respondent was running a small business/ Gruh Udhyog [8] jointly, she got 1 point. She got an additional 1 point for running the small business/ Gruh Udhyog. If the respondent had been running a business for more than 3 years, she got an additional 1 point.

Research Design, Sample Size, and Data Collection

In this study, cross sectional research design was adopted. A total of 384 respondents were surveyed using a



judgmental sampling method. The respondents were selected on the basis of two criteria : (a) the respondents should be from the geographical area of Mehsana district and Navsari district ; (b) the respondents should be a part of the SHG based microfinance programmes. The respondents were covered from two talukas [9] of each district. The data collection pattern is shown in the Figure 1. On the basis of review of past studies, variables were identified and a structured questionnaire was framed. Data were collected through personal interviews of the SHG members. The instrument was pilot tested at the Vankarvas [10] in Paldi village of Visnagar Taluka and Undovas [11] in Agasi village of Chikhli Taluka.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data analysis was performed using regression and paired t - test. The demographic profile of the respondents is depicted on the basis of different parameters. The age of the respondents ranged from less than 21 years to more than 60 years (Table 1). Only 2.08% of the respondents were aged less than 21 years, 53.13% of the respondents were in the age range of 21-30 years, 30.21% of the respondents were in the age range of 31- 40 years. The respondents falling in the age range of 41-50 years and 51- 60 years were 5.73% and 6.77%, respectively. Only 2.08% of the respondents were aged more than 60 years. Overall, the respondents were from mixed range of age and majority of the respondents were young by age.

In terms of educational background, 20.57% of the respondents were illiterate (Table 2), 37.76% of the respondents were educated upto the primary level ; whereas, 41.67% of the respondents were educated till high school, that is, possessed secondary education. Overall, there was a mixed profile of the respondents on the dimension of educational background.

The monthly income (Table 3) of the respondents ranged from less than ₹ 1,000 to ₹ 10,000, 3.13% of the total respondents had monthly income less than ₹ 1,000, 50.78% of the respondents had a monthly income in the range of ₹ 1,000 - ₹ 5,000 ; 177 respondents, that is, 46.09% of the total sample had a monthly income level of ₹ 5, 001- ₹ 10, 000.

The family size is depicted in Table 4, which shows that the number of family members ranged from 2 to 10

Table 1. Age Profile of the Respondents

Age Level	Number of Respondents	%
Less than 21 years	8	2.08
21-30 years	204	53.13
31-40 years	116	30.21
41-50 years	22	5.73
51-60 years	26	6.77
More than 60 years	8	2.08
Total	384	100.00

Table 2. Educational Profile of the Sample Respondents

Educational Level	Number of Respondents	%
Illiterate	79	20.57
Primary Education	145	37.76
High School Education	160	41.67
Total	384	100.00

Table 3. Monthly Income Profile of the Sample Respondents

Monthly Income Level	No. of Respondents	%
< ₹ 1,000	12	3.13
₹ 1, 000 - ₹ 5, 000	195	50.78
₹ 5, 001- ₹ 10, 000	177	46.09
Total	384	100.00

Table 4. Distribution of Family Size of the Sample Households

Family Size	Number of Households	%
Small (<=2)	14	3.65
Medium (3-4)	224	58.33
Large (5-6)	116	30.21
Very Large (>=7)	30	7.81
Total	384	100.00

Table 5. Number of Family Members Working in the Sample Households

Family Members Working	Number of Households	%
1	112	29.17
2	249	64.84
3	23	5.99
Total	384	100.00

Table 6. Occupational Profile of the Respondents

Occupation	Number of Households	%
Animal Husbandry	23	5.99
Farming	133	34.64
Labour	140	36.46
Salaried Worker	48	12.50
Self-Employed	40	10.42
Total	384	100.00

family members. Here, the family size is categorized into four categories, that is, small, medium, large, and very large on the basis of the number of family members. Only 3.65% of the total respondents had a small family size, that is, up to 2 members in the family, 58.33% of the respondents had 3 - 4 family members with a medium family size, 30.21% of the respondents had a large family size with 5 - 6 members. Family members with size of 7 or more members were treated as very large - size families. Here, 7.81% of the respondents had a very large family size.

The number of family members (Table 5) working in a family is one of the important criteria as it affects the income of the household. Here, 29.17% of the households had only 1 family member working, 64.84% of the households were such where 2 family members were working and earning. Only 5.99% households had 3 members working in the family.

The Table 6 shows the occupational profile of the respondents. Animal husbandry as an occupation was pursued by 5.99% of the respondents ; farming as an occupation was carried out by 34.64% of the respondents ; 36.46% of the respondents worked as labourers ; whereas, 12.50% of the respondents worked as salaried workers. Self-employment was adopted by 10.42% of the total respondents.

(1) Reliability Test : The Table 7 demonstrates the results of the reliability test. Cronbach's alpha authenticates the data as it is related to the uniformity between two variables (Nunnally, 1978). The Table 7 shows that the value of Cronbach's alpha (0.849) is more than the required level of 0.6 (Cronbach, 1951). Moreover, the value of 0.849 falls in the range of 0.8 - 0.9, which further indicates that the results are good (Cronbach, 1951). Overall, the outcome of the reliability test shows that the data were reliable for further study (Cronbach, 1951; Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 1998).

(2) Effect of Participation in the Microfinance Programmes on Women Empowerment : Women empowerment from the microfinance programmes has been studied using various factors such as self-confidence, role in social decision making, physical mobility, economic situation, role in financial decision making, participation in society, and public interface. *t* - test was performed to make a comparison between the two groups. The hypothesis for *t* - test is as follows :

👉 **H₀ :** The level of women empowerment before joining SHGs and after joining SHGs is the same.

The Table 8 shows the comparison on empowerment indicators before joining SHGs & after joining SHGs. Here, the significance value of all the 12 indicators is 0, which reveals that the level of women empowerment before joining SHGs and after joining SHGs is not the same. Further, the values of all mean scores indicate an

Table 7. Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.849	38

Table 8. Comparison on Empowerment Indicators Before and After Joining SHGs

Empowerment Indicator	Before Joining SHGs (Mean)	After Joining SHGs (Mean)	t - Statistics	Sig.
Financial Decisions	2.45	3.24	-18.44	0.000
Social Decisions	2.12	3.02	-2.93	0.000
Physical Mobility	1.89	2.45	-1.48	0.000
Economic Situation	2.07	2.52	-4.58	0.000
Participation in Political and Other Forums	1.55	2.09	-2.35	0.000
Self - Confidence	1.87	2.44	-2.45	0.000
Public Interaction	1.69	2.38	-4.56	0.000
Ability to Make Small Purchases	2.44	3.58	-2.35	0.000
Ability to Make Large Purchases	1.80	2.14	-3.24	0.000
Participation in Public / Civic Protests	1.44	1.89	-2.41	0.000
Development Programmes	1.95	2.58	-8.24	0.000
Able to Run Small Business	2.04	3.12	-5.37	0.000

increasing trend after joining the SHGs. As compared to before joining SHGs, the mean value of after joining SHGs is higher, which reveals an improvement in all 12 standards. Overall, it indicates women empowerment with respect to joining the SHGs. Furthermore, these factors have been categorized in three natures of empowerment, namely, economic, social, and political. The Table 9 shows the results of the paired t - test of these three natures and a composite of these three natures.

The Table 9 shows the comparison of nature of empowerment indicators before joining SHGs and after joining SHGs. To study whether there is a significant difference in economic empowerment before joining SHGs ($M = 10.8$) and after joining SHGs ($M = 14.6$), a two tailed paired t - test assuming equal variances was conducted. Here, t - value (-17.69) and significance value (0.000) reveal that the H_0 is rejected, and the difference is statistically significant between before joining SHGs and after joining SHGs with respect to economic empowerment.

To analyze whether there is a significant difference in social empowerment before joining SHGs ($M = 9.52$) and after joining SHGs ($M = 12.57$), a two tailed paired t - test assuming equal variances was conducted. Here, t - value (-19.19) and significance value (0.000) reveal that the H_0 is rejected, and the difference is statistically significant between before joining SHGs and after joining SHGs with respect to social empowerment.

Table 9. Comparison on Nature of Empowerment Indicators Before and After Joining SHGs

Nature of Empowerment	Before Joining SHGs (Mean)	After Joining SHGs (Mean)	t -statistics	Sig.
Economic	10.8	14.6	-17.69	0.000
Social	9.52	12.87	-19.19	0.000
Political	2.99	3.98	-10.31	0.000
Composite	23.31	31.45	-27.37	0.000

Table 10. Effect of Duration of Membership in SHGs on Empowerment Indicators

Dependent Variable: Empowerment Indicators	Independent Variable: Period of Membership in SHGs	
	β	95% Confidence Interval
Financial Decisions	0.85	(0.61 , 1.09)
Social Decisions	1.12	(0.76 , 1.48)
Physical Mobility	1.04	(0.99 , 1.09)
Economic Situation	1.05	(0.98 , 1.12)
Participation in Political & Other Forums	0.81	(0.67 , 0.95)
Self-Confidence	0.84	(0.81 , 0.87)
Public Interaction	1.02	(0.92 , 1.12)
Ability to Make Small Purchases	0.94	(0.88, 1)
Ability to Make Large Purchases	0.96	(0.89, 1.03)
Participation in Public/Civic Protests	0.81	(0.75, 0.87)
Development Programmes	0.80	(0.74, 0.86)
Able to Run Small Business	0.88	(0.79, 0.97)
Economic Empowerment	1.09	(0.99 , 1.15)
Social Empowerment	1.14	(1.04 , 1.16)
Political Empowerment	1.11	(1.02 , 1.12)
Amalgamated Empowerment	1.10	(1.01 , 1.15)

To examine whether there is a significant difference in political empowerment before joining SHGs ($M = 2.99$) and after joining SHGs ($M = 3.98$), a two tailed paired t - test assuming equal variances was conducted. Here, t -value (-10.31) and significance value (0.000) reveal that the H_0 is rejected, and the difference is statistically significant for political empowerment before joining SHGs and after joining SHGs.

To evaluate whether there is a significant difference in composite empowerment before joining SHGs ($M = 23.31$) and after joining SHGs ($M = 31.45$), a two tailed paired t - test assuming equal variances was conducted. Here, t - value (-27.37) and significance value (0.000) reveal that the H_0 is rejected, and the difference is statistically significant between before joining SHGs and after joining SHGs with respect to composite empowerment.

The Table 10 shows the results of binary logistic regression with empowerment indicators and duration of membership in SHGs as dependent and independent variables, respectively. The results show that with the increase in duration of membership by 1 year, the probability of empowering women rises by 8%. Likewise, with the increase in duration of membership by 1 year, the probability of economic, social, and political empowerment increases by 9%, 14%, and 11%, respectively. Overall, it is revealed that the microfinance programme leads to women empowerment on all the considered dimensions, and it is one of the important tools for women empowerment in rural India.

Conclusion

This research has been done with the objective to assess the effect of microfinance on empowering women. The study finds that after participating in the microfinance programmes, the involvement of women in social and financial decisions increased. A paired t - test was done to analyze whether there is any difference in women empowerment before and after joining SHGs. The results find that women empowerment increased with participation in the SHG based programmes. The participation of women in microfinance programmes leads to social, political, and economic empowerment. Binary logistic regression was performed to analyze women empowerment with respect to participation duration. The results of the binary logistic regression reveal that with the increase in duration of membership by 1 year, the probability of empowering women with respect to economic, social, and political empowerment increases by 9%, 14%, and 11%, respectively. With the increase in duration of membership by 1 year, the composite empowerment increases by 10%. Overall, microfinance is a significant tool for empowering women in rural areas of Gujarat region.

The results are in line with the results of some recent studies, for example, Ghosh et al. (2015), Othman (2015), Ullah and Khan (2017), and Patel et al. (2018). The results are in line with those of past studies. One imperative outcome derived from the study is that the duration of participation in the microfinance programmes is important for achieving positive outcomes, and microfinance is an important strategy towards societal development. In this study, microfinance is proven to be a successful strategy for societal transformation in rural areas of Gujarat.

Research Implications

This study can be used to empower women on political, social, and economic grounds. The successful implementation of microfinance can lead to societal transformation in rural areas, especially for a country like India. The results of this research can encourage more women to participate in microfinance activities and development projects. The successful implementation of microfinance programmes can lead to societal transformation in rural areas, especially for a country like India.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

The limitation of the study is its geographical coverage. The study is limited to 384 respondents from rural areas of Mehsana and Navsari districts in Gujarat. So, the results which are derived from the study may not be generalized for all the rural parts of India. The present study has scope for future research work in terms of evaluating the comparative effect of microfinance programme run by government and NGOs on women empowerment.

End Notes

[1] According to the Census 2011 and Gujarat state portal, literacy rate in the state of Gujarat was 79.31%, where the male literacy rate was 87.23% and female literacy rate was 70.73%.

[2] A Gram panchayat is a local self-government institution at the village level. It consists of 7-17 members elected from the wards of the village, and they are called “panch” or ward members. The elected head of a Gram Panchayat is called Sarpanch. The Sarpanch and other elected Panchs together constitute the Gram Panchayat. The Sarpach plays a vital role to establish a link between government officers and villagers/village community. Similarly, there exists a Panchayat Samiti (Block Council) in the middle and Zilla Parishad (District Council) on the top under the three-tier of the Panchayati Raj system.

[3] A Panchayat Samiti is composed of elected members from each Gram Panchayat of its area and it is called Samiti Sabhya or Samiti Member. The Block Chairman is the elected head of the Panchayat Samiti and is nominated/elected from Samiti members. Members of the Zilla Parishad are elected from Zilla Parishad constituencies of the district. A Zilla Parishad leads by the president of the council, who is either nominated/elected from among Zilla Parishad members.

[4] Palli Sabha is the meeting of all the electorates of a revenue village. Gram Sabha is the meeting of all the voters of all the revenue villages under a Gram Panchayat. The quorum for Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha meetings is 1/10th of its respective total electorates out of which 1/3rd shall be women. The Palli Sabha selects the beneficiaries who need assistance under different poverty alleviation programmes and schemes.

[5] Sarpanch is the head of Gram Panchayat elected by an election. Sarpanch along with other members forms the Gram Panchayat.

[6] PDS stands for public distribution system. It is the system through which the food grains are distributed to poor Indians under various schemes of the Government of India.

[7] An anganwadi worker is a lady working on the Government of India programme - Integrated Child Development Services program in a village.

[8] Gruh Udhog is a small business run by women where they produce consumption products in their homes.

[9] Taluka is a sub-division of the district.

[10] Chalsan village is a village in Kadi taluka where people from low income groups are staying.

[11] Thala is an area in Agasi village in Chikhli taluka where people from low income groups are staying.

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