

Microfinance and Women Empowerment in Bangladesh: Impact in Economic Dimension

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Abstract : Using 285 respondents from two microfinance institutions, this research aims to assess the impact of microfinance on women's economic empowerment in Bangladesh. Empirical measures of economic empowerment used in this paper are underpinned by a bargaining theory of household. Questionnaire is used for data collection following purposive sampling. Descriptive statistics, chi-square test, Kruskal-Wallis test, binary, and ordinal logistic regressions are deployed for data analysis. The findings of this study show that around three quarters of respondents have increased household income. They have increased their savings overwhelmingly; nonetheless, many of them are found to have a very small amount of savings. Still, more than half of the respondents are reported to have increased their savings when it is checked against at least 500 BDT per month. On the contrary, the percentage of women is moderate in terms of increasing control over finances. Empirical findings demonstrate the evidence of a relationship between the amount of loan and women's household income, their savings, and control over finances. Nonetheless, no relationship is found in women's areas. This study infers that women's access to financial resources is fundamental to empower them in economic dimension.

Keywords : microfinance, women, economic, empowerment, Bangladesh

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