

Impact of Microcredit on Women's Empowerment in Bangladesh: A Case Study on Rangamati Pourashaba, Bangladesh

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Abstract

The empowerment of women is a robust matter in developing countries. Women empowerment has become a worldwide affair in the current discourse of development. The study attempts to explore the influence of microcredit on women empowerment in Rangamati Paurashava, Bangladesh. Primary as well as secondary data was used for data compilation method. Primary data were collected through questionnaire and in-depth interview survey. A semi-structured questionnaire and 140 samples were administered. Simple random sampling technique used on borrowers and 09 (nine) in-depth interviews operated on NGOs institutional level. Secondary data collected from primary, secondary and tertiary sources of secondary data. Essential data analyzed by Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Results significantly showed a positive impact of microcredit on women empowerment and endorses microcredit borrowers especially women to contribute in the domestic decision-making process through obtaining the self-esteem, business skills, confidence level, institutional management etc. The results exhibited that microcredit program was associated with each measurement of women empowerment as well as aggregate measure of empowerment. Therefore, this study disclosed that microcredit program improved the women empowerment in the study area.

Keywords: Microcredit, Women Empowerment, Rangamati Pourashaba, Bangladesh

Introduction

Bangladesh is a south-east Asian developing country. According to the United Nations Gender-related Development Index (GDI),

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Bangladesh ranked 105th out of a total of 177 countries worldwide (Grimm et al., 2008). It has a fast-growing economy and with its 167 million inhabitants, which is one of the largest density countries in the world. However, a large share of this population is still very poor (UNDESA, 2018). According to a recent opinion poll, Bangladesh has the second most pro-capitalist population in the developing world (BBS, 2010, 2013). Bangladesh averaged a GDP growth rate more than of 6% between 2004 and 2014. Export-oriented industrialization progressively led the economy of the country (Ahmed and Toufique 2014). Even though in the field of impressive improvement occurred poverty alleviation, still nearly 50 million people living in impoverishment here (Ahmed, et. al, 1997), In Bangladesh, like other developing countries, agriculture plays a strategic role in the overall economic performance of the country. It contributes not only in GDP (15.93%), but also in a major source of foreign exchange earnings, and in providing employment (46.03%) to a large segment of the population, particularly the poor (Economic Review, 2018). According to 2013, Census in Bangladesh 25.15% of women lives in urban and 74.85% lives in rural from the total population (BBS, 2013). In Bangladesh, 23.4% of the country's population lives below the poverty line with 80% in the rural areas (Economic Review, 2018).

In Bangladesh maximum women live in marginal areas. Majority of them are engaged in many activities including management of crops, fisheries livestock, energy, biological diversity, family and domestic chores. However, their substantial economic contribution is mostly unrecognized (Sultana and Hasan 2010). Women's have a limited access to educational services, health care, industrial institution, trades, and politics which leads to a lower welfare of the family that shock women and impedes the progressive goals of the country (Parveen and Chaudhury, 2009). Certainly, it can say that like Bangladesh all developing countries' women's' access to power positions is too limited. They are dependent on the men by socially, politically, familiarly and economically especially rural women and they must struggle to remove the discrimination and reconcile activities outside the home with their customary roles. For these contexts, women empowerment is so significant in Bangladesh. As a goal in itself, the women empowerment are very much significant to

attain greater gender equivalence as well as to remove the poverty in the society. (Volart, 2004).

To enhance the national income of the state and accomplish a sustainable existence of the societies, families and communities, throughout the world, women employment always plays a vital role. In newly, women even though become progresses but they live under many socio- cultural restrictions, such as family violence, gender discrimination, social and like religious prejudice, lack of education, legal barriers and so on. Women have been marginalized from the primitive society. They are rarely independent in financial and in decision making process and frequently they face vulnerable difficulties of society (Zoynul and Fahmida, 2013). The microcredit is an exclusive innovation of credit delivery technique to enhance income-generating activities. These small-scale credit programs provide production credit and other services to rural poor. Self-employment actions thus permitting the users to accomplish and improve life (Hussain, 1998; Morduch, 2000; Rahman, 1995). It is one of the most sensational antipoverty apparatuses for the poorest, especially for women (Micro-credit Summit, 1997). Conversely, microcredit almost target women as a significant tool to empower women from poor domestic level. (Noreen, 2011). It is assumed that worldwide 25 million populaces are now using micro-credit to commence income generating or self-employment activities, 90% of these are women (Chavan and Ramakumar, 2003). Micro-credit scheme offers loans at very low interest and organized guidance to low-income women to follow alternative income-generating actions intended to enlighten their social and economic status. To improve their current economic activity or to start a new enterprise, the program provided women with loans. Such investments, was believed, would lead to gender and social equality in the country. It would enhance the eradication of poverty, which would diminish poverty among women (Maheswaranathan and Kenned, 2010).

In recent years, microcredit, which is known as microfinance in eider dimension, has become a much-preferred intervention for poverty alleviation in the developing countries and least developed countries. Through institutional arrangement, microcredit is a recent innovation for poverty alleviation. In recent years, targeting the poor in low-

income countries government and nongovernment organizations have introduced microcredit programs. Based on the view that women have restricted access to the wage labor market, are more likely to be credit-constrained than men, and have inequitable share of power in household decision making many of these programs specifically target women. (Pitt & Khandker, 1998). Today, Bangladesh is named the land of microcredit revolution. Microcredit has generated considerable hopes and prospect among the academics, policy makers of the GOs, NGOs leaders and other development practitioners in Bangladesh. Bangladesh probably has the highest number of populations in absolute poverty per sq. mile and about one-third of its population suffer moderate to severe starvation during most of the year. As a result, poverty reduction programme in Bangladesh is increasingly getting importance and priority in order to face the poverty problem in the country (Zoynul et al., 2013). Microcredit is essentially the dispersion of small collateral free loans to conjointly legally responsible clusters in order to foster profits generation and poverty reduction through enhancing self-employment. Perhaps the best-known microcredit institution is the pioneering Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh first began in 1976. Formal sector banks do not lend to the poor, as it is difficult for them to identify the truly reliable borrowers, monitor their behavior and to make them accountable when it needs (Morduch, 1999). It is with the view to overcoming this phenomenon that the microfinance movement emerged by substituting material collateral with social collateral, organized social pressure from group members among the poor to make each member of the group responsible to and for the collective to enhance social solidarity (Rahman, 1999 and Morduch et al, 2001). Grameen Bank targeted at women strategically for recovering of loans because of women's positional vulnerability such as shyness, eagerness of repaying in some societies as well as they are more reliable and more disciplined. In addition, women in many programme have been proved for repaying their loans at higher rates than men, (Webster and Fidler, 1996). As it was stated in 1999, lending to women gives microfinance institutions an unwritten guarantee of getting back their money. Conversely, the Grameen model has been simulated in many developing countries by microcredit operation (Morduch, 1999). The Grameen Bank wants to help 70% of its members to graduate from

below to above the poverty line by 2007 (Yunus, 1997).

Bangladesh government first conceived the micro-credit in the present form as an effective intervention for poverty alleviation in early seventies for whole country. At present, hundreds of non-government organizations besides Government sector have been operating microcredit programme as a strategy for poverty reduction. In fact, the microcredit programme got momentum in early eighties and Government departments' undertaken different innovative projects with micro-credit initiatives. At the same time, practitioners are in continuous efforts to explore more effective programmes in working with poorest (Hussain, 1998). In Bangladesh, more than 750 organizations are operational in rural areas to offer credit and non-credit facilities to the target people - largely women from landless households (Khandaker, Hossain & Khan, 1998).

In Bangladesh many poverty reduction interventions are undertaken by NGOs through there microcredit programme, because of their special characteristics, they are better able to reach and mobilize the poor people and provide services the poor (Ahmed, 2000). In poverty alleviation efforts, microcredit plays imperative role in many developing countries like Bangladesh. Both achievements and challenges prevail in the field of microcredit. Despite the various efforts of both government and NGOs the number of people living below poverty line has remained unchanged over the last 100 year's (Ahmed, 2000). It was believed that microfinance is not important for all people but poor need credit and more significantly they could use credit more proficiently and reliably.

Micro-credit programs are increasingly sought as a way to enhance the income and employment of the poor who can be self-employed in a variety of informal activities. (Hossain & Khan, 1998).

According to Aguilar 1999, the aim of integrating the poor into the economic circuit through microfinance programme is to alleviate poverty by creating income and jobs, and consequently promote development. To that end, participants of microfinance programs are expected to invest the micro-loans in productive activities (Rahman, 1999) that generate enough income enabling the low-income households to exit from poverty; expand their businesses; and improve the

excellence of their lives (Morduch, 1999).

Webster and Fidler (1996) explained the strong emphasis placed on gender issues by microfinance institutions and donors as recognizing "the constraints that limit the access of the poor to financial services are particularly harsh for women." Microfinance institutions' rationale for targeting women over men, according to Rahman (1999), is based on the assumption of their greater contribution for the household welfare women's caring is prior to reading children, followed by their spending on their household necessities. Therefore, lending to women and increasing their earnings bring more qualitative benefits to family welfare than the earnings of men. In addition, lending to women is perceived an effective way to assist the poor women in attaining their socio-economic empowerment in the larger society (Rahman, 1999).

Even though Bangladesh has enormous advancement feasibility, it is, for a variety of socio-economic motives, placed with the poorest countries in the world. With 80% in the rural areas, about half of the country's inhabitants lives underneath the poverty line (Ahmed, 2004). Women, who represent half of the total population but liability of poverty sprays disproportionately only on women. Logically, hence, poverty alleviation and establishment of employment in the rural area are pinnacle priorities in the broadening program of the government of Bangladesh. This has adopted as an extensive based approach to poverty reduction, economic liberalization, emphasizing macroeconomic constancy and support for a number of government agencies and non-government organizations (Ahmed, 2004).

Empowerment of women which means involvement of women in exercising power is not a new thing. Women's empowerment concept has been divided into three constituents and measured individually to attain a better understanding of their underlying issues and their relationship to women's empowerment. These separate indices are intersperse consultation index, individual autonomy index and authority index. The three choices were given diverse weights - "generally" was apportioned a value of 1, "never" a value of 0 and "occasionally" a value of 0.5." (Rahman 1999).

Microcredit should benefit poor women in three different ways.

- l First, microcredit inclines to lessen economic dependency of the women on husbands by providing independent sources of income outside home and therefore help improve sovereignty;
- l Second, together with their exposure to new sets of ideas, values and social support, the same independent sources of income should mark these women more confident of their rights;
- l Finally, - by providing control over material resources, micro credit programmes-should raise women's status and prestige in the eyes of husbands and thereby promote intersperse consultation.

The aim of this study is to examine the impact of microcredit on women empowerment in Rangamati Paurashava.

The major objectives are as follows;

- n To investigate the role of micro credit on women empowerment in the study area;
- n To determine the prospect of micro credit on the route of women empowerment; and
- n To provide some recommendations for women empowerment in Bangladesh.

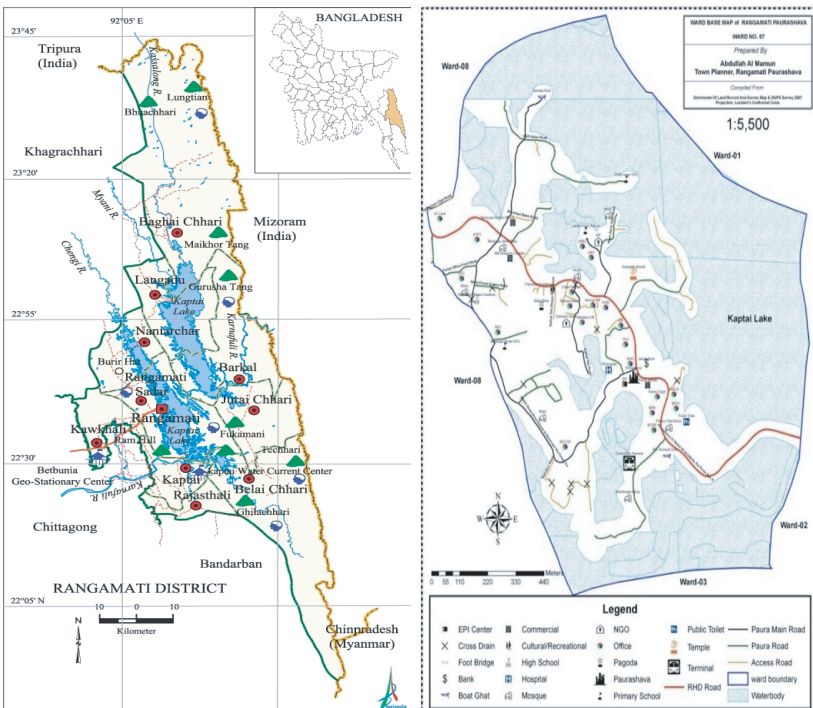
Materials And Methods

Considering the importance of women empowerment by microcredit an intensive study was carried out in the Rangamati Paurashava. The present investigation was based on perceptual as well as factual data sources. The perceptual data have been collected through field survey which was based on semi structural questionnaire. Total 140 selected samples were considered and simple random sampling techniques have been adopted during data collection on household's level. These factual data have been collected from various secondary sources like local authority, review papers, journals, books, magazines, newspaper and other recent publications, internet and national and international published data etc. The collected data and information i.e. perceptual and factual data, relevant literature and final tabulate supervision have been analyzed with the help of required computer software such as Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, version-18), Microsoft Excel and Microsoft word.

The statistical data have been presented in the tabular and graphical from to make it easy and understandable.

Study Area

Rangamati Paurashava is the Study area of the present study. Rangamati, a municipal town, is located at 22°37'60N 92°12'0E and has an altitude of 14 meters (49 feet) (Rahman, 2003). It consists of 9 wards and 35 mahallas. The area of the town is 64.75 sq.km. The town has population of 65294 and literary rate among the town people is 60.8% (Chakraborty, 2003). It is known that Rangamati is the most developed district than the other Hill Tracts district. Many people in this area depend on microcredit. Hence, this study will help to show how much essential microcredit in this area and present status of the women at Rangamati Paurashava.



Map 1: Location of the study area (Bangladesh: Rangamati Municipal Area)

Source: LGED and Rangemati Municipality, 2018

Results and Discussion

The observed material was chosen as a suitable area meanwhile it, according to staff members of both GRAMEEN BANK and BRAC, is symbolic of Bangladesh in some aspects. In table 1, illustrated that a noteworthy proportion of respondents ($f = 61$, 43.57%) were of the age group of 31-40. Higher portion of respondents were married ($n = 120$, 85.71%) and usually living in joint families ($f = 77$, 55%), general family members above 6 ($f = 75$, 53.57%). Maximum respondents' (53.57%) family size more than 6 where as our national family size is 4.4.

Table 1: Demographic and Socio-economic variables of the respondents

Demographic and socio-economic Variables	Category	Statistics		
		Frequency(f)	Percentage (%)	Cf
Age(in Years)	<30	31	22.14	22.14
	31-40	61	43.57	65.71
	41-50	36	25.71	91.42
	51-60	6	4.29	95.71
	>60	6	4.29	100
	Total	140	100	
Marital Status	Unmarried	15	10.71	10.71
	Married	120	85.71	96.42
	Divorcee	2	1.43	97.85
	Widow	3	2.15	100
	Total	140	100	
Family Size	1-3	20	14.29	14.29
	4-6	45	32.14	46.43
	>6	75	53.57	100
	Total	140	100	
Family Type	Single Family	63	45.00	45.00
	Joint Family	77	55.00	100
	Total	140	100	
Educational Status	Illiterate	29	20.71	20.71
	Primary	40	28.57	49.28
	Secondary	35	25.00	74.28
	Higher secondary	25	17.86	92.14
	Graduate	9	6.43	98.57
	Post-graduate	2	1.43	100
	Total	140	100	

Demographic and socio-economic Variables	Category	Statistics		
		Frequency(f)	Percentage (%)	Cf
Occupational Status	Agriculture	4	2.86	2.86
	Business	10	7.14	10.00
	Services	20	14.29	24.29
	Housewife	90	64.28	88.57
	Taylor	2	1.43	90.00
	Business and Housewife	11	7.86	97.86
	Teaching	3	2.14	100
	Total	140	100	
Monthly Income	<5000 Tk.	20	14.29	14.29
	5000-10000 Tk.	38	27.14	41.43
	10001-15000 Tk.	32	22.85	64.28
	15001-20000 Tk.	24	17.14	81.42
	20001-25000 Tk.	6	4.29	85.71
	>25000 Tk.	20	14.29	100
	Total	140	100	
Loan Taking	1-3 times	51	36.43	36.43
	4-7 times	27	19.29	55.72
	8-11 times	49	35.00	90.72
	>12 times	13	9.28	100
	Total	140	100	

Source: Field Survey 2018

When out looked at the education status of the respondents although larger share having primary education ($f= 40, 28.57\%$), it was also observed that a substantial proportion of them ($f = 29, 20.71\%$) were having illiterate at the same time. Besides, graduate and postgraduate ($n= 9, 6.43\%$), ($f= 2, 1.43\%$) separately, confirmed the presence of the traditional perception of the low level of education among females. Not only the existence of lower rate of higher education but also occupational position showed highest number of women being housewives ($f =90, 64.28\%$). Some were engaged with agriculture ($f =4, 2.86\%$) where other chose to took part of family income by working from home as Taylor ($f=2, 1.43\%$), business and homemaker ($f=3, 2.14\%$). Nevertheless, the positive points were women becoming coming out of home activity and worked in

services (f=20, 14.29%), teaching (f=3, 2.14%) and in business (f=10, 7.14%), respectively. Monthly family income was relatively low major of the respondents (f= 38, 27.14%). Only (f=20, 14.29%) had income over ?25,000 Tk. Although maximum took 1-3 (f= 51, 36.43%) loans but 8-11 times (f= 49, 35%) also high among the respondents. Were having primary education (f = 40, 28.57%), it was also observed that a significant proportion of the respondents (f= 29, 20.71%) were illiterate.

Reason To Get Loan

Generally, NGOs give the credit in limited working purposes. Business and Bain are the popular purposes of the NGOs micro-credit program. Table 2 indicates that maximum respondents taking loan for business purpose (n = 74, 52.85%), 17.14 percent respondent took credit for house build and Bain, 11.42 percent respondent for buying CNG and minor portions were covered by buying TV, poultry, family maintenance, agriculture, daughter marriage, family expenditure, job (paying interest) and buying domestic animal.

Table 2: Reasons to Get Loan

Reason	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Buying TV	2	1.42
Poultry	4	2.85
Family maintenance	8	5.71
Agriculture	2	1.42
Buying CNG	16	11.42
Business	74	52.85
Daughter marriage	6	4.28
House build	24	17.14
Family expenditure	2	1.42
Job (paying interest)	1	0.71
Buying domestic animal	2	1.42
Total	140	100

Source: Field survey, 2018

Family Information Before And After Receiving Microcredit

Family is the main and first stage for not only for empowerment of women but also women education, awareness, social status, community status, development and freedom. It generally depends on three stages of women life such as child and young stage at responsible of parents, marriage stage at responsible of husband and his family and old stage at responsible of husband and her children. Intellectual husband and better family relations will disappear every hindrance of women empowerment and development and these directly effect on her future generation because women are rearing and caring our children to fit for future. Following table 3 try to explore information about family level and their implementations in their daily life.

Table 3: Concerning family related information from before and after taking loan

Types of family related issues	After		Before		Not change	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Family status (dominating or mutual)	82	58.57	44	31.42	14	10.00
Freedom for pregnancy	78	55.71	48	34.28	14	10.00
Decide choosing	78	55.71	48	34.28	14	10.00
Sending children to school	96	68.57	38	27.14	6	4.28
Buying food for children/family	88	62.85	34	24.28	18	12.85
Son or daughter marriage	72	51.42	40	28.57	28	20.00
Recognition of unpaid laboring from husband or family members	72	51.42	50	35.71	18	12.85

Source: Field Survey, 2018

This inquiry reveals that, three states i.e., before, after taking loan and not change were considered to explore gathering family information before and after receiving loan. Concentrated of the borrowers assembled knowledge and generating awareness afore taking loan and smaller share were not changed in these aspects. Knowledge accumulation and developing awareness level were moderate at after taking loan while it was significant. Because present borrowers are recent client of microcredit and NGOs volunteers or field workers tried to collect information on borrowers at every time in the study area.

Social And Community Participation Of Borrowers Before And After Receiving Loan

Society is the second unite of the empowerment and development of women in our community. The disruptions in the traditional rural economic pattern brought about by changing socio-economic processes have adverse effect on women. Increasing lawlessness, pauperization, unemployment have increased the stress and tension in male and female relation in poor households and rise desertion, divorce and violence rate. Various types of social and community-based problems prevail in our society for instance illiteracy, social ignored, cultural apathy; Pardah etc. become make women victimized of social misinterpretation. Many families still think that girls are not eligible for acquiring knowledge. ***Social ignorance***; our society has given much laxity to them. So, they (girl) are not sent to school, colleges and universities because of many families' Islamic perspectives. However, maintaining pardah girls are allowed to go for education of job sector which they ignore. ***Cultural apathy***; culture is the part of male, is the belief of many arrogant people. Therefore, female is kept aloof from many cultural festivals. It is a grate blow to women as they have no scope of joining cultural elaboration to learn more about their culture. Following table 4 shows level of borrowers were gathered knowledge about social and community participation before and after receiving loan.

Table 4: Social and community participations of borrowers before and after receiving loan

Types of Social and community related issues	After		Before		Not change		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Participation women education programme (community based)	72	51.42	40	28.57	28	20.00	140
Participation of occasion with relatives	88	62.85	28	20.00	24	17.14	140
Participation of the occasion with neighborhoods	78	55.71	42	30.00	20	14.28	140
Participation cultural programme	68	48.57	44	31.42	24	17.14	140
Participation of community programme	74	52.85	30	21.42	36	25.71	140
Participation of social welfare programme	84	60.00	36	25.71	20	14.28	140

Source: Field Survey, 2018

This analysis divulges that social and community participation improved after receiving loan among the borrowers. On an average, twenty-five (25.00%) percent raise in the social and community participation of borrowers after taking loan in the study area. However, it was still noteworthy that, on an average 20.00% of the respondents still deprived of the social and community participation was detrimental for women empowerment in the study area.

Social Status of Borrowers After Receiving Loan

The most effective tool for assessing the benefits of a micro-credit programme is the measurement of its effect on the poor in terms of employment, income, consumption, assets, net worth, nutrition, contraceptive use, fertility, and children schooling. The immediate impact of having access to credit from a micro-credit programme is on employment and, consequently, income. The induced income and employment effects may have impact on other outcomes such as consumption, nutrition, contraceptive use, fertility, and education. However, identifying the credit impact is problematic because of: (a) fungibility of credit; (b) non-randomness in programme participation; and (c) non-randomness of programme placement. Since money is fungible, it is very difficult to identify the credit impact. However, unlike in formal credit institutions, the cost of credit in a group-based credit programme contains not only the interest rate but also the timing of repayment and the penalties associated with default. Group-based credit is packaged with responsibilities (meeting attendance, forced saving, shared default risk) and benefits (training, insurance, consciousness-raising). If there were no monitoring of the use of borrowed funds and no group responsibility and decision-making in the lending programme, individuals would want to borrow much more than they actually do in order to capture the premiums associated with the soft terms of the loan. Monitoring credit use makes all programme participants 'credit constrained', in that the notional demand for credit always falls short of supply. For these reasons all participating households are presumed to be in the same credit demand regime, which means that the amount of credit may directly enter into the production and consumption decisions (UNDP, 2001).

Table 5: Improve of Women Status after Taking Loan

	F	%	Various initiatives	F	%
Yes	120	85.71	Buying CNG	10	7.14
			Schooling children	4	2.85
			Business	36	25.71
			Buildup shop	4	2.85
			Buying domestic animal (milky cow)	2	1.42
			Agricultural land expansion	2	1.42
			Children send in abroad	4	2.85
			Increase income	30	21.42
			Money use in oppressive time	2	1.42
			Increase family status	6	4.28
			Promote family conditions	8	5.71
			House build	12	8.57
No	20			14.28	
Total	140			100.0	

Source: Questionnaire Survey, 2018

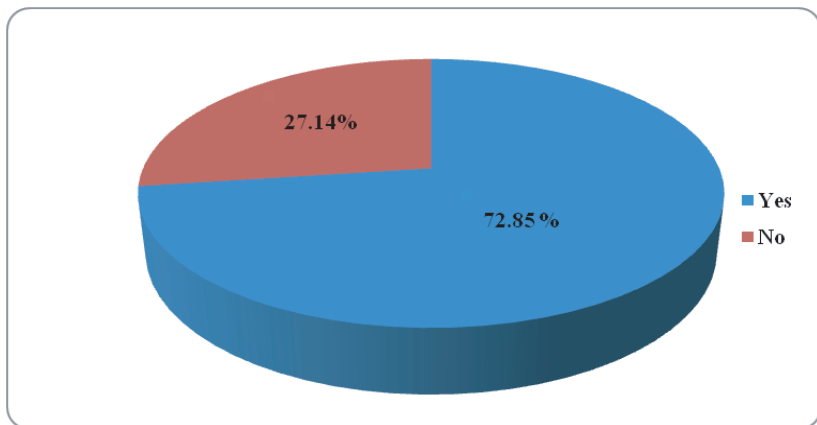
On the above table it was found that, larger share of borrowers (25.71%) opined that taking credit were used for business, 21.42% said that income was increased, 8.57% were used for house build and 7.14% were bought CNG. Minor portion opined that they were used taking credit for schooling children, build shop, buying domestic animal (milky cow), agricultural land expansion, children send in abroad, increase income, money use in oppressive time, increase family status, promote family conditions and house build. Only 14.28% borrowers understood that no noticeable revolution in their status due to microcredit in the study area. Nearly 85.71% borrowers opined their social status improved due to microcredit as these credits invested in different sectors such as buying CNG, schooling children, business, build shop, buying domestic animal (milky cow), agricultural land expansion, children send in abroad, increase income, money use in oppressive time, increase family status, promote family conditions and house build which flourished in result.

Economic Condition Of Borrowers After Receiving Loan

Current investigation emphasis on what are reduces of economic problems after taking loan of borrowers. Following figure shows

that, 73% borrowers opined that economic problem has been reduced due to taking loan from NGOs and 27% borrowers said that no economic problem were reduced due to taking loan. As larger share had improved in economic condition resultant of micro-credit, it indicated micro credit helped in promote the economic solvency of the women which is the indicator of intensified women development and empowerment in the study area

Figure 5.1: Economic problem has been reducing after taking loan of borrowers



Source: Questionnaire Survey, 2018

Impacts of Microcredit on Physical, Social and Psychological Violence against Women

NGOs organizations work for sleek of helping hand of government. Government and NGOs organization try to collaborative initiatives in our society about different types of things especially women empowerment, development and solve various types of physical, social and psychological violence. The following table 6 represents the impacts of microcredit on changing scenario of violence against women in the study area-

Table 6: Microcredit programme solve the physical, social and psychological violence against women

	F	%	Various initiatives	F	%
Yes	94	67.14	By increasing family awareness	4	2.85
			Social and psychological development	10	7.14
			Social development	28	20.00
			Taking proper steps	2	1.42
			Social and family status development	4	2.85
			Women motivate her husband to make conscious about her status	2	1.42
			House wives play role in family by taking credit	2	1.42
			Women are working outside in her house	2	1.42
			Women are aware about her right	6	4.28
			Trained up women by giving loan	4	2.85
			Building awareness about her right	2	1.42
			Increase women's voice in family	14	10.00
			Know about early marriage and dowry	4	2.85
			Building reciprocal relation between husband and wife	4	2.85
			Same time doing service with business	2	2.85
			No Comments		1.42
No				46	32.85
Total				140	

Source: Questionnaire Survey, 2018

Table 6 found that nearly 67.14% borrowers explained that microcredit programme tried to solve different type of problems. Especially, physical, social and psychological violence against women by their following initiatives such as by increasing family awareness, social and psychological development, social development, taking proper steps, social and family status development, women motivate her husband to make conscious about her status, housewives play role in family by taking credit, women are working outside in her house, women are aware about her right, trained up women by giving loan, building awareness about her right, increase women's voice in family, know about early marriage and dowry, building reciprocal relation between husband and wife, same time doing service with business. It was remarkable that, 20% borrowers assumed that

microcredit solve the physical, social and psychological violence against women by the help of social development, 10% borrowers assumed that microcredit increase women voice in her family and 7.14% assumed that microcredit develop social and psychological conditions of borrowers. It was noticed that, 32.85% borrowers assumed that microcredit did not solve or reduced physical, social and psychological violence against women in the study area.

Prospect of Microcredit on Women Empowerment

Grameen Bank, ASA, CCDR, BRDB, IDF, BRAC, PROSHIKA, Green Hill and YPSA were directly involved in women development and empowerment activities in this hilly region. In terms of development, hilly regions of Bangladesh fall behind because of its physiographic. In case of women empowerment, in Rangamati, although women especially tribal's very hard working but self-development and empower opportunity is lesser compare the whole country due to its geographic location, physiographic as well as economic backwardness. Nevertheless, owing to NGO efforts in developing awareness and growing knowledge on microcredit among the women inhabitants, situation has changed. Survey of this study identify that comparing to prior loan receiving personal, household social and community involvement and awareness moderately enriched among the women. Media (electronic media; television) (31.42%) and NGOs volunteers or field workers (20.00%) were the main routes for awareness building of borrowers. Earning sources changed significantly after getting loan as women engaged in business and varied service-oriented activities. Business, farming, house made Bain and service were the main income sources of loan borrowers earlier. Investment along with profit from business boomed after receiving the loan. Loan borrowers engaged more in service sectors later receiving loan. Number of borrowers with >5000-taka monthly earning rose considerably. It was also found that, using of gas cylinder was increased among the borrowers after taking loan. Borrower's statuses were improved due to taking microcredit and these credits applied in different sectors especially business purposes; build new house and buying CNG as a result reduce their economic problems. Microcredit programme tried to solve different problems particularly physical, social and psychological

violence against women by the different initiatives especially social development, increase women voice in her family and development of social and psychological conditions of borrowers in the study area. Child educational status improved after receiving loan. Before taking loan where children were mostly engaged as helping hand of house hold's activities, business sectors of his/her mother as lack of money were the main hindrances for children education. Microcredit changed the perception of life and brought hope for women this remote region. It also elevated women personal, social and community life by providing economic base.

Recommendations

Microcredit becomes successful in bringing light to the fact that the poorest of the poor are in a vulnerable situation to benefit from credit programmes. In vindictiveness of some confines, microcredit has been recognized as an effective tool for poverty alleviation and as attitude to women development. It is a matter of superiority for Bangladesh as it is the global centrum of excellence in microcredit and dwelling of many successful microfinance institutions. To empower the women of Bangladesh, society must recognize the productive and reproductive roles of women. The process of empowerment should be followed by conscious efforts of society which requires following steps;

Family, Society & Community Based

- v The obstacles that deprive women from the benefits of economic development should be eradicated. Measures should be taken for building women's capacity to be effective partners with their husbands in household's decisions making and resource allocation.
- v Protection of young girls and married women must be ensued. The parents and community leaders must have the commitment to improve the reproductive health and counseling services.
- v The attitude and practices of men regarding women should be changed.
- v Measure should be taken to wipe out barriers (legal and regulatory) for full participation of women in the labor force, to

enable rural women to gain title to land they farm, and give women accessibility to credit and other monetary assistance for income generating and consumption activities.

- v It is needed to go beyond gender-neutral investments in health and education to address disparities that directly and indirectly affected women.
- v The specified subjects in the curriculum of education system, which are made for women to keep them in 'their own places' should be reconsidered.
- v Political parties should be committed to solve these problems. Women organizations can lobby with political parties to include women issues in the respective manifesto. They may reorient the attitudes and outlook of women politicians.
- v Violence against women is a social crime and social action is probably the most effective shield against it. Social mobilization must therefore be attained to curb violence, for this vigorous publicity should be given through all types of media, pictures release, demonstrations etc. Besides, anti- violence committees should be formed in Ward and Mollahs.
- v To make the women aware of their rights and responsibilities, they should be provided with proper education. They should be made able to fight against superstition and oppression.
- v To provide more job facilities to women with their physical, social and psychological security and co-operate women in the field of work.
- v We have to create public awareness and consciousness. Government, NGOs and press can play a vital role in these respects.
- v The number of shelters for affected women and facilities for legal aid, counseling and vocational training is inadequate. So, need for shelter is urgent. Besides, it is essential to develop adequate facilities within the health system to identify cases of violence. Besides, affected women should be absorbed in the income generating projects of NGOs for providing skill training and rehabilitation.

NGOs Level

- v NGOs volunteer groups must be concerned different types of awareness programme of women & concept sharing with borrowers.
- v Donor NGOs should be arranged seminars and symposium for deal about how to utilize getting credit? What sectors more promoting for income generate? After year or closing paying interest that time they will finally evaluate the present situation the family, social and community status of borrowers (women).
- v Donor NGOs should arrange training programme about problems and prospects of women status in family, social and community level.
- v NGOs volunteer groups must be concerned about matter of health care especially, reproduction age group, pregnant mother and breast-feeding mother and children, food intake during pregnancy and breast feed time, rights in family and build reciprocal relationship between husband & wife, wife and others family members.

Credit Related

- v Sufficient amount of loan should be given to start up the selected enterprises at a lower interest rate.
- v A strong monitoring and follow-up support and services should be given in executing the enterprises especially in the first few months.
- v Microcredit should be given in kind not in cash. So that borrowers will be benefited by getting goods and services in fare prices.
- v The NGOs should make its rule and regulations more flexible and its operational system more dynamic; as more and more people can be attached with its micro-loan programme.
- v Payment of loan installment should be fortnightly, if possible monthly.
- v Government should come forward to eliminate the traditional

exploitative moneylenders to rescue the poor people.

- v Government and NGOs should incorporate continuous monitoring and assessment of the current microcredit operational system.

Conclusions

The 21st century is ushering in an era of new hopes and aspiration for the women folk. The women of Bangladesh can now look forward with pride and hope for having some outstanding and significant moments that have taken place in the last two decades for their all-out development. Microcredit programs in Bangladesh represent a breakthrough for rural financial markets. By collecting and assembling primary data, the study refers light on the microcredit impacts on women empowerment at Rangamati Municipality in the Rangamati district a remote hilly region of Bangladesh. Women availed the microcredit in the study area achieved personal, social and community empowerment. Microfinance offers opportunity to female keeping involved in economic and trade activities by self-business, which boosts women empowerment along with, articulating a optimistic change on leading to the higher living standard, contribution on total assets sharing, economic solvency of the family, child education, proper family diet and improvement. Microcredit positively interconnected with the promotion of social and economic empowerment of women at Rangamati Municipality. The role of microcredit programs in empowering women, this study becomes an exemplification in the study area as well as Bangladesh.

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