

**PERFORMANCE OF MICROCREDIT TOWARDS EMPOWERMENT OF
WOMEN – A CASE STUDY OF SAVING AND CREDIT COOPERATIVES
IN BARDIYA DISTRICT OF NEPAL**



A DISSERTATION

**SUBMITTED FOR THE
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR
THE MASTER'S DEGREE OF GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT**

By
Laxmi Kumar B.K.
ID No. 17172010

**BRAC INSTITUTE OF GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT
MA IN GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT
BRAC UNIVERSITY
SAVAR RESIDENTIAL CAMPUS
DHAKA, BANGLADESH
OCTOBER 2018**

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Supervised by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Millat', is positioned above the printed name of the supervisor.

***Dr. Millat-E-Mustafa
Senior Consultant
USAID MECC Project
D R Congo***

**BRAC INSTITUTE OF GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT
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BRAC UNIVERSITY**

Statement of candidate

I, *Laxmi Kumar B.K.*, hereby declare that the work presented herein is genuine work done originally by me and has not been published or submitted elsewhere for the requirement of a degree program. Any literature, data or works done by others and cited in this dissertation has been given due acknowledgement and listed in the reference section.



Laxmi Kumar B.K.

Date: October 2018

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Acknowledgements

I am deeply indebted for the valuable guidance, comments, encouragement and suggestion of my research supervisor, Dr. Mohammad Millat-E-Mustafa, from BRAC Dhaka University in Bangladesh, for his continued guidance and support during this research work.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Prof. Dr. Niaz Ahmed Khan, Senior Academic Advisor of BIGD, BRAC University Dhaka, Bangladesh for his warm support, suggestions and encouragements to complete the dissertation in time. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to all teachers and staffs of the MAGD Program, BRAC University Dhaka, Bangladesh for their kind help.

At last I would like to thank Mr. Md. Khorshed Alom, Departmental Coordinator Officer, BIGD BRAC University, all staff of BRAC Savar Residential Campus and all my friends who helped me.

Laxmi Kumar B.K.

October 2018

ABBREVIATIONS

US\$ = United States Dollar

NGO = Non Government Office

km² = Squared Kilometer

CBS = Central Bureau of Statistics

WB = World Bank

UN = United Nation

BWTP = Banking With the Poor Network

NRs = Nepalese Rupees

MFI = Microfinance Institution

CMF = Center for Microfinance

SHGs = Self-Help Groups

Mm = Millimeter

°C = Degree Celsius

WWF = World Wide Fund for Nature

NRB = Nepal Rastra Bank

Ltd = Limited

LPG = Liquefied Petroleum Gas

GoN = Government of Nepal

INGO = International Non Government Office

Km =Kilometer

Abstract

Microcredit has often been seen as an important means of empowering women. A study was conducted in the Mid-Western Development Region of Nepal to explore impact of micro-credits in women's empowerment. A total of 32 women borrowers of micro-credit was randomly selected from eight cooperatives. A pre-tested questionnaire was administered to collect the data. Qualitative information was collected through case studies.

Most of the survey respondents (94%) are over the age of 25. Nearly three-quarter of the respondents did not have formal education. About 44% of respondents have an average monthly income of NRs. 11000-20000 (94-170 US\$). Only 3% have average monthly income below NRs 10,000 (85 US\$) and 6% have income above NRs 50,000 (427 US\$).

All respondents maintain a savings account – 88.5% with cooperatives and 12.5% with the bank. Most of them (90%) have a regular savings pattern. All respondents received cooperative loans with 41% borrowed loan for more than three times and 19% borrowed loan only once. Approximately 31% of respondents also borrowed loan from the micro finance institutions. Nearly 94% of respondents repaid their instalments on time.

The study shows different levels of impact on the role of micro-credits in women's empowerment. In the case of women's decision-making power and change in the attitude of men towards domestic violence, there was no change in the status of women, even after joining cooperatives and borrowing micro-credits. However, more than two-third of respondents indicated that their respect had improved significantly in the family. With respect to participation in community activities, 60% of respondents felt that it had improved after borrowing micro-credits. Almost 53% also indicated that their communication skills had improved than before. About 94% of respondents reported having improved confidence in their work or business.

The data are collected by perception survey that only provides information about what people feel or think. A longitudinal study involving a control group and more respondents in the treatment group is recommended to validate the findings of this study.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Microcredit refers to very small loans for unsalaried borrowers with little or no security, provided by registered institutions (Yogendrarajah, 2012). Wikipedia defines the term as '*the extension of very small loans (microloans) to impoverished borrowers who typically lack collateral, steady employment, or a verifiable credit history*'. It aims to help improve the quality of life of people by lending them a small amount of money for a short period of time that does not require any type of collateral. Many recipients are illiterate, and therefore cannot complete the paperwork required to get conventional loans. The Grameen Bank report suggests that approximately 74 million people had microcredit totaling \$38 billion US\$ in 2009, and the repayment success rates ranged from 95 to 98% (Grameen Bank Monthly Report, retrieved on 7th July, 2018).

Microcredit has often been seen as an important means of empowering women. Women's empowerment is the process that allows women to redefine gender roles to acquire the ability to choose between known alternatives that otherwise been restricted from such an ability (Naila, 2005). Important India – a website explains 'women empowerment' as an environment where they can make decisions for themselves for personal benefits and for the society by increasing and improving social, economic, political and legal strength by making those confident enough to claim their rights and get their voices heard (Important India, 2015). This definition focuses on the voice of the women in decision making.

Women's loans have become an important principle of microcredit, with banks and NGOs exclusively addressing women (Beatriz, 2005). Although the Grameen bank initially tried to lend to men and women at equal rates, women currently constitute 95 percent of the bank's clients. Women continue to catch up with 75% of all microcredit recipients worldwide (Beatriz, 2005). Women's exclusive loans began in the years 1980 when the Grameen Bank found that women had higher reimbursement rates and tended to accept smaller loans than men (Milford, 2010).

About 70% of the world's poor are women. Women's employment plays a vital role in enhancing national income and managing a sustainable existence of societies, families and communities throughout the world. From the Primitive society, women have been marginalized. They are rarely independent by financial situation and decision-making and often face more vulnerable societal problems (Noreen, 2011).

Nepal is not an exception. Although the majority of women in Nepal participate in many economic activities, ranging from household chores (e.g., cleaning, cooking, childcare, water recovery, etc.) to crop, livestock, fishing and bio-diversity conservation, their contribution is rarely recognized. Like other developing countries, women in Nepal have limited access to education, health care, family planning, decision making process, politics, etc. As a result, the country is lagging behind in achieving gender equality and in alleviating poverty.

Many researchers suggest that micro credit has positive impacts on gender equality, women's empowerment and household's wellbeing. Kumar *et. al.* (2012) reported that micro credit enabled the poor women in Bangladesh to undertake diversified economic activities that generate stable income streams throughout the year and thus strengthened the survival strategy of poor women. With micro credit, poor households now own assets, and can use to meet contingencies without sacrificing their independence, security and peace of mind by getting into debt. Leach and Sitaram (2002) found that micro-credit in India had succeeded in socially empowering women where economic empowerment could not be possible because of the lack of knowledge and understanding among women about business.

The impact of microcredit is a subject of much controversy. Critics say that microcredit has not increased incomes, but has driven poor households into a debt trap. They add that the money from loans is often used for durable consumer goods or consumption instead of being used for productive investments, that it fails to empower women, and that it has not improved health or education (Tonelli and DalGLISH, 2012). Maclsaac (1997) states that in fact, it is difficult to separate the impact of microcredit from that of other interventions. A number of studies have shown that women may be empowered in one area of life, but not in others (Malhotra and Mather, 1997).

Although there are lots of literature available in women's empowerment through micro-credits in Bangladesh and elsewhere, studies in the Mid-Western Development Region in Nepal is scanty. There are 1,288 cooperatives registered in this region; 351,707 members are involved in these cooperatives with 2,762 employees working in these cooperatives. These cooperatives play an important role in the socio-economic empowerment of women in the region through the provision of micro-credits. A systematic study will provide useful information to assess the current status of micro-credits, particularly with regard to the empowerment of women in the region. The objectives of this study are to:

- Assess the current status of micro-credits towards socio-economic empowerment of women in the region;
- Identify challenges faced by women that impedes their socio-economic empowerments; and,
- Recommend strategies to improve the situation so that women's empowerment can be facilitated by micro-credit.

The dissertation is structured as follows:

Chapter 1: Provides an introduction to the problem of the research and research objectives.

Chapter 2: Presents Nepal country background, micro-credit status in Nepal and literature review on current status of women empowerment and micro-credit research in Nepal and elsewhere.

Chapter 3: Summarises the methods and materials of data collection and analysis, and limitations of the study.

Chapter 4: Presents the findings from the study.

Chapter 5: Presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

Bibliography

Annex

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter summarizes the findings of micro-credit and its impact on women empowerment from literature review. A brief description of the country and the study area, the history of micro-credit and its relationship to the empowerment of women, the history of micro-credit in Nepal, the status of micro-credit institutions in the study area and a short account of micro-credit research in Bangladesh and Indonesia are included in this chapter.

2.1. The country of study: Nepal

Nepal is a landlocked country in South Asia, located mainly in the Himalayas, but also includes parts of the Indo Gangetic Plain. Being roughly trapezoidal shape, the country is 800 km long and 200 km wide, with an area of 147,181 km². It is located between latitudes 26° and 31° N and longitudes 80° and 89° E. (Wikipedia, 2017)

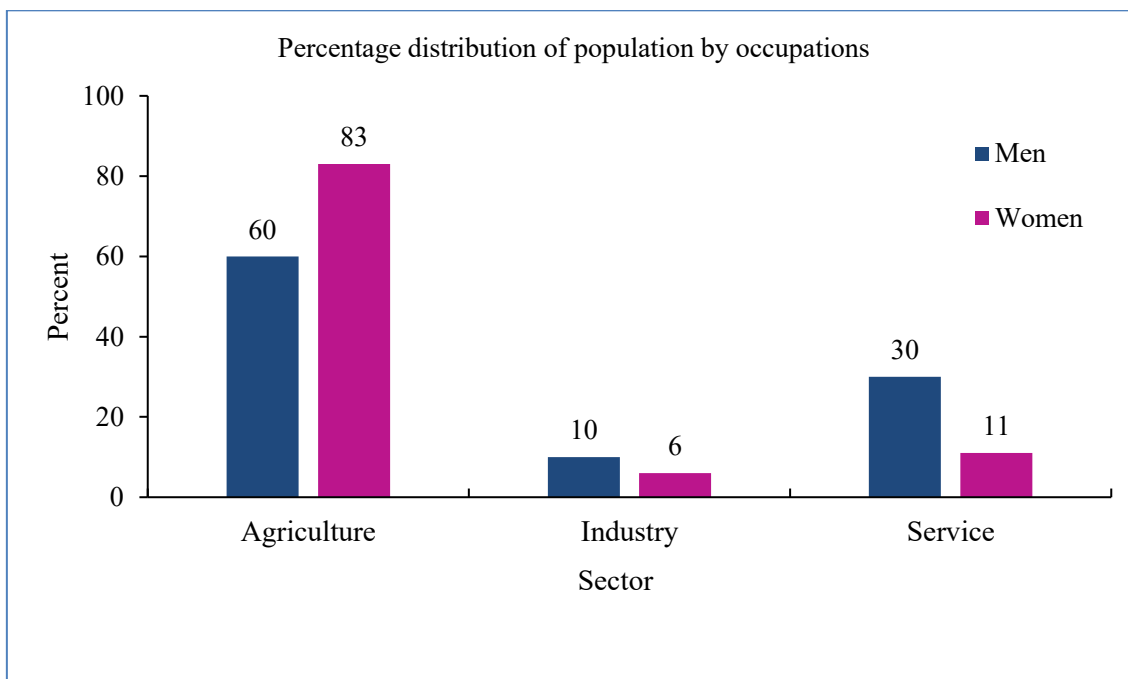


Nepal is commonly divided into three physiographic zones: Himal, Pahad and Terai. These ecological belts are headed east to west and intersected vertically by the main river systems in Nepal, from north to south. A map of Nepal is presented below showing different districts (Fig 2.1). Nepal has a total population of 2.64 million according to the census of 2011. The female population is 1.34 million (CBS, 2011).

Nepal has been divided into the 5 development regions. They are Eastern development region, Central development region, Western development region, Mid-western development region and Far-western Development Region geographically. This study is conducted only in the Mid-western development region.

Nepal is mainly an agrarian society. Almost 60 percent of men and 83 percent of women are engaged in agriculture sector (WB group, 2016). The next two sectors of employment in order of priority are the service and the industry, respectively (Fig. 2.1). While comparing by gender, women occupy more in the agriculture activities than men. Men dominate in industry and service sectors than women.

Fig. 2.1: Percentage distribution of population by occupations



2.2 The study area

The Mid-western development region of Nepal has a total population of 3.54 million according to the census of 2011 (CBS, 2011). The region has a total area of 42,378 km² and a population density of 84/km². Brahmin, Chhetri, Magar, Tharu, Awadhi are the main ethnicities.

There are 15 districts and three zones (e.g., Karnali, Bheri and Rapti) in this region (Fig. 2.2). The main rivers of this region are Karnali, Bheri, Rapti River and Babai. Mount Kanjiroba, Mount Sisne and Mount Patarasi are the main mountains of this region. Rara National Park, Banke National Park and Bardiya National Park, Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve, are located in this region. People celebrate number of festivals like Dashain, Tihar, Lhosar and Eid etc.

Fig. 2.2: Map of the study area with districts



People are involved in different professions such as agriculture, livestock, tourism, and service. The main occupation is agriculture. People grow different types of crops such as corn, pulse, wheat and paddy. Industries such as steel manufacturing, garment industry etc. are also present in this region.

2.3 Micro-credit and women empowerment

The empowerment of women and the movement towards gender equality is a modern phenomenon that continues to develop worldwide. After the Second World War, international treaties put a lot of emphasis on human rights; however, as time progressed, it was clear that particular attention should be paid to women's rights. Therefore, beginning in the 1970s, advocates lobbied for women's rights at greater lengths (Ollier, 1988). Issues such as the feminization of extreme poverty and disparities in politics, education and wealth have been used as a justification for the explicit support and recognition of women's empowerment. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995 initiated an effort to focus on women's empowerment. Drawing attention to the participation of women in all areas of society, the paper discusses gender gaps in the pursuit of the guarantee of women's rights (UN Women, 2017). In 2000, the Millennium Development Goals expanded the campaign for women's rights in areas such as education, health and poverty.

The history of micro-credit dates back to eighteen centuries (e.g., the Irish borrowing funds, Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen founded cooperative lending banks to support farmers in rural Germany etc.) (Deutscher Raiffeisenverband, 2011). During 1960s, Akhtar Hameed Khan's group oriented credit in East Pakistan was probably the first initiatives of microcredit in the Asian sub-continent.

Until 1970, the state was a unanimous institutional player to design and implement development programmes. Rural credit programs funded by donor agencies and the government institutions were the main provision of financial services in 1970s. In 1976, the well-known Grameen Bank model developed by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Muhammad Yunus is the basis for micro-credit development in Bangladesh. Successful mobilization of small loans and savings services by the Grameen Bank in 1980s took the turning point in the history of Microfinance (Robinson, 2001).

During 1980's, microcredit programs improved on original methodologies and proved that the poor, especially women, were paying their loans more reliably than those better-off people

with loans from commercial banks (UN Environment, 2017). From early 1990s, the failure of centrally planned development intervention has led to a shift in international development ideology with the understanding that the poverty could not respond by growth oriented 'trickle down' approach of development (Baruah, 2010). In 1997, the Microcredit Summit campaign for the first time to reach 100 million of the world's poorest families, especially the women of those families, with micro-credit for self-employment and other financial and business services by the year 2005. (Grameen Bank, 2017)

2.4 Micro-credit status in Nepal

Over the past two decades, Nepal's financial sector, along with the number and type of financial institutions, has grown rapidly as a result of reforms and liberalization. The recent commercialization of microfinance NGOs and their transformation into microfinance development banks has made the microfinance sector more diversified. Nevertheless, access to financial services remains limited mainly to a small segment of the population in easily accessible regions of the country (BWTP 2009).

About half of Nepal's households do not have access to formal financial services. Only 28% of Nepalese households have a bank account or have taken a bank loan. Another 25% have an account or a loan from other types of formal financial institutions. Almost 28% depend solely on informal financial sources, and 20% receive no financial services (BWTP 2009).

It is estimated that the total rural credit requirement in Nepal is 23.3 billion Nepalese rupees (\$1 = 102 NRS), while the total supply from the formal and semi-formal sectors is NRS 9.6 billion. AS a result of this deficit, the number of retail Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) has grown exponentially (BWTP, 2009).

Nepalese microfinance is being built progressively from a lesson learned from the mistaken policies in the past. The initial development of microfinance (popular term was rural finance) was highlighted by supply leading finance paradigm which emphasized on subsidized credit program to support peasant farmers in rural areas and massive donor-funding for alleviating

chronic poverty. The approach has been gradually shifted into market driven which focuses more on providing financial services including voluntary saving products to economically active poor and micro-entrepreneurs (CMF Nepal, 2008).

2.5 Micro-credit institutions in the Mid-western development region

There are 1,460 micro-finance institutions in the Mid-western region in Nepal as shown in Table 2.1 (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2017). For every 442,500 people, only one financial company is available. Similarly, for every 21600 people, a micro-finance development bank, and, for every 2500 people, savings and credit cooperatives are available.

Table 2.1: Number of micro-finance institutions in Mid-western of Nepal

Type of microfinance associations	Number of microfinance associations	Number of branches per 10,000 population
Financial company	8	0.0028
Microfinance development banks	164	0.46
Saving and credit cooperatives	1288	3.63
Total	1460	4.07

2.6 Research in micro-credit and women empowerment

Currently, in its wider dimension, micro-credit is known as microfinance and is considered a legitimate economic tool in the combat against poverty. Many researchers argue that micro-credit has a positive impact on gender equality, women's empowerment and household well-being (John Agyekum Addae, 2015). Poor rural women have little or no property to offer as collateral, which is necessary in the formal banking system. Micro-credit has responded to difficulties by offering loans without collateral.

Many studies on micro-credit have been conducted in developing countries. The largest volume of literatures is available from Bangladesh, perhaps, it is the country where the

successful microcredit model was introduced by the Grameen Bank in the late 1970s (Chowdhury 2009; Hulme and Mosley 1996; Yunus 1999).

In Bangladesh, over the past two decades, micro-credit approach has been increasingly incorporated in the development discourse (Pitt *et al*, 2006). Rahman *et al*. (2009) conducted a study on the impact of microcredit programs on higher income borrowers in Bangladesh. The main objective of the study was to estimate the impact of microcredit on income and assets. The results showed that microcredit programs were effective in generating higher incomes and assets for borrowers in general. However, the impact was not seen to be consistent between the income levels of borrowers. Higher income borrowers appear to be better compared to average and lower income borrowers. It was also observed that other factors such as the age and education of the head of household and his partner in the family were important and had a better impact on the household. Another study was conducted by Zaman (2001) on the assessment of the impact of micro-credit on poverty and vulnerability in Bangladesh. He observed that moderate poor benefitted more from micro-credit than those who are extremely poor in terms of poverty reduction.

Hashemi, Schuler and Riley (1996) explored the impact of micro credit on a number of indicators of empowerment in the context of rural Bangladesh. They found that women's access to credit was an important determinant of the scale of economic contributions reported by women. Micro credit was linked to an increase in the asset holdings in their own names; of an increase in their exercise of purchasing power. They also found that micro-credit was linked to the political and legal awareness of women. The borrowers have reported significantly higher levels of mobility and political participation. Some members reported having greater involvement in making major decisions. Empowerment has also allowed them to increase their contribution to family income.

Johnston and Morduch (2000) conducted a study to measure the impact of micro-credit on household income in Indonesia. They took household-level data from 1438 households in six provinces in Indonesia, an important site for microfinance. They observed that loans for small business were important, but low-income households in the survey used loan for household

needs. The results showed the important non-commercial activities in which they spent the loan include paying school fees, medical treatment, home repair or extension, daily consumption needs, social and holiday expenses etc.

Suguna (2006) stated that economic empowerment is the initial aspect of women's development. Economic empowerment means greater access to financial resources inside and outside the household. It is also linked to reducing vulnerability of poor women in crisis situation such as famine, food crisis, riots, death and accidents in the family. Economic empowerment gives women the power to keep their incomes and use them at their own discretion. The researcher also emphasized the establishment of self-help groups (SHGs) for women's empowerment.

2.7 Conclusions

Most of the population in Nepal remains out of reach of financial institutions. Access to financial services is mainly limited to a small segment of the population in easily accessible areas of the country. About half of Nepal's households do not have access to formal financial services. The ratio of the total number of institutions of microfinance by 10000 populations is 4.07, which is very low. The literatures on micro-credit research show that the main focus of micro-credit programs in developing countries is to empower women as they are the most vulnerable. Micro-credit empowered them both socio-economically and politically. However, the impact on poverty reduction varies significantly - moderate poor have benefited more from micro-credit than those who are extremely poor.

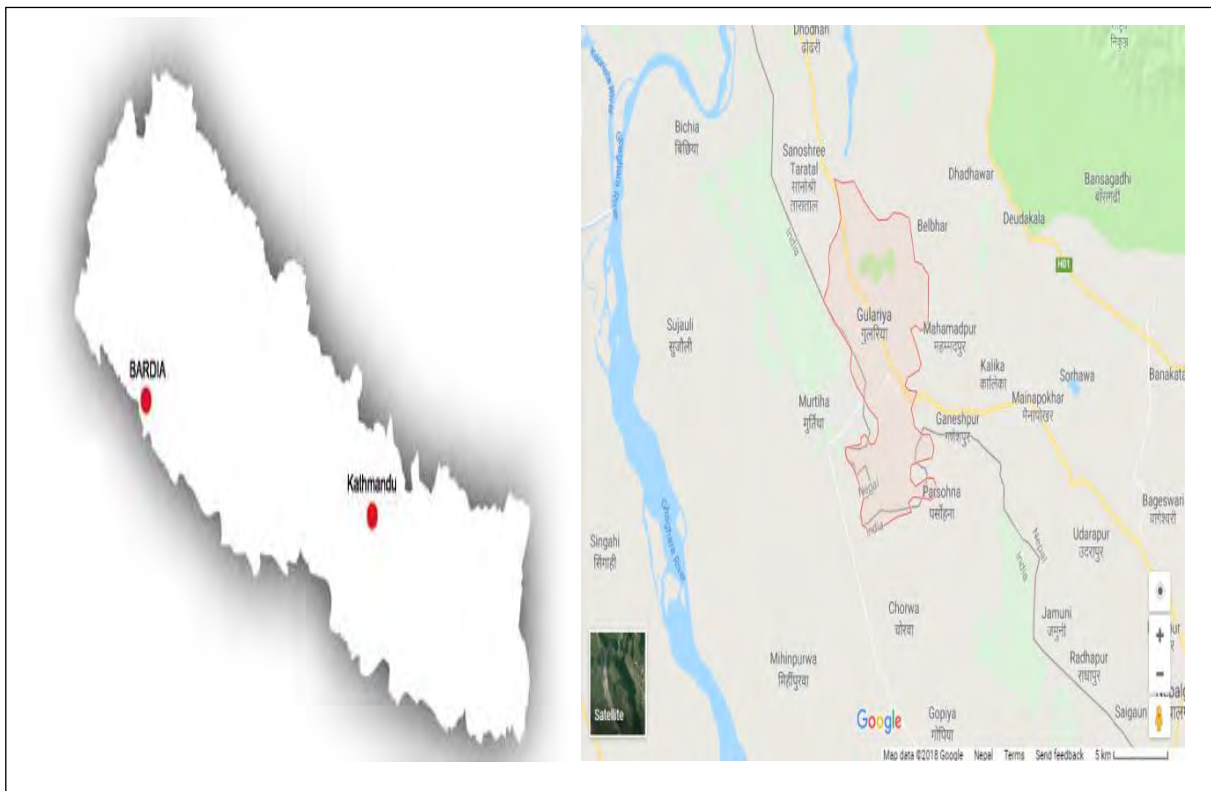
Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter outlines the selection of the study area, data collection methods, tools, and limitations of data collection and analysis.

3.1 Selection of the study area:

The main objective of this study is to assess the current status of micro-credits towards the socio-economic empowerment of women in the Mid-western development region in Nepal. Bardiya (see Fig. 3.1) is among the districts in the Mid-western development region with a large number of registered cooperative associations. So Bardiya district is selected purposively for this study. There are 401 registered cooperative associations of which 80 are the saving and credit cooperative associations. There are 32 village development committees and municipalities in Bardiya district and eight of them are randomly selected for the study.

Fig 3.1: The study area



3.2: Description of the study area

Bardiya district lies in Bheri zone of the Mid-Western Development Region of Nepal. It has occupied 2025 km^2 area and lies in the west of Banke district, south of Surkhet district, east of Kailali district of Nepal (District statistical Office, 2017). It is located at Latitude $28^{\circ} 17''$ to $28^{\circ} 39''$ North and Longitude $81^{\circ} 3''$ to $83^{\circ} 41''$ east. It has a maximum altitude of 1279 meters at Chepang Gaun and minimum altitude of 138 meters. Its climate consists of mainly lower tropical temperature and maximum temperature recorded here is $40^{\circ}C$ and minimum temperature recorded is $4^{\circ}C$. Its average annual rainfall is 1900 mm. (Wikipedia, 2017).

Most people living in this district are farmers. The districts headquarter, Gulariya lies on the Babai River. The Karnali, one of Nepal's largest rivers is divided into multiple branches when it reaches the Terai. The westernmost branch forms the boundary between Bardiya and Kailali districts. An eastern branch is called the Geruwa. The endangered Gangetic dolphin was often seen in its waters, but populations have been declining. (WWF, 2006)

Many microfinance institutions are working in this district. Among them the well-recognized are; Nirdhan Utthan Bank Ltd., Chhimek Microfinance Development Banks Ltd., Shawalamban Laghu Bitta Bikas Banks Ltd, Sana Kisan Bikas Bank Ltd., Sworojagar Laghu Bitta Bikas Bank Ltd, Kisan Microfinance Bittiya Sanstha Ltd., Nepal Grameen Bikas Bank Ltd. etc. (NRB, 2016). However, for this study, I am considering only the saving and credit cooperatives which are working as microcredit institutions. According to a report of the Division Cooperative Office (2017), 80 saving and credit cooperatives are registered in the Division Cooperative Office Bardiya.

3.3 Selection of sample population

Altogether, 32 informants are selected for this study. All of them are women. Four informants are selected from each cooperative. Choosing of informants from a single cooperative was done by simple random sampling. In this case each member of a cooperative was chosen entirely by chance and each member of the population had an equal chance, or probability of being selected.

3.4 Data collection

The data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Secondary data were collected from published reports, journals, informant's personal records and Google search. These data are mostly used for the literature review.

For primary data collection, questionnaire survey, case study, focus group discussion (Fig. 3.2) and key informants' interview (Fig. 3.3) were conducted. The questionnaire was translated into Nepali language.

Fig 3.2: FGDs with the members of Sunshine Saving and Credit Cooperatives, Gulariya, Bardiya



The most important aspect of any empirical research is the questionnaire design that draws out informative data to answer the underlying research question: what is the impact of microcredit on women empowerment? The questionnaire was translated into Nepali language.

The questionnaire was pre-tested with three informants. Substantive revisions were then made in the design and flow of questions. The questionnaire consists of two parts - a demographic profile sheet and the survey questionnaire (Annex 1).

Fig. 3.3 Key Informant's Interview with the chairman of saving and credit cooperative federation, Gulariya, Bardiya



3.5 Data Quality Control

Each questionnaire was checked closely for completeness, consistency and grammatical error or bilingual meaning. Problems identified during the fieldwork were resolved. Case study results and interview were recorded and noted without twisting and changing the original view of the respondents.

3.6 Methods for Data Analysis

In the Information Age, data is no longer scarce - it's overpowering. The key is to sift through the overwhelming volume of data available to organizations and businesses and correctly interpret its implications. But to sort through all this information, you need the right statistical

data analysis tools. Data analysis can be done by qualitative and quantitative method. There are differences between qualitative data analysis and quantitative data analysis. In qualitative researches using interviews, focus groups, experiments etc. data analysis is going to involve identifying common patterns within the responses and critically analyzing them in order to achieve research aims and objectives. Data analysis for quantitative studies, on the other hand, involves critical analysis and interpretation of figures and numbers, and attempts to find rationale behind the emergence of main findings. Comparisons of primary research findings to the findings of the literature review are critically important for both types of studies qualitative and quantitative.

Most of the quantitative results in this report are presented as percentages, all with one decimal points. Means of the various data has also been used for this study. For values provided in questionnaire, percentages are computed using the weighted number of cases that provided a given response as the numerator, and the total weighted number of cases as the denominator. Single response variables add up to a maximum of 100 percent, while multiple response variables may total more than 100 percent. For variables collected in a continuous scale format (e.g., number of household members), means are computed using the weighted sum of values as the numerator and the total weighted number of cases as the denominator.

3.7 Limitations of the study

During this research, some constrains were encountered and these include the following:

- Lack of financial resources and time for carrying out the research work, which only allowed the researcher to collect limited information.
- Subjectivity of some respondents was another problem encountered during the study; some respondents answered the questions without taking into consideration their real situation. It could not be triangulated due to time constraint.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter presents the results of the study, carried out from 5 to 25 September in the study areas. The data are collected from two sources – the primary data are collected in the field by questionnaire survey, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informants Interviews (KII). Secondary data are collected from literature search from published and online sources.

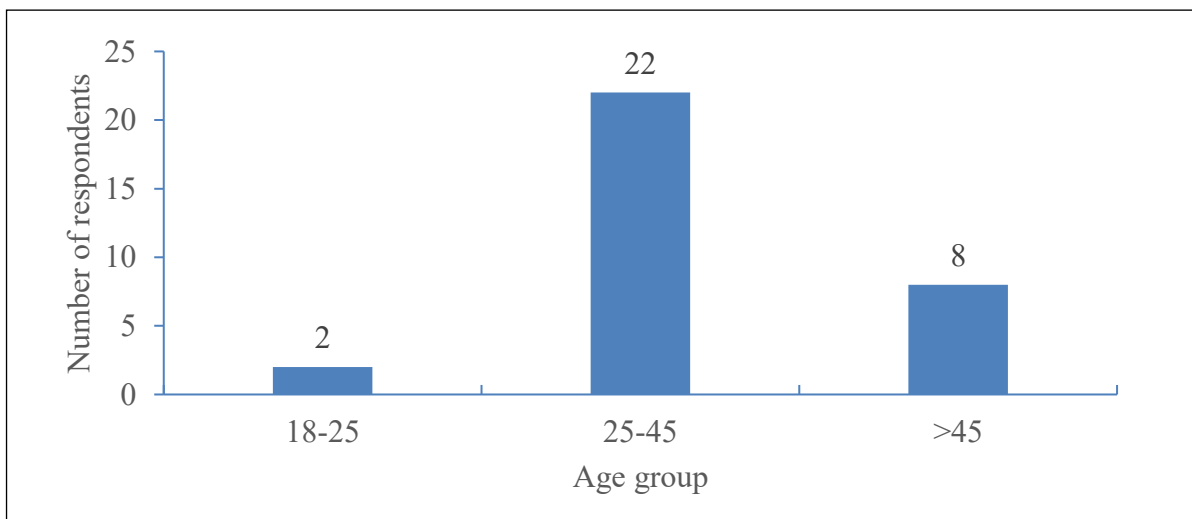
4.1 Analysis of the respondents

There are a total of 32 women respondents randomly selected from eight cooperatives – four from each. The aim of this study is to observe the impact of microcredit on women's empowerment. That is why all the respondents are women.

4.1.1 Age group of the respondents

Of the 32 respondents, 22 (69%) are of the age range 25-45 (Fig 4.1). Eight (25%) of the total respondents were in the age group greater than 45. Only 2 (6%) of the respondents are in the age range of 18 to 25. This shows that all the women associated with microcredit in the cooperatives are working age population and that most of them are over 25 years old.

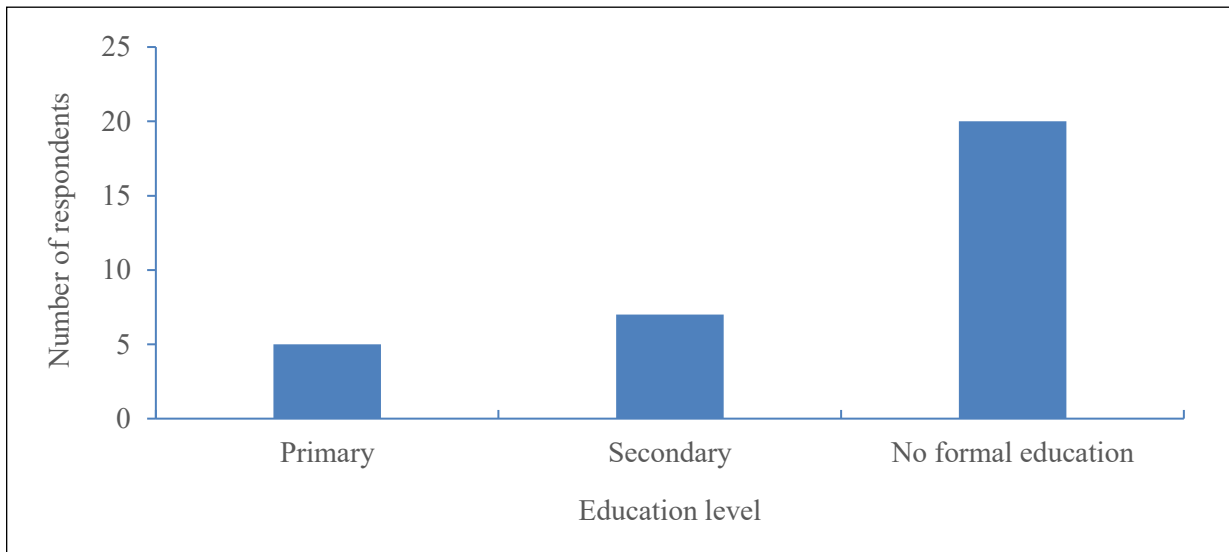
Fig 4.1: Distribution of respondents by age groups in the study area



4.1.2 Education level of the respondents

Of the total 32 respondents, the majority (20) did not have formal education. They have never been to formal education (Fig 4.2). However, they have attended informal education such as adult education or learning from family members. Seven respondents completed their secondary level (Class 10 equivalent) and five completed primary level education (Class 5 equivalent). None of them attended a tertiary level education.

Fig 4.2: Education level of the respondents



4.1.3 Socio-economic conditions

Thirty-one (96.8%) respondents are married and one (3%) is divorced. All respondents have experience in family life.

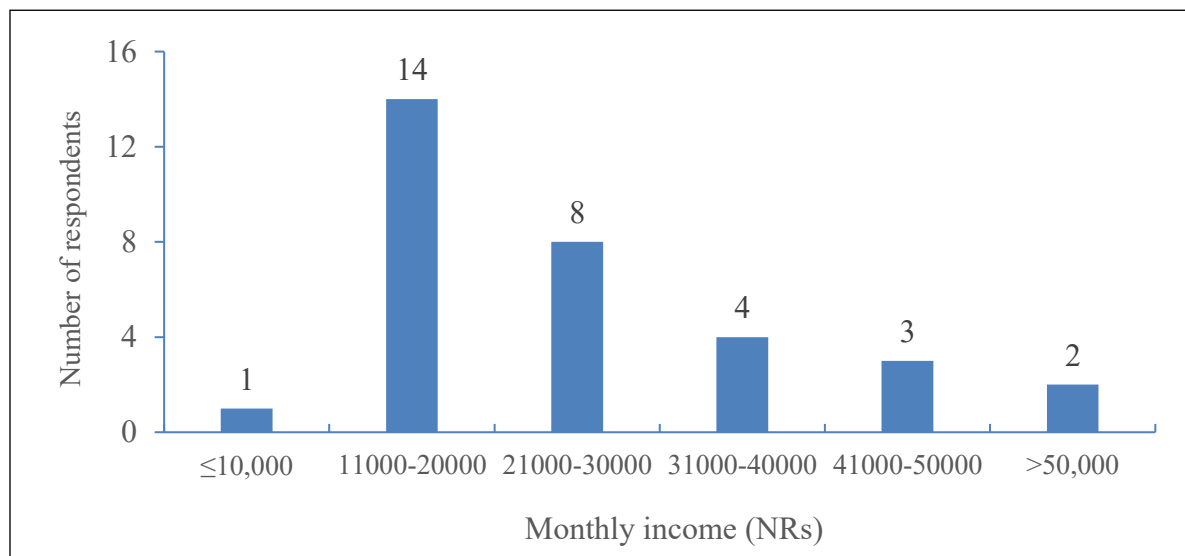
Prior to joining cooperatives, 31 (96.8%) respondents were unemployed and only one respondent (3%) was self-employed. This reflects the status of the Nepali society where significant portion of the women are unemployed. The ratio is higher among uneducated and poor women (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2017).

Fifty percent respondents have two children. Sixteen percent have only one child. Almost 19% of respondents have three children and sixteen percent have more than three children. This is the trend of the Nepalese society that has already undergone demographic transition.

Twenty-four (87.5%) respondents live in a nuclear family. Only four (12.5%) of them live in the joint family. Thirty-one respondents (96.8%) have their own house and 29 of them live in Kuccha house. Twenty-two respondents (68.7%) use LPG gas for cooking and the remainder 10 (31.3%) use firewood. Only two (6.2%) respondents have access to sanitation facility and one has access to water supply within the house. Twenty-three (71.8%) respondents have access to have safe drinking water in the locality. Thirty-one (96.8%) respondents have access to medical facilities. Thus, more than two-third of respondents have access to safe drinking water and medical facilities in their communities. Only 15 (48%) respondents' family members are agricultural labourers. Agricultural labourers generally do not have any farm land of their own. They sell their labor to other lands as a daily worker.

The average monthly income of the respondents is shown in Fig. 4.3. Almost 44% of respondents have an average monthly income of NRs. 11000-20000. This is followed by 25% with a income between NRs. 21000-30000, 12.5% between NRs. 31000-40000, and 9.6% between NRs. 41000-50000 respectively. Only 3% have average monthly income below NRs 10,000 and 6% have income above NRs 50,000.

Fig 4.3: Average monthly income of the respondents



Nearly 87.5% of respondents have a savings account with cooperatives and all of them maintain a cooperative passbook to save money (Case study 1). Only 12.5% respondents save their money in the bank despite the fact that 65.6% of respondents/ their household members have bank accounts. Of the total respondents, 90.6% reported that their saving pattern was regular, while the other saved money occasionally.

Case study 1: Ganga with her Cooperative passbook



B.K. Ganga was a housewife. She was only engaged in household chores such as preparing and serving food, getting her children ready for school, washing clothes for the whole family, etc. Her friend Shila was a member of a cooperative. Ganga's husband needed some money for which they had no access to the bank. Banks do not provide small loans. Her friend Shila was a member of a Women's cooperative association. Shila suggested her to become a member of the Cooperative. Ganga talked to her husband and he has given his permission since he needed money. Ganga has become a member of the cooperative and is still an active member of MACHHAPUCHHRE Savings and Credit Cooperative, which is located in the municipality of Gulariya in the district of Bardiya. She has regularly saved money on a weekly basis. She borrows a loan and pays back at the exact time. Her husband has nowadays has a bank account while she has not, but she has cooperative passbook and Cheque book...

4.1.5 Loan borrowed from the cooperatives

All respondents reported receiving a cooperative loan. Of them, 40.6% borrowed loan from the cooperatives more than three times and 19% borrowed loan only once. Almost 72% borrowed less than NRs 200,000 which is considered the microloan. Almost all the respondents (31, 96.8%) borrowed loans for household utility, building houses, to start petty trade, spending for the education of children, to travel to foreign country as laborer and they spent the money for the same purpose of borrowing. Only one respondent could not use the borrowed money for the same purpose. About 31.2% of respondents also borrowed loan from the micro finance institutions.

Nearly 94% of respondents repaid their instalments on time. It shows a very good reimbursement rate. This may be due to the fact that the cooperative staff follows their clients regularly. The regularity of saving in the cooperatives is also due to the fact that savings representatives regularly visit door to door to members of the cooperatives.

4.1.6 Empowerment status of the micro-credit borrowers

Many researchers argue that micro-credit has a positive impact on gender equality, women's empowerment and household well-being (John Agyekum Addae, 2015). Poor rural women have little or no property to offer as collateral, which is necessary in the formal banking system. Micro-credit has responded to difficulties by offering loans without collateral. This study explored the extent to which micro-credit could contribute to women's empowerment.

4.1.6.1 Women's role in decision making

Decision-making is one of the most important indicators of empowerment. If women are not able to participate in their own household decision-making process, then their participation in other socio-cultural and political affairs cannot be imagined.

All respondents reported having made independent decisions to purchase daily basic household items (e.g., groceries). For the purchase of medium-cost household goods (e.g., television, refrigerator, mobile, furniture, etc.), almost 78.1% of respondents reported that they took joint decisions. When buying expensive items such as land and home, only 9% of respondents say they can make such decisions.

As far as education is concerned, only 25% of respondents can make an independent decision about the school to send their children. Almost 43.7% of respondents are unable to make any decisions about their own health and medical expenses.

With regard to birth control, 81.2% of respondents may decide independently of the birth control measure to be used. More than 90% of respondents felt that the decision regarding the marriage of their offspring was made by both parents.

Most respondents (> 90%) can make their mobility decisions for the purchase of daily household items. They can freely go to the nearby markets whenever necessary. This may be due to the fact that their male counterparts do not stay at home during the day.

Attempts were made to explore the change in the role of women in the decision-making process before and after borrowing micro-credits. The study shows no difference before and after the borrowing of micro-credits. There could be minor improvements that could not be recognized by the respondents. There could be so many factors that could be responsible for the role of men and women in making this kind of decision.

4.1.6.2 Changes in the family and social relationships after borrowing micro-credits

Respect and recognition are always seen as important parameters of empowerment. Almost two-thirds (68.7%) of respondents indicated that their husbands' respect had improved significantly after joining cooperatives and borrowed micro-credits, while the remainder (31.2%) felt that they remained the same. Almost 81% believed that their respect from parents and the in-laws had improved and 90.6% said they had improved respect from their children

(case study 2). In patriarch society such as Nepal, respect for the father as a head of the family is considered normal while respect for women is not considered important as respect for men. The results show that after borrowing micro-credits, the male began to give increasing respect to women.

Case study 2: Rama built a house from borrowing micro-credit



Rama B.K. married six years ago at the age of 23. Her husband was a member of the army. Her husband managed to buy a piece of land for the construction of the house, but due to rising prices and low pay, he could not build the house. Rama borrowed Microcredit from the cooperative. She also persuaded her family members to borrow microcredit with an agreement that her husband would pay them back. The couple then built a three-room house. Her husband repaid the loan. Today her husband asks her and involves her in many household decisions. He asks her while making decisions that he did not usually ask for otherwise. Neighbours and relatives started to talk positive about the couple. Their common effort to build a house was praised by all. The social status of the couple has improved to a greater extent. In addition, the couple jointly decides on the education of the children, their marriage, on the use of the measure of birth control, the purchase of movable goods.

Regarding participations in community activities, 60% of respondents replied that participation in community activities had improved after borrowing micro-credits, while the remainder found no difference. It's a common phenomenon that being a social organization, the respondents surely participated in community activity through the cooperatives and the microcredit institutions. It should be noted that none of the respondents reported any negative impact on family and social relationships after joining the cooperative's microcredit schemes. This shows an exclusively positive opinion of the people towards microcredit and cooperative.

4.1.6.3 Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a most common issue of the under developed society like Nepal. Since it is a sensitive issue and the respondents may not be interested to report any violence against their husband or family members. Thus, a female enumerator was involved to collect the data. Twenty-five out of 32 respondents shared their experiences on this aspect. About 78% respondents reported verbal abuse as a usual type of domestic violence. About 38% also reported experiencing beating and physical violence by the male member of their family. Three percent also reported experiencing psychological and emotional abuse like mental torture. All respondents felt that the borrowing of micro-credit did not change men's attitude towards domestic violence (case study 3).

Case study 3: Monika (Pseudonym) was physically abused by her husband

Monika was married at the age of 19. After two years of happy marriage, her husband began abusing her verbally and even physically sometimes. So, she got divorced after four years of marriage. Monika then joined a cooperative and borrowed micro-credit. She bought two sewing machines with the money and opened a tailor shop. When her business started to make a profit after two years, she got married for the second times. Initially there was no problem in their relationships, but now days, the same story repeats itself. She is worried about the relationship and she wants to protect it any cost.

4.1.6.4 Enhanced skills through using micro-credits

Many respondents reported learning different types of skills after joining cooperatives and using micro-credits. Almost 53% of respondents reported that their communication skills had improved than before. They are now confident to communicate with outsiders, bank officials, members of the cooperative, etc. About 20% of respondents reported that their ability to read

bank records and confidence in operating bank account has improved than before. Almost 78% of respondents recognized the importance of keeping their passbook/bank documents. About 94% of respondents reported having improved their confidence in their work or business. This is due to the sharing of experiences between women, because they are naturally closer to other women and can make emotional connections with other women. Women's gathering in the Co-operative organization gives women the opportunity to share their experiences and talk about their own daily activities (case study 4)

Case study 4: Jaukala can sign her documents



Jaukala Roy is a 50-year-old lady, and a member of Bhoomi savings and Credit Cooperative Ltd. Ten years ago, she was illiterate without reading and writing skills. She always felt shy and nervous about communicating in front of strangers. After joining the Cooperative, she had to sign documents and had to take part in the meeting. She began to interact and learn the reading and writing from her cooperative counterparts and family members. Initially, people felt weird when she was thinking about learning. Some people also made fun of her, but she found a lot of helping hands. Her quest to sign documents and communicate with outsiders has led to the improvement of her skills. Today she has the awareness to keep her records safe. She does not have high-level banking skills, but she can make a simple type of transactions. She is aware of the regular savings in the Cooperative. She can ask about her savings and the instalment of her loan. She is also able to make a simple type of calculations. She thought that this type of improvement would be impossible if she had not joined Cooperative.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

This report documents the results of a research conducted in the Mid-Western Development Region in Nepal. There are 1288 cooperatives registered in this region; 351707 members are involved in these cooperatives with 2762 employees working in these cooperatives. These cooperatives play an important role in the socio-economic empowerment of women in the region through the provision of micro-credits. This study assessed the role of micro-credits towards women empowerment in the region. A total of 32 women were selected for the study from eight cooperatives.

5.1 Conclusions

The following conclusions are made from the study:

- All the women associated with microcredit in the cooperatives are working age population and that most of them are over 25 years old. The majority (20 out of 32) respondents did not have formal education. Almost all of them are married. Almost 44% of respondents have an average monthly income of NRs. 11000-20000. Only 3% have average monthly income below NRs 10,000 and 6% have income above NRs 50,000.
- Almost 88% of respondents believed that participation in microcredit increased their income by creating additional sources of income and employment opportunities. All of these respondents invested micro-credit loans in small businesses.
- Nearly 81% of the respondents reported that participation in micro-credit has improved their access to family decision making process. Almost 84% reported that participation in micro-credit increased their confidence to face problems by exposure to challenges.
- Approximately 94% of respondents felt that participation in micro-credit created a better awareness resulting from training and experience sharing. All respondents reported that participation in micro-credit improved the level of education of children and access to health by improving affordability.

- Income and capacity to spend are very important to live a decent life in the society. It is also fact that social status is now determined by someone's income. About 53% respondents mentioned that micro-credit improved their social status by increasing their income.
- In cooperatives, people usually do transactions. Half of the respondents reported a better understanding of the banking process. Almost 81% of respondents agreed that participation in micro-credit improved employability skills by providing training. About 84% of the respondents believed that micro-credit also improved participation in community activities through group work.

5.2 Recommendations

- Although micro-credit has increased women's empowerment in decision-making, mobility, enhanced skills and income etc., it could not have an impact on reducing domestic violence. Cooperatives should conduct an awareness campaign against domestic violence.
- To increase the entrepreneurship and business skill of the participants, vocational and skill enhancement training should be emphasized, since credit without skills may not be sustainable in the future. There should have proper co-ordination with government and non-governmental training institutions at national, regional and local level.
- The data are collected mainly by perception survey that only provides information on what people feel or think. In addition, respondents may not have a full understanding of the topic. This means that the information collected through the perception survey may have limited use in assessing actual project performance progress against strategic outcomes. A longitudinal study with a control group and including more respondents is recommended to validate the findings of this research.

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Annex 1: Survey questionnaire

1. Full Name of respondent.....
2. Name of the cooperative involved.....
2. Gender: (Tick the appropriate)
(1) Male (2) Female
3. Which of the following ranges includes your ages? (Tick the appropriate)
(1) Below 18 (2) 18 to 25 (3) 25to 45 (4) Above 45
4. Highest level of education you have completed (Tick the appropriate)
(1) Primary school (2) Secondary (3) High education (4) Others
5. Marital status (Tick the appropriate)
(1)Single (2) Married, (3) Widow (4) Divorcee
6. What is your employment status? (Tick the appropriate)
(1)Self-employed (2) Employed (3) Unemployed (4) Student (5) Others
- A. Family Details:
 7. Type of family
Nuclear () Joint ()
 8. No of Family Members: No of Earners:.....
 9. Do you have Children? Yes () No () No. of Children:.....
 10. How many Children (above the age of 3yrs) go to School/ College?
1 () 2 () 3 () More than 3 (Specify).....
 11. Please mention the education expenses of your household for the current year for the school going children (Including school fees and other educational expenses)?
() 0 () 1- 2500 () 2501-5000 () 5001 – 7500
() 7501 – 10000 () >10000
 12. Highest Education Level of the Children in your household (Above 3yrs of age)
Illiterate () Illiterate but can sign () Primary () Secondary ()
Diploma/Technical () Graduation () Post Graduation ()
 13. Any Dropouts: Yes () No()
 14. Occupation Details:
 - 14.1 Self (Member) No employment () Farmer () Farm Labourer ()

Industrial Labour () Salaried Employee () Self Employed ()
others (specify).....

14.2. Spouse No employment () Farmer () Farm Labourer ()

Industrial Labour () Salaried Employee () Self Employed ()
others (specify).....

14.3 Other Family Member(s) No employment () Farmer () Farm Labourer ()

Industrial Labour () Salaried Employee () Self Employed ()
others (specify).....

15. Structural Condition of House: Kuccha House() Pucca House()

16. Ownership Status of House: Owned () Rented () Given by Govt ()

17. Which Cooking Fuel do you Use:

18. Access to facilities/ Amenities:

Sanitation facility within the house () Sanitation facility within the area () Water
Supply within the house () Safe drinking water within the house/area () Access
to Medical Facilities ()

B. Economic Empowerment Variables: LOAN DETAILS

19. Have you received loan as cooperative?

Yes () No () Amount of loan received.....

20. How many times have you received loan? _____

21. For what purpose have you received loan? _____

22. For what purpose have you utilised loan? _____

23. Have you been able to repay loan on time?

Yes () No () Sometimes

24. Have you borrowed loan from other sources?

Yes () No ()

25. How many times have you borrowed loan from other sources? _____

26. Sources of loan from other than cooperative:

Friends/ Relatives () Money lender () NGO/ MFI/ NBFC () Other banks ()
) Revolving Fund () Govt. Schemes () Others (Specify).....

C. INCOME

27. Major Sources of Household Income:

Agriculture () Agriculture and allied activities () Industrial/ Agriculture labour
 () Employment () Business () Pension () Rent Others

Specify _____

28. Average Monthly Income: Rs. _____

Self: ≤10,000 () 11000-20000 () 1000-30000 () 31000-40000 ()
) 41000-50000 () >50,000

D. SAVINGS

29. Does your household have a bank account?

Yes () No () No of A/cs _____

30. Where do you save your money?

Bank () Post Office () Chit Fund () Cooperative () Others
 (specify).....

31. Saving Pattern

No Savings () Regularly () Occasionally () Rarely()

32. Monthly Savings of the household: Rs. _____

33. Which of the following instruments do you use?

Passbook () ATM Card () Cheque book ()

D. CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE PATTERN

34. How much do you spend on the following items? (Monthly)

Items	Amount
Food	
Clothing	
Education	
Health Care	
Festival/ Recreation	
Cable/ Newspaper/Mobile	
Transportation	

E. Contribution to Decision Making and Mobility)

35. Who takes the decision for the following activities?

Decision	Before taking credit			After taking credit		
	Self	Spouse	Jointly	Self	Spouse	Jointly

Purchase of Basic Household needs (Grocery)						
Purchase of household assets(TV, Fridge, Mobile, Furniture)						
Purchase of Land/House						
Children schooling expenses						
Which school to send to children						
Health/ Medical Expenses Family						
Health/ Medical Expenses for self						
Use of Birth Control Methods						
Use of Loan Amount						
Girl Marriage Decision						
Children Marriage Decision						
Can't go outside						
Can visit another village						
Can visit other village and nearest town						
Can visit city						
Can visit market for purchase of household						

items						
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F. Change in Family and Social Relationship

36. Has there been any change in the family and Social relationship after joining cooperative?

Relationship	Improved greatly	Improve d slightly	Remaine d Constant	Slig htly bad	Worsen ed
Respect from Husband					
Respect from Parents/ In-laws					
Respect from Children					
Recognition within the group					
Participation in Community activities					
Consideration of your views for household decisions					
Consideration of your views for children education/marriages					

37. Have you ever been victim to domestic Violence? Yes () No ()

If yes, then what is your response to the following domestic violence acts?	Res ist	Sub mit	Complaints to cooperative members	Compla in to Relative	War ns
Verbal Abuse					
Beating/ Physical Violence					

Negligence					
Psychological and emotional abuse					

What was your response to the same violence before joining cooperative?

	Res ist	Sub mit	Complaints to cooperative members	Compla in to Relativ e	War ns
Verbal Abuse					
Beating/ Physical Violence					
Negligence					
Psychological and emotional abuse					

38. Has participation / training in the cooperative helped you improve any of the following skills?

Has participation / training in the cooperative helped you improve any of the following	Impro ed Great ly	Impro ve d Slightl y	Remaine d Constant	Slight ly Bad	Worse ned
Reading/ Writing skills					
Communication in the meeting					
Communication with the outsiders/ bank officials/ others					
Reading bank documents					
Confidence in operating bank account					

Maintenance of records					
Confidence in managing financial crisis					
Skills for one's own work/business					

39. Self Perception of Beneficiary Empowerment

Perception of the Beneficiary	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Participation in microfinance increases income by creating employment opportunity					
Participation in microfinance provides employment opportunities by providing capital					
Participation in microfinance improves power of decision making by providing exposure to women					
Participation in microfinance increases confidence to face problems by providing exposure to women					
Participation in microfinance creates better awareness due to the training and sharing					

Participation in Microfinance creates knowledge about banking operations by transaction					
Participation in Microfinance improves social status by increasing income					
Participation in microfinance improve level of children education by improving affordability					
Participation in microfinance improve nutrient and health of household by improving affordability					
Participation in microfinance improves employability skills by providing training					
Participation in microfinance improves participation in community activities by group work					

Name of the enumerator:.....

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Annex 2: Data summary

Table I: Analysis of the respondents

Gender	Male	Female	Others	-
Frequency	0	32	0	-
Age group	Below 18	18 to 25	25 to 45	Above 45
Frequency	-	2	22	8
Highest level of education completed	Primary school	Secondary	High education	Others
Frequency	5	7	-	20
Marital status	Single	Married	Widow	Divorcee
Frequency	-	31	-	1
Employment status	Self-employed	Employed	Unemployed	Student
Frequency	1	-	31	-

Table II: Status of family of the respondents

Type of family	Nuclear	Joint	-	-	-	-	-
Frequency	28	4					
Number of children	One	Two	Three	More than three	-	-	-
Frequency	5	16	6	5			
Expenditure of children's education in the current fiscal year	0	1- 2500	2501- 5000	5001 – 7500	7501 – 10000	>10000	-
Frequency	4		4	2		22	
Level of education completed by children above 3 years of age	Illiterate	Illiterate but can sign	Primary	Secondary	Diploma/ Technical	Graduation	Post Graduation
Frequency			16	14	2		
Dropout of children	Yes	No	-	-	-	-	-
Frequency	3	29					
Occupation (self)	No employment	Farmer	Farm Laborers	Industrial Laborers	Salaried Employee	Self Employed	others (specify)
Frequency	29		2			1	
Occupation (spouse)	No employment	Farmer	Farm Laborers	Industrial Laborers	Salaried Employee	Self Employed	others (specify)

Frequency	25		3		4		
Occupation (family members)	No employment	Farmer	Farm Laborers	Industrial Laborers	Salaried Employee	Self Employed	others (specify)
Frequency	4		15	6	7		
Structural condition of House	Kuccha House	Pucca House	-	-	-	-	-
Frequency	29	3					
Ownership Status of House	Owned	Rented	Given by Govt	-	-	-	-
Frequency	31	1					
Cooking Fuel	Firewood	LPG gas	Others	-	-	-	-
Frequency	10	22					
Access to facilities	Sanitation facility within the house	Sanitation facility within the area	Water Supply within the house	Safe drinking water within the house/area	Access to Medical Facilities	-	-
Frequency	2	31	1	23	31		

Table III: Saving details of the respondents

Average monthly income	≤10,000	11000-20000	21000-30000	31000-40000	41000-50000	>50,000
Frequency	1	14	8	4	3	2
Saving instrument	Passbook	ATM Card	Cheque book	-	-	-
Frequency	28		4			
Does your household have a bank account?	Yes	No	-	-	-	-
Frequency	21	11				
Where do you save your money?	Bank	Post Office	Chit Fund	Cooperative	Others	-
Frequency	11			32		
Saving Pattern	No Savings	Regularly	Occasionally	Rarely	-	-
Frequency		29	3			

Table IV: Loan details of the respondents

Have you received loan as cooperative?	Yes	No	-	-	-	-
Frequency	32					
How many times have you borrowed loan as cooperative?	One	Two	Three	More than three	-	-
Frequency	6	5	8	13		
Amount of loan	≤20000	20000-50000	50000-100000	100000-150000	150000-200000	>200000
Frequency	3	5	6	3	6	9
Have you utilized loan in the same work, you were supposed to invest by the cooperative?	Yes	No	-	-	-	-
Frequency	31	1				
Have you been able to repay loan on time?	Yes	No	-	-	-	-
Frequency	30	2				
Sources of loan from other than cooperative	Friends/ Relatives (Money lender	NGO/ MFI/ NBFC	Other banks	Revolving Fund	Govt. Schemes
Frequency	6	1	10	1		
How many times have you borrowed loan from other sources?	One	Two	Three	More than three	-	-
Frequency	1	2	3	7		

Table V: Contribution to Decision Making and Mobility

Decision	Before taking microloan			After taking microloan		
	Self	Spouse	Jointly	Self	Spouse	Jointly
Purchase of Basic Household needs (Grocery)	29		3	29		3
Purchase of household assets(TV, Fridge, Mobile, Furniture)	5	2	25	5	2	25
Purchase of Land/House	3	1	27	3	1	27
Children schooling expenses	15	1	13	15	1	13
Which school to send to children	8	2	19	8	2	19
Health/ Medical Expenses Family	7	4	21	7	4	21
Health/ Medical Expenses	18		14	18		14

for self						
Use of Birth Control Methods	26	4	2	26	4	2
Use of Loan Amount	10	1	21	10	1	21
Girl Marriage Decision	1	1	30	1	1	30
Children Marriage Decision	1	2	29	1	2	29
Can't go outside	16	2	14	16	2	14
Can visit another village	21		11	21		11
Can visit other village and nearest town	23		9	23		9
Can visit city	6	2	24	6	2	24
Can visit market for purchase of household items	18		14	18		14

Table VI: Change in the family and social relationship after joining cooperative

Relationship	Improved greatly	Improved slightly	Remained Constant	Slightly bad	Worsened
Respect from Husband		22	10		
Respect from Parents/ In-laws		26	6		
Respect from Children		29	3		
Recognition within the group		23	9		
Participation in Community activities	1	18	13		
Consideration of your views for household decisions	1	30	1		
Consideration of your views for children education/marriages		30			

Table VII: Domestic Violence

If yes, then what is your response to the following domestic violence acts?	Resist	Submit	Complaints to cooperative members	Complain to Relative	Warns
Verbal Abuse		25			
Beating/ Physical Violence		12			
Negligence					
Psychological and emotional abuse		1			

Table VIII: Domestic violence before joining cooperative

If yes, then what was your response to the following domestic violence acts?	Resist	Submit	Complaints to cooperative members	Complain to Relative	Warns
Verbal Abuse		24			
Beating/ Physical Violence		12			
Negligence					
Psychological and emotional abuse		1			

Table IX: Has participation / training in the cooperative helped you improve any of the following skills?

Has participation / training in the cooperative helped you improve any of the following	Improved Greatly	Improved Slightly	Remained Constant	Slightly Bad	Worsened
Reading/ Writing skills		7	25		
Communication in the meeting		17	15		
Communication with the outsiders/ bank officials/ others			32		
Reading bank documents		6	26		
Confidence in operating bank account		7	25		
Maintenance of records		17	15		
Confidence in managing financial crisis		25	7		
Skills for one's own work/ business		30	2		

Table X: Self Perception of Beneficiary Empowerment

Perception of the Beneficiary	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Participation in microfinance increases income by creating employment opportunity		28	3	1	
Participation in microfinance provides employment opportunities by providing capital		27	5		
Participation in microfinance improves power of decision making by providing opportunity to women		26	6		
Participation in microfinance increases confidence to face problems by providing exposure to women	1	27	4		
Participation in microfinance creates better awareness due to the training and sharing	1	30	1		
Participation in Microfinance creates	1	16	15		

knowledge about banking operations by transaction					
Participation in Microfinance improves social status by increasing income		17	15		
Participation in microfinance improve level of children education by increasing affordability		32			
Participation in microfinance improve nutrient and health of household by increasing affordability		32			
Participation in microfinance improves employability skills by providing training		26	6		
Participation in microfinance improves participation in community activities by group work		27	5		