

**IMPACT OF MICRO FINANCE ON THE
EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN IN
PUTTALAM DISTRICT**

By

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ABSTRACT

Since the 1911s there has been a significant increase in provision of microfinance services to women through Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) to start small and medium enterprises income generating activities in Sri Lanka, especially in rural areas. The microfinance programmes are aimed at empowering women economically and socially. The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of microfinance on economic empowerment of MFIs' women clients in Pattalam District. Data for the study was collected from primary sources using questionnaire administered to beneficiaries of the MFIs of Regional Development Bank, Deshadaya Development Finance Ltd and Prime Grameen Finance Ltd. The main finding of the study is that access to microfinance has impacted positively in the empowerment of women through improvement in their businesses, asset ownership, income and living standards. Besides, the study shows that access to microfinance has improved the status of women both at the family level and in society as a whole.

The Univariate Analysis was made to find out the Mean and Standard Deviation for the each and every variable. Bivariate Analysis included the simple regression analysis and correlation analysis. Regression analysis made to find out the impact of micro finance factors on the empowerment of rural women. Correlation analysis is used for measuring the relationship between each micro finance factors and empowerment of rural women.

In this survey three variables are addressed under the independent variable (micro loan, saving and advisory & training services) and one variable was discussed under the dependent variable as empowerment of rural women.

The empirical results obtained through this investigation provided several interesting points that necessitate further discussion. As was expected, given the widespread empirical support shown for this influence in other contexts, a higher level of micro finance factors were found to be positively correlated with empowerment of rural women. And also positively impact micro finance on the empowerment of rural women in the MFIs.

Based on the results, the study recommends that MFIs should endeavor to extend more credit facilities & savings and to women clients as this enhances their empowerment. Finally, MFIs should provide more training programmes to women in order to improve their entrepreneurial skills and help reduce problems which hinder their access to microfinance and growth.

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