

MICROCREDIT FOR WOMEN WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MALDA AND UTTAR DINAJPUR DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL

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Abstract:

Women, living in poverty, access to credit services enable the women to increase income and smooth consumption flows, thus expanding their asset base and reducing their vulnerability to the external shocks that plague their daily existence. The availability of credit services acts as a buffer against sudden emergencies, business risk, and seasonal slumps that may push a family into destitution. This research highlighted about the microcredit for women empowerment with special to Malda and Uttar Dinajpur District, West Bengal.

Keywords: Microcredit, Women, Malda, Uttar Dinajpur, West Bengal

INTRODUCTION:

Microcredit has many attractive features. Over the last twenty-five years it has been studied by researchers in its every single aspect. Women come up with very positive findings with regard to the impact of microcredit. They find steady movement of the borrowers from poverty to non-poverty, improvement in housing, sanitation, nutrition, education, child mortality, women empowerment etc [1].

AMOUNT OF CREDIT RECEIVED FROM BANKS:

Women, living in poverty, access to credit services enable the women to increase income and smooth consumption flows, thus expanding their asset base and reducing their vulnerability to the external shocks that plague their daily existence [2]. The availability of credit services acts as a buffer against sudden emergencies, business

risk, and seasonal slumps that may push a family into destitution. Credit packages and programmes have been designed based on the perceived needs of the women. The different commercial banks in collaboration with DRDA played an important role in disbursing loan to the women SHGs. The amount of loan depends on the group's performances [3]. The amount of credit comprises the credit money and revolving money both. Here credit is given by any commercial bank at which the concerned group opened their account and revolving money is given by DRDA after fulfilling few formalities. Here, interest is not calculated on revolving money [4].

TABLE 1: AMOUNT OF CREDIT RECEIVED FROM THE BANK IN PERCENTAGE

AMOUNT OF MONEY (per head)	DISTRICTS						GRAND TOTAL
	MALDA			UTTAR DINAJPUR			
	BLOCK		TOTAL	BLOCK		TOTAL	
	MANIKCHAK	HABIBPUR		KALIAGANJ	RAIGANJ		
Rs. 5,000	-	-	-	-	20	20	20
					11.30	4.64	2.36
Rs. 6,000	-	-	-	-	10	10	10
					5.65	2.32	1.18
Rs. 6,500	-	-	-	-	70	70	70
					39.54	16.24	8.27
Rs. 6,900	-	-	-	-	07	07	07
					3.95	1.62	0.83
Rs. 7,500	37	101	138	82	65	147	285
	26.06	37.00	33.25	32.28	36.72	34.11	33.69
Rs. 8,500	10	-	10	92	-	92	102
	7.04		2.41	36.22		21.35	12.06
Rs. 10,500	51	-	51	30	05	35	86
	35.91		12.29	11.80	2.82	8.12	10.17
Rs. 12,500	-	72	72	20	-	20	92
		26.37	17.35	7.88		4.64	10.87
Rs. 13,700	14	100	114	10	-	10	124
	9.86	36.63	27.47	3.94		2.32	14.66
Rs. 15,000	30	-	30	10	-	10	40
	21.13		7.23	3.94		2.32	4.73
Rs. 16,200	-			10	-	10	10
				3.94		2.32	1.18
TOTAL	142	273	415	254	177	431	846
	34.22	65.78	49.05	58.93	41.07	50.95	

In receiving credit, 2.36% women have received money of Rs. 5,000/, 1.18% women have received money of Rs. 6,000/, 8.27% women have received money of Rs. 6,500/, 0.83% women have received money of Rs. 6,900/, 12.06% women have received money of Rs. 8,500/, 10.17% women have received money of Rs. 10,500/, 10.87% women have received money of Rs. 12,500/, 14.66% women have received money of Rs. 13,700/, 4.73% women have received money of Rs. 15,000/ and 1.18% women have received money of Rs. 16,200/. Here, maximum no of women, that is; 33.69% women have received money of Rs. 7,500/. Now it is striking to note that in this study, the only one group have received the 3rd dose loan of Rs. 1,62,000/. In achieving the highest amount of credit per women, that is Rs. 16,200/, the only block, Kaliaganj have gained that capability [5].

RESOURCES OF MICRO CREDIT:

Women need access to a diverse range of financial services, including loans, savings services, insurance, and money transfers for proper and adequate use of credit. There is a bank linkage programme established to SHGs' members. They have opened their accounts in various nationalised banks such as United Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, State Bank of India, Allahabad Bank, Bangiya Gramin Vikash Bank, and Raiganj Central Co-operative Bank Ltd etc. The choice of banks for women depends on nearest banking services and banks' interest to attach these women. Here, both of their interests attach themselves in transaction of money [6].

Table 2: SETTING UP A BANK LINK IN PERCENTAGE

DISTRICT	BLOCK	UBI	PNB	SBI	AB	BGVB	RCCB	TOTAL
MALDA	MANIKCHAK	12 85.21	-	11 7.75	-	10 7.04	-	142 34.22
	HABIBPUR	30 10.99	161 58.98	82 30.03	-	-	-	273 65.78
	TOTAL	151 36.38	161 38.80	93 22.41	-	10 2.41	-	415 49.05
UTTAR DINAJPUR	KALIAGANJ	209 82.28	-	-	-	-	45 17.72	254 58.93
	RAIGANJ	47 26.55	-	-	130 73.45	-	-	177 41.07
	TOTAL	256 59.40	-	--	130 30.16	-	45 10.44	431 50.95
GRAND TOTAL		407 48.11	161 19.03	93 10.99	130 1537	10 1.18	45 532	846

Here, most of the respondents have established their links with United Bank of India. 48.11% respondents have set up their links with United Bank of India (UBI), 19.03% links with Punjab National Bank (PNB), 15.37% links with Allahabad Bank (AB), 10.99% links with State Bank of India (SBI), 1.18% link with Bangiya Gramin Vikash Bank (BGVB) and rest 5.32% with Raiganj Central Co-operative Bank (RCCB) [7].

FUNDS DISBURSED BY BANKS:

As it is mentioned that United Bank of India took a pioneering role in the credit linkage. The Banks as financial intermediaries have played an important role with the help of their credit instruments in deciding the directions of change in a poverty economy. Banking with the women provides precisely this provision of financial intermediation through distribution of small loans, acceptance of small savings and provision of other financial services to the women [8].

TABLE 3: PERCENTAGE OF AMOUNT DISBURSED TO THE RESPONDENTS BY THE BANKS

DISTRICT	BLOCK	UBI	PNB	SBI	AB	BGVB	RCCB	TOTAL
MALDA	MANIKCHAK	12.16. 500/- 78.31	-	1.67. 000/- 10.75	-	-	1.70. 000/- 10.94	15.53. 500/- 39.80
	HABIBPUR	75. 000/- 3.19	14.50. 000/- 61.70	8.25. 000/- 35.11	-	-	-	23.50. 000/- 60.20
	TOTAL	12.91. 500/- 33.09	14.50. 000/- 37.15	9.92. 000/- 25.41	-	-	1.70. 000/- 4.35	39,03, 500/- 53.82
UTTAR DINAJPUR	KALIAGANJ	19.06. 000/- 88.57	--	-	--	02,46. 000/ 11.43	-	21.52, 000/- 64.25
	RAIGANJ	3,67. 500/- 30.69	-	-	8.30. 000/- 69.31	-	-	1 1.97. 500/- 35.75
	TOTAL	22,73. 500/ 67.88	-	-	8.30. 000/- 24.78	02.46. 000/- 7.34	-	33.49. 500/- 46.18
GRAND TOTAL		35.65 000/- 49.15	14.50 000/- 19.99	09.92 000/- 13.68	8.30 000/- 11.44	02.46 000/- 3.39	1.70 000/- 2.35	72.53 000/-

Here, 49.15% of the total amounts have been disbursed by UBI, 19.99% by PNB. 13.68% by SBI, 11.44% by AB, 3.39% by BGVB, 2.35% by RCCB.

CAUSES OF JOINING MICRO CREDIT SCHEME (According to preference):

Access to credit services enables the women to increase income and smooth consumption flows, thus expanding their asset base and reducing their vulnerability to the external shocks that plague their daily existence. The availability of these services acts as a buffer against sudden emergencies, business risk, and seasonal slumps that may push a family into destitution. More and better financial services of this strategy have the capability for low-income groups to move from mere subsistence for dailysurvival to planning for the future and investing in better nutrition, improved living conditions, and children’s health and education. Women had joined in the micro credit strategy in the goal of fulfilling their needs. Here, they preferred to join for economic self-sufficiency of own, generating additional income for the family, better life style of own and their family members [9].

TABLE 4: REASONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE MICRO CREDIT SCHEME IN PERCENTAGE

DISTRICT	BLOCK	ECONOMIC SELF SUFFICIENCY	ADDITIONAL INCOME FOR THE FAMILY	BETTER LIFE STYLE	TOTAL
MALDA	MANIKCHAK	109 76.76	08 5.63	25 17.61	142 34.22
	HABIBPUR	207 75.82	25 9.16	41 15.02	273 65.78
	TOTAL	316 76.14	33 7.95	66 15.91	415 49.05
UTTAR DINAJPUR	KALIAGANJ	196 77.17	32 12.59	26 10.24	254 58.93
	RAIGANJ	147 83.05	18 10.17	12 6.78	177 41.07
	TOTAL	343 79.58	50 11.60	38 8.82	431 50.95
GRAND TOTAL		659 77.90	83 9.81	104 12.29	846

In this study, 77.90% respondents have chosen this strategy for own income and savings, 12.29% respondents for living of better life and 9.81% for creation of additional income for the family.

SCHEME SELECTION:

Women face difficulties in establishing links with the microcredit strategy due to negative socio-cultural attitudes, social barriers, practical external barriers, lack of education and personal difficulties. Therefore, they need counselling to motivate in this development project. In addition, selection and development of profit-oriented micro-enterprises had been a crucial issue for rural women due to lack of awareness, mobility, expertness and presence of social rigidity. In this context, a special support for women in both financial and non-financial services was necessary in order to facilitate the promotion of these women in micro and small-scale income generating projects.

TABLE 5: SELECTION OF SCHEME IN PERCENTAGE

DISTRICT	BLOCK	SCHEME SELECTED BY OWN		
		YES	NO	TOTAL
MALDA	MANIKCHAK	39	103	142
		27.46	72.54	34.22
	HABIBPUR	56	217	273
		20.51	79.49	65.78
	TOTAL	95	320	415
		22.89	77.11	49.05
UTTAR DINAJPUR	KALIAGANJ	61	193	254
		24.02	75.98	58.93
	RAIGANJ	49	128	177
		27.68	72.32	41.07
	TOTAL	110	321	431
		25.52	74.48	50.95
GRAND TOTAL		205	641	846
		24.23	75.77	

In this research, only 24.23% women have selected their scheme of credit generating enterprises directly by their own initiation. Although they had to take supports indirectly by promoting personalities with this strategy. Rest 75.77% respondents have taken the help in selecting the scheme.

HELP IN THE SCHEME SELECTION:

In the formation and promotion of SHGs, the Panchayat play an important role under the guidance of SGSY. Here, concerned panchayat shows their achievement by forming SHGs and through belongingness of women into the credit facilities in his area. Therefore, they time to time try to motivate the women in entering into credit worthiness. In addition, some social activists who want the development of people and make aware about the govt, scheme for development of people, do campaign the different scheme for welfare of the people. Women also have taken the guidance from concerned bank officer. In addition, as family member, husbands also have guided their wives to choose the right path. In the selection of the scheme, the women need guidance regarding how they utilize the credit in which productive purpose, how they handle the credit, overall to make the scheme as profit oriented [10].

Table 6: PERCENTAGE OF SCHEME SELECTION WITH ASSISTANCE

DISTRICT	BLOCK	PANCHAYAT MEMBER	SOCIAL ACTIVISTS	BANK OFFICER	HUSBAND	TOTAL
MALDA	MANIKCHAK	82 79.61	- 4.15	06 5.83	15 14.56	103 32.19
	HABIBPUR	171 78.80	09 4.15	11 5.07	26 11.98	217 67.81
	TOTAL	253 79.07	09 2.81	17 5.31	41 12.81	320 49.92
UTTAR DINAJPUR	KALIAGANJ	136 79.47	21 10.88	04 2.07	32 16.58	193 60.12
	RAIGANJ	95 74.22	06 4.69	- 1.25	27 21.09	128 39.88
	TOTAL	231 71.96	27 8.41	04 1.25	59 18.38	321 50.08
GRAND TOTAL		484 75.50	36 5.62	21 3.28	100 15.60	641

Here, in this study, they have taken help mainly from concerned Panchayat, i.e; 75.50 % women have selected their scheme by the initiation of panchayat. Then, Husbands of the family have provided the guidance to women, i.e.; 15.60% women have depended on their husband. Social activists nearby their circumstances also guided them, i.e., 5.62%. Only 3.28% women have selected the scheme by the consultation with concerned bank officer.

REGULAR REPAYMENT OF CREDIT:

In the handling of credit, it is important to recognize the status of repayment of interest. Because the regular interest payment indicates how their entrepreneurship ran, what were their actual performances after getting credit? In addition, their status of repayment of interest shows their knowledge, regularity, discipline and overall consciousness about the handling of money. Women here had to engage always to make this small loan viable, make the activity viable and ensure loan repayment.

TABLE 7: PERCENTAGE OF THE INTEREST OF LOAN PAYMENT ON A REGULAR BASIS

DISTRICT	BLOCK	INTEREST OF LOAN PAYMENT		
		YES	NO	TOTAL
MALDA	MANIKCHAK	114	28	142
		80.28	19.72	34.22
	HABIBPUR	251	22	273
		91.94	8.06	65.78
	TOTAL	365	50	415
		87.95	12.05	49.05
UTTAR DINAJPUR	KALIAGANJ	218	36	254
		85.83	14.17	58.93
	RAIGANJ	153	24	177
		86.44	13.56	41.07
	TOTAL	371	60	431
		86.08	13.92	50.95
GRAND TOTAL		736	110	846
		87.00	13.00	

In this study, the regularity of interest payment is praiseworthy. 87% women paid their interest of loan regularly and remaining only 13% women did not maintain regularity in this regard.

REASONS FOR REGULAR NON-REPAYMENT OF CREDIT:

Women have to bear so many burdens in the family. They invisibly bear a lot responsibilities of own family members. In handling of money, they had to spend their earnings for needs fulfillment of family members. In addition, women mainly associated with that type of entrepreneurships, which were seasonal. Therefore, there was the absence of uniformity in their profit making. In this context, the regularity in interest payment to some extent was unbearable for them [8].

TABLE 8: PERCENTAGE OF REGULAR NON-PAYMENT CREDIT

DISTRICT	BLOCK	INADEQUATE INCOME	DELAY OF DISBURSEMENT	TIGHT PAYMENT SCHEDULE	NON-AVAILABILITY OF ASSETS	URGENT FAMILY NEEDS	WILLFUL DEFAULT	TOTAL
MALDA	MANIK CHAK	-	-	04 14.29	02 7.14	21 75.00	01 3.57	28 56.00
	HABIBPUR	01 4.55	01 4.55	02 9.09	01 4.55	14 63.63	03 13.63	22 44.00
	TOTAL	01 2.00	01 2.00	06 12.00	03 6.00	35 70.00	04 8.00	50 45.45
UTTAR DINAJPUR	KALIAGANJ	02 5.56	04 11.11	01 2.78	04 11.1	23 63.88	02 5.56	36 60.00
	RAIGANJ	01 4.17	02 8.33	01 4.17	02 8.33	16 66.67	02 8.33	24 40.00
	TOTAL	03 5.00	06 10.00	02 3.33	06 10.00	39 65.00	04 6.67	60 54.55
GRAND TOTAL		04 3.64	07 6.37	08 7.27	09 8.18	74 67.27	08 7.27	110

In this study, causes of absence of regularity in interest payment also had been associated with the reason as such. In their day-to-day life, women first gave priority in family members' needs and demands. So here, the causes of non-repayment were for urgent family needs among 67.27% women. Remaining members did not show their regularity due to inadequacy of income, delay of disbursement, tight repayment schedule of interest, non-availability of assets and willful default.

ACCOMPANYING PERSONS:

Women's contribution to the family and society is considerable; they are subjected to numerous constraints, undermining their potentials. They receive only small share in development opportunities and are often excluded from proper education, better jobs, participation in political system and better health care, decision making, etc. Besides, they suffer from physiological, psychological, social and cultural barriers, which hinder their any kind of outer-household involvement. In rural areas, women are preoccupied with mostly household works - including the bearing and rearing of children. Accordingly, the opportunities for improving their conditions are limited. In this backdrop, involvement in credit strategy of these women need adequate accompanies and influences.

TABLE 9: PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN ACCOMPANIED FROM THE SOCIETY

DISTRICT	BLOCK	FAMILY MEMBERS	RELATIVES	FRIENDS	PANCHAYAT MEMBER	TV, MEDIA	PRINTED MEDIA	SELF INTEREST	TOTAL
MALDA	MANIKCHAK	40 28.16	05 3.52	12 8.45	70 49.30	-	-	15 10.57	142 34.22
	HABIBPUR	69 25.27	12 4.40	20 7.33	111 40.66	25 9.16	10 3.66	26 9.52	273 65.78
	TOTAL	109 26.26	17 4.10	32 7.71	181 43.61	25 6.03	10 2.41	41 9.88	415 49.05
UTTAR DINAJPUR	KALIAGANJ	70 27.55	10 3.94	24 9.45	81 31.89	21 8.27	16 6.30	32 12.60	254 58.93
	RAIGANJ	45 25.42	14 7.91	10 5.65	54 30.51	15 8.48	12 6.78	27 15.25	177 41.07
	TOTAL	115 26.68	24 5.57	34 7.89	135 31.32	36 8.35	28 6.50	59 13.69	431 50.95
GRAND TOTAL		224 26.48	41 4.85	66 7.80	316 37.35	61 7.21	38 4.49	100 11.82	846

In this study, women mainly have been influenced and got accompany from concerned Panchayat member, i.e. 37.35%, 26.48% women from own family members, 11.82% members from self-interest, 7.80% women from friends, 7.21%

women from electronics media, 4.85% women from distant relatives and remaining 4.49% women from printed media like newspaper, posters, banners etc.

CATEGORIES OF BENEFITS:

Women lacking in social position and legal rights, traditionally were particularly vulnerable in getting any economic opportunity, like employment opportunity, credit facility. Due to less education, they do not get any employment opportunity, which accelerates poverty in cash economy. In addition, with little income or collateral, these poor people are seldom able to obtain loans from banks and other formal financial institutions. In this context, making credit available to low-income women is one of the most effective ways of raising their standard of living and increasing their opportunities for advancement [6,9].

TABLE 10: PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN BENEFITED FROM THR CREDIT FACILITY

DISTRICT	BLOCK	REPAYMENT OF LOAN	DEVELOPMENT OF ASSETS	INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT	BETTER IMAGE IN THE FAMILY	ECONOMIC EMPowerment & FREEDOM	ADDITIONAL INCOME	INCREASING SAVINGS FUNDS
MALDA	MANIK CHAK	142 35.15	109 30.45	05 7.04	142 34.22	129 32.91	56 34.57	36 23.84
	HABIB PUR	262 64.85	249 69.55	66 92.96	273 65.78	263 67.09	106 65.43	115 76.16
	TOTAL	404 48.79	358 52.80	71 23.83	415 49.05	392 53.41	162 33.26	151 45.48
UTTAR DINAJPUR	KALIA GANJ	254 59.91	216 67.50	131 57.71	254 58.93	216 63.16	209 64.31	105 58.01
	RAIGANJ	170 40.09	104 32.50	96 42.29	177 41.07	126 36.84	116 35.69	76 41.99
	TOTAL	424 51.21	320 47.20	227 76.17	431 50.95	342 49.59	325 66.74	181 54.52
GRAND TOTAL		828 97.87	678 80.14	298 35.22	846 100	734 86.76	487 57.56	332 39.24

CONCLUSION:

In this study, women have benefited from credit facility in different dimensions. 100% women have created better image in the family. 97.87% women have used credit in the loan repayment. 86.76% women have benefited in the economic empowerment and freedom. 80.14% women have built and developed their own assets. 57.56% women have made additional income for the family. 35.22% women have used credit at infrastructural development of own surroundings. 39.24% women have made their own account in the bank for savings.

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