

**IMPACT OF MICROCREDIT ON WOMEN
EMPOWERMENT IN GAURIGANJ RURAL
MUNICIPALITY, JHAPA**

A Thesis

**Submitted to the Department of Economics, Patan Multiple Campus,
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, Nepal, in
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in

ECONOMICS

By

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled “IMPACT OF MICROCREDIT ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN GAURIGANJ RURAL MUNICIPALITY, JHAPA” which I have submitted to the Department of Economics, Patan Multiple Campus, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of MASTER OF ARTS in ECONOMICS, is entirely my original work prepared under the guidance of my supervisor. I have made do acknowledgements to all ideas and information borrowed from different sources in the course of writing this thesis. The results of this thesis have not been presented or submitted anywhere else for the award of any degree. I shall be solely responsible for any evidence found against my declaration.

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This thesis entitled “IMPACT OF MICROCREDIT ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN GAURIGANJ RURAL MUNICIPALITY, JHAPA” has been prepared by Ms. KUSHUM BHATTARAI under my guidance and supervision. I, hereby, recommend it in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of MASTER OF ARTS in ECONOMICS for final examination.

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LETTER OF APPROVAL

We certify that this thesis entitled “IMPACT OF MICROCREDIT ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN GAURIGANJ RURAL MUNICIPALITY, JHAPA” submitted by Ms. KUSHUM BHATTARAI to the Department of Economics, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Patan Multiple Campus, Tribhuvan University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS in ECONOMICS has been found satisfactory in scope and quality. Therefore, we accept this thesis as a part of the said Degree.

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ABSTRACT

Women in Nepal, particularly from marginalized communities, face significant challenges in achieving economic empowerment. This study aims to evaluate the impact of microfinance programs on the economic and social empowerment of Rajbanshi women in Gauriganj Rural Municipality. The data, collected from 120 women respondents, were analyzed using the Difference-in-Differences (DID) model and processed with Microsoft Excel. Descriptive, statistical, and analytical tools, along with diagrammatic and graphical representations, were utilized to present the findings clearly. The study found that access to microfinance significantly increased household earnings and savings, with a notable rise in women's autonomy, mobility, and decision-making abilities. Women in the treatment group experienced higher income growth compared to the control group, with a Difference-in-Differences (DID) indicating substantial economic benefits. Savings also increased significantly, enhancing financial stability and investment capacity. Additionally, there was an improvement in the quality of household consumption and access to education and healthcare. Policy implications suggest the need for targeted interventions to enhance women's access to microfinance and address socio-cultural barriers. Strengthening microfinance programs, coupled with educational and skill development initiatives, can further empower women economically and socially. These findings suggest that microfinance can be a valuable tool for empowering women in developing countries, potentially leading to improved social well-being, improved quality of household consumptions. This study underscores the critical role of microfinance in promoting women's empowerment and provides a basis for policymakers to design effective strategies for inclusive development. This result is also consistent with the findings of other developing countries.

ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
GDI	Gender Empowerment Index
GRM	Gauriganaj Rural Municipality
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
IBP	Intensive Banking Program
IDRC	International Development Research Center
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MoWCSC	Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens
NRB	Nepal Rastra Bank
SFDP	Small Farmer's Development Programs
WEF	World Economic Forum

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REPORT OF PLAGARISM SHEET

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Microfinance institutions (MFIs) have emerged as crucial facilitators of women's economic empowerment globally, particularly in developing countries where traditional banking services are often inaccessible to the poor, especially women. Despite the progress facilitated by MFIs, significant challenges persist for women worldwide. These challenges include entrenched gender norms that relegate women to subordinate roles within households and societies, limited access to education and skills training, and exclusion from decision-making processes at both familial and national levels. These factors collectively contribute to the economic marginalization of women, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality (Khursheed, 2022).

In the context of South Asia, the success of the Grameen Bank model in Bangladesh has served as a catalyst for the widespread adoption of microfinance initiatives across the region. These initiatives have demonstrated the potential of microfinance to uplift marginalized communities by providing access to financial services, fostering entrepreneurial activities, and empowering women to take control of their economic destinies (Chandra, 2015)

In the context of Nepal, a landlocked country with an area of 147,556 sq. km situated between China and India, microfinance has been pivotal in addressing poverty and promoting economic empowerment. Despite the economic growth of its neighbors, Nepal has struggled with low economic growth rates, with a World Bank projection of 3.3 percent for the fiscal year 2023/24. Nepal remains one of the poorest countries globally, with low per capita income, uncontrolled urban growth, and a high population growth rate. With a population of 29,192,480, where women constitute more than half (CBS, 2021), poverty is deeply rooted, and women are often the poorest among the poor. Nepal

ranks 149th out of 193 countries with an HDI of 0.601 (HDR,2023) and 20.3 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line (ADB, 2022).

Microfinance is the provision of financial services to the poor, on a scale appropriate to their needs. The term includes facilities for small savings, ‘microinsurance’, and increasingly, given the growing mobility of the working poor, money transfer (remittances). The microfinance service that has always attracted most attention, however, is the provision of small loans – microcredit – whether for purposes of investment (in agriculture, small enterprises, or education), or to cover unforeseen short-term expenses (Goenka & Henley, 2009).

Empowerment is granting power, rights, or authority to someone (Merriam-Webster). Women empowerment is an ongoing process where women become aware of their situation, organize to improve it, and access opportunities. This process enables women to take control of their lives, set their own agendas, gain skills, solve problems, and develop self-reliance. It includes indicators such as employment, savings, awareness of rights, and attitudes towards violence against women (IDRC, 2018).

The World Bank defines empowerment as "the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes." This process involves actions that build both individual and collective assets and enhance the efficiency and fairness of the organizational and institutional context governing these assets. According to a World Bank report (2001), societies that discriminate based on gender incur costs such as greater poverty, slower economic growth, weaker governance, and lower living standards. The World Bank identifies four key elements of empowerment for drafting institutional reforms: access to information, inclusion and participation, accountability, and local organizational capacity.

Microfinance in Nepal began taking shape in the 1970s with rural credit programs targeting the poor, such as the Small Farmer’s Development Programs (SFDP) and the Intensive Banking Program (IBP). The establishment of Grameen Bikas Banks in the 1990s, modeled after Bangladesh’s Grameen Bank, marked a significant expansion in

microfinance services. Today, Nepal has 55 MFIs (NRB, 2024), several development and commercial banks, and numerous community-based saving credit cooperatives providing microcredit services, primarily to women and poor communities.

Gauriganj Rural Municipality lies on the southern belt of Jhapa district with a total area of 101.35 square km. The southern border of which is India. There are total of 8,547 households residing in this rural municipality. Total population is 35,506, out of which female population is 52.4 percent. The major occupation is agriculture and cattle farming while major communities are Rajbanshi, Santhal, Tajpuriya, Chhetri and Bramhin (CBS, 2021). There are total of 25 community schools, 20 private schools and 2 Madarasas. The literacy rate is 74.6 percent which remains slightly lower than the district average of 75.2 percent (GRM, 2024).

Rajbanshi community is one of the small ethnic communities among 142 castes in Nepal with total population of 132,564 occupying 0.45 percent of total population. This community predominantly resides in the eastern terai of Nepal primarily in Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari District with approximately 97 percent of its population residing in Province 1. However, for Gauriganj Rural Municipality, Rajbanshi community is one of the representative communities constituting approximately 21 percent of the total population of this rural municipality (CBS, 2021).

Compared to other caste and ethnic groups such as Brahmins, Chhetris, Newars, Rais, Limbus, etc., the Rajbanshis are politically, socially, and economically backward. Despite steady changes over the past 50 years, they remain predominantly agro-based, settling in fertile lands in Jhapa. Their nucleated settlements, often with 10-15 households in smaller villages and 50-60 in larger ones, feature thatched-roof houses made from local materials and smeared with red clay, dung, and white clay. The Rajbanshis prefer to live in groups, helping each other during emergencies (Shrestha, 2010).

This study focuses on the impact of microfinance on women's economic empowerment in Gauriganj Rural Municipality. The Rajbanshi community, a small ethnic group, constitutes about 21 percent of Gauriganj's population (GRM, 2024). Despite residing on

fertile lands and being agro-based, the Rajbanshis face significant socio-economic challenges. Seven class-D microfinance institutions and five local co-operatives provide microcredit facilities in Gauriganj, targeting women to improve the economic condition of low-income groups. This study aims to analyze the impact of these microfinance programs on women's economic empowerment from Rajbanshi community in this specific region.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Southern Asia ranks lowest in economic participation and opportunity at 38.8 percent, half the level of Northern America. The region improved by 1.1 percentage points from 2023 but declined by the same amount since 2006. Women's low labor force participation results in gender parity scores below the global average, except in Bangladesh. Women are underrepresented in senior roles but show increased parity in professional roles, with variations between countries like Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Nepal ranks 117th in the global gender gap index and 137th in economic participation, second in Southern Asia after Bangladesh. (World Economic Forum, 2024).

Empowering women is crucial in developing countries due to its significant potential for reducing poverty and fostering overall development. Microfinance institutions (MFIs) have become vital tools for tackling both poverty and women's empowerment (Thapa & Yadav, 2023). At present, 20.3 percent of people are still living under the poverty line in Nepal (ADB, 2022). In many societies, including Nepal, women are often considered the weaker sex and lag far behind men in all aspects of life, including access to financial resources. Men are traditionally seen as the breadwinners and heads of families, while women are confined to household work, which is often undervalued despite their hard work. This gender disparity is not unique to Nepal; even in developed countries like the USA, women earned only 84 percent of what men earned (Barroso & Brown, 2021). Various studies have shown that microcredit can be a vital tool for the empowerment of women, offering them the means to generate income and contribute financially to their households and communities.

Despite the expansion of microcredit programs aimed at empowering women, many, especially in rural areas, still lack access to these facilities. In Nepal, women face significant economic exclusion and are often seen as subordinate to men (Aryal, 2018). While microfinance programs show positive outcomes, women from marginalized communities like the Rajbanshi continue to face substantial challenges. Progress is slow, and low self-confidence among rural women hinders national efforts to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development goals.

Several relevant studies have highlighted the positive impact of microfinance on women's empowerment. Gyanwali (2018) concluded that the correlation between credit facilities, income status, capacity building, insurance, and women's economic empowerment is positive and significant, though the study focused solely on class-D MFIs and primary data. Adhikari & Shrestha (2013) found that the economic status of loanees improved significantly after starting small businesses with microloans, but their study disregarded loans for other purposes like agriculture or education. Jain (2020) emphasized that access to microfinance services empowers women economically and socially, though the study was limited to borrowers from only three MFIs and did not consider other dimensions of empowerment like autonomy, mobility, or ownership of land or houses.

1.3. Research Questions

Given the above-mentioned gaps, this study aims to address the effectiveness of community-based microfinance in delivering microfinance facilities to women, particularly from marginalized communities like the Rajbanshi, for their economic and social empowerment. The research covers both primary and secondary data to provide a comprehensive analysis. The key research questions to be addressed are:

- What changes have occurred in household earnings and savings due to increased access to microcredit facilities among the Rajbanshi women in Gauriganj Rural Municipality?
- How has access to microcredit impacted the economic and social empowerment of Rajbanshi women in Gauriganj Rural Municipality?

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to analyze the impact of microcredit on empowerment of women from Rajbanshi Community in Gauriganj Rural Municipality. The specific objectives are mentioned below:

- To evaluate the changes in household earnings and savings due to increased access to microcredit facilities.
- To assess the impact of microcredit on the economic and social empowerment of Rajbanshi women in Gauriganj Rural Municipality.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study contributes new insights into the impact of microcredit facilities on empowering women from marginalized communities, such as the Rajbanshi, in rural areas of Nepal. It offers valuable information for policymakers on effective strategies to enhance rural women's empowerment through improved access to microfinance. By understanding the real impacts of microfinance in rural areas, microfinance providers can refine their services to better support women's economic and social empowerment.

For researchers, this study provides comprehensive data and analysis, contributing to the academic discourse on microfinance and women's empowerment. It also serves as a valuable reference for further studies in this field. Policymakers can use the findings to develop and implement policies that effectively support women's participation in socio-economic development.

Additionally, the study offers practical insights for microfinance companies, organizations working for women's and indigenous communities' empowerment, academia, government agencies, and donor organizations. It highlights the role of microcredit in improving women's living standards and participation in income-generating activities, thereby fostering their overall socio-economic development.

University students and academics find the study's extensive knowledge base useful for their research on the impact of microfinance on rural Nepalese communities.

1.6. Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study investigates the impact of microcredit on the economic and social empowerment of Rajbanshi women in Gauriganj Rural Municipality, Nepal. It aims to assess changes in income, household earnings, and savings resulting from microcredit access, alongside exploring if these women have assumed leadership roles in family and community initiatives. Additionally, the study examines how increased access to microcredit has influenced their autonomy, mobility, decision-making abilities and quality of household consumptions. Adopting a holistic approach, it considers various microcredit providers and utilizes both primary and secondary data to provide comprehensive insights into the empowerment dynamics of this marginalized community.

The choice of this geographical area stems from a distinct research void concerning the Rajbanshi community. Despite their substantial demographic presence in the region, previous scholarly investigations have not sufficiently delved into their distinct socio-economic circumstances, challenges, and prospects, especially concerning themes like economic empowerment. This study seeks to rectify this deficiency by concentrating on the Rajbanshi community, aiming to offer comprehensive insights that could enhance comprehension and address the specific needs of Rajbanshi women in rural Nepal more effectively.

The limitations of the study are as follows:

- The study is limited to the boundary of Gauriganj Rural Municipality, Jhapa.
- The study is based on limited sample size.
- The bias of the respondents could distort the findings as the study is mainly based on primary data.

- Impact of exogenous factors on economic empowerment are ignored.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Over the past few decades, the economic empowerment of women through microcredit has been widely studied. Microcredit, which involves providing small, collateral-free loans to deprived individuals, aims to reduce poverty and encourage entrepreneurship, especially among women. This literature review summarizes recent relevant study on microcredit on women's economic empowerment in global as well as domestic context.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 International Context

Polin *et al.* (2024) studied to predict the impact of microcredit on women's empowerment in rural Bangladesh using machine learning (ML) algorithms. Conducted in Narayanganj, Kishoreganj, and Jessore districts where microcredit programs are underutilized, data was gathered via a survey encompassing socioeconomic, demographic, and empowerment indicators. A total of 43 subjects received BDT 4000 (\$46.51) in 2020 after direct verification of their conditions. Employing Naive Bayes (NB), Sequential Minimal Optimization (SMO), k-Nearest Neighbor (k-NN), Decision Tree (DT), and Random Forest (RF) techniques, the study found all models performed well, with DT achieving 83.72 percent accuracy in predicting empowerment outcomes. These results suggest specific socioeconomic and demographic factors significantly influence microcredit's effectiveness. The study underscores ML's potential in targeting microcredit interventions effectively, enhancing impact on women's empowerment and socioeconomic development in similar settings. Critically, while robust in predictive capabilities, the study acknowledges limitations in survey bias, sample representativeness, and the generalizability of findings across diverse contexts, suggesting a need for complementary

qualitative research to validate outcomes and understand underlying causal mechanisms further.

Del Sarto *et al.* (2023) explored the transformative impact of microcredit, particularly through institutions like Grameen Bank, on marginalized communities worldwide, with a specific emphasis on empowering women. It examined the operational models and origins of microfinance institutions, highlighting their distinction from traditional banks and addressing concerns such as interest rates. Drawing on empirical studies and case analyses, the review underscored microcredit's dual role in fostering socioeconomic development and empowering women by facilitating access to financial resources, enhancing entrepreneurial opportunities, and increasing decision-making autonomy. While recognizing its positive effects, the paper critically evaluated challenges including sustainability, varying impact across contexts, and the importance of ethical practices. It called for further research to address these complexities and maximize the potential of microcredit in promoting equity and reducing poverty globally.

Khan *et al.* (2023) examined the impact of microfinance on various dimensions of women empowerment, specifically economic, social, political, and psychological. Using a quasi-experimental design, the study employed a control group of 180 participants and a treatment group of 190 participants to assess this impact. The findings revealed that microfinance had a positively significant but moderate impact on the economic, political, and psychological dimensions of women empowerment, and a smaller overall impact on social empowerment. Additionally, case studies supported that the microfinance program substantially empowered women across all four dimensions, clarifying ambiguity over social empowerment. While the study provided valuable insights, it was limited by its quasi-experimental design, which might not fully account for all confounding variables. The moderate impact observed suggests that while microfinance contributes to empowerment, other factors also play crucial roles.

Mboto *et al.* (2023) examined the impact of microcredit finance on women's empowerment in Cross River State, Nigeria, amidst systemic financial challenges and limited credit access. Utilizing a survey design, 154 randomly selected married women

out of a total population of 250 were included, and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis was employed to assess the relationship between microcredit and women's empowerment. Findings indicated a significant positive effect of microcredit, enhancing women's economic participation and decision-making capabilities. The review underscored the importance of gender-sensitive microfinance policies and called for enhanced managerial skills to integrate gender analysis into policy frameworks. Critically appraising the study's methodology, it highlighted the potential for sampling bias inherent in survey-based research, as well as the study's geographical focus on Cross River State, which may have limited generalizability to other regions. The review recommended further research to explore diverse socio-economic contexts and the long-term sustainability of microcredit initiatives in empowering women across Nigeria and similar settings.

Pervin *et al.* (2023) explored the determinants influencing the role of microfinance in the empowerment of women, assessing its impact on economic, social, and political dimensions. Using a case study method, data were gathered through field interviews with 20 female microfinance borrowers and their male family members, focus group discussions, and participant observation. The findings, analyzed using Kabeer's empowerment framework, revealed that microfinancing primarily empowered women socially, particularly in decision-making, while it did not significantly affect economic and political empowerment. Factors such as age, family type, educational level, financial literacy, and training played crucial roles in women's empowerment. While the study offered detailed insights, it was limited by its small sample size, potential subjectivity in qualitative methods, and lack of focus on long-term impacts and other dimensions of empowerment.

Rathnayaka & Silva (2023) examined the impact of microcredit programs on rural women's livelihood development in Sri Lanka, focusing on their access to financial services and the effectiveness of microcredit loans. Three main objectives were identifying the client base and loan granting intentions of microcredit programs, analyzing the impact of these loans on rural women's livelihoods, and providing

recommendations to enhance the program's effectiveness. Using simple random sampling, 50 microcredit clients from Bulathsinhala DS division participated in structured questionnaires and interviews, which were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Findings revealed that while microcredit provided easy access to loans, it did not significantly improve rural women's livelihoods; instead, it increased their indebtedness due to issues such as lack of financial literacy and mismanagement of funds. The study suggested improving access to credit schemes, implementing effective evaluation and monitoring processes, and enhancing financial literacy among clients to ensure the sustainability and positive impact of microcredit programs in rural Sri Lanka. Critical appraisal highlighted the need for further research to address these limitations and optimize the program's outcomes across diverse socio-economic contexts.

Mengstie (2022) examined the effect of microfinance on women's economic empowerment, specifically targeting areas such as decision-making, income growth, and asset ownership. The study utilized data from 346 female microfinance clients, analyzed through multiple regression and paired sample t-test techniques. The findings from multiple linear regression showed that age, marital status, education level, credit amount, and training sessions significantly affected women's economic empowerment, while prior business experience did not. Paired sample t-tests indicated substantial improvements in income, asset ownership, and savings levels before and after utilizing microfinance services. Overall, microfinance significantly boosted women's economic independence, enhanced asset ownership, encouraged entrepreneurship, and broadened business opportunities. However, the study's limitations include a lack of consideration for external economic factors and regional variations that may also influence the outcomes.

Khursheed (2022) analyzed the role of MFIs in empowering women in Pakistan, providing insights that inform both MFIs and policymakers on strengthening support for women entrepreneurship. Qualitative methodology was employed, involving primary data collection through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with six female borrowers of the Rural Community Development Programs (RCDP). The empirical

findings provided valuable insights into how RCDP initiatives empower women and contribute to poverty alleviation by fostering women's entrepreneurship. This study not only examined the empowerment outcomes resulting from microfinance but also offered guidance to MFIs on their significant role in economic development. However, the study is limited by its small sample size of six female borrowers from a specific program, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to broader populations of female microfinance clients in Pakistan. Additionally, the qualitative approach, while rich in detail, may not capture quantitative measures of impact and scalability necessary for comprehensive policy recommendations. Future studies could benefit from larger sample sizes and mixed methods approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted impacts of MFIs on women's empowerment in Pakistan.

Maroof et al. (2022) studied the relationship between microfinance and women empowerment, considering the moderating roles of household support and entrepreneurship in the district of Jhelum, Pakistan. A quantitative approach was employed to measure and interpret the study's results. Primary data were collected from 315 respondents using a self-administered questionnaire, and the data were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM). The findings supported the hypothesized positive relationship between the availability of microfinance and women empowerment. Additionally, the results provided evidence of the moderating effects of household support and entrepreneurship. While the study offers valuable insights for policy development by the government, policymakers, NGOs, and microfinance institutions in Pakistan, it has limitations. The study is geographically limited to the district of Jhelum, which may not be representative of broader trends across Pakistan. Moreover, the reliance on self-reported data could introduce bias, and other potential factors influencing women's empowerment were not considered in the analysis.

Al-shami *et al.* (2021) studied the effects of Al-Amal Bank's microcredit on women's empowerment in Yemen, a low-income country in the Middle East. The study employed panel data and household surveys to assess the impact from 615 sample households, 321 borrowers and 294 non-borrowers. It found that microcredit significantly improved

household incomes and asset accumulation. However, it did not affect women's decision-making and mobility, which were constrained by patriarchal norms. This study highlights the nuanced impacts of microcredit on different facets of women's economic and social empowerment in Yemen and provides insights for policymakers to enhance financial inclusion and empowerment strategies. Nevertheless, the study's scope was limited to evaluating microcredit's impact on women's empowerment using specific economic and social metrics at the individual and household levels, neglecting a broader spectrum of empowerment measures at the community level. Additionally, the study focused exclusively on microcredit from Al-Amal Bank, without considering the effects of different microcredit products.

Arshad *et al.* (2021) explored the unintended consequences of microfinance on women's empowerment in Pakistan. The objective of their study is to assess whether microfinance initiatives intended to empower women may inadvertently lead to unintended outcomes. This research used a cross-sectional quantitative analysis of a sample of 1000 selected female micro-enterprises in Pakistan. Methodologically, the authors conducted a qualitative inquiry, utilizing interviews and focus groups to gather data from microfinance beneficiaries in various regions of Pakistan. Their findings reveal complex dynamics where while microfinance has empowered women in economic terms, it has also posed challenges in social and familial contexts, potentially exacerbating gender inequalities. The study critically appraises these findings, acknowledging the nuanced impacts of microfinance on different facets of women's lives beyond economic measures. However, it also identifies limitations, including the scope of qualitative data, which may not fully capture broader quantitative impacts across diverse socio-economic contexts in Pakistan.

Islam (2021) studied the impact of Islamic microfinance services (IMFS) on women's empowerment in rural Bangladesh. Using a multi-stage sampling technique, primary data were collected through a face-to-face survey of 389 women respondents who had received IMFS from Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited. The reliability and internal consistency of the collected data were tested using Cronbach's alpha. To measure the

impact of IMFS on women's empowerment, paired-sample tests, logit regression, and proportion hypothesis tests were conducted. The data were interpreted using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that IMFS led to a structural transformation in the occupational dynamics of the respondents' families, shifting from agriculture to retail businesses. IMFS had a significant positive impact on household income, savings, and expenditure, improving the standard of living and human capital formation. Additionally, IMFS enhanced all three dimensions of empowerment: economic empowerment (ECEM), socio-cultural empowerment (SCEM), and familial empowerment (FLEM). While ECEM and SCEM positively contributed to overall women's empowerment, FLEM had a negative but insignificant impact on overall empowerment. Respondents' perceptions supported the finding that IMFS benefited rural women and empowered them. However, the study was limited by its reliance on self-reported data, which may have introduced bias. The sample was also limited to women who had received services from Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited, which may not be representative of all women receiving IMFS in Bangladesh. Furthermore, while the study highlighted significant positive impacts on economic and socio-cultural empowerment, the negative yet insignificant impact of familial empowerment suggested complexities in family dynamics that required further exploration. Future research should address these limitations by including a more diverse sample and exploring the nuanced effects of familial empowerment on overall women's empowerment.

Solomon (2021) explored the dimensions through which microfinance self-help groups (SHGs) facilitate women's empowerment in Alwar District, Rajasthan. A survey method was employed, targeting 550 women beneficiaries of microfinance SHGs, with 496 completed questionnaires analyzed due to partial responses. The data analyzed using SPSS, Factor Analysis, Pearson r, and various statistical tests, investigates the impact of microfinance on both economic and social empowerment. The findings reveal a positive relationship between microfinance participation and women's empowerment, highlighting improvements in economic self-sufficiency and enhanced social agency. However, critical appraisal identifies challenges such as incomplete data collection and potential biases in self-reported outcomes. Despite these limitations, the study underscores the

pivotal role of microfinance SHGs in empowering marginalized women, addressing both economic disparities and social inequalities within Rajasthan, thereby contributing to broader socio-economic development initiatives.

Akhter and Cheng (2020) explored sustainable empowerment initiatives for rural women in Bangladesh through microcredit borrowing. The study aimed to address the gap between poor rural women's access to microcredit and sustainable socio-economic development, comparing the empowerment outcomes of microcredit borrowers with non-borrowers in similar socio-economic contexts in rural Bangladesh. The total sample size was 428 women, out of which 328 were borrowers and rest 100 were non borrowers. Both descriptive and econometric models were used to achieve the study's objectives, alongside simple statistical data analysis and propensity score matching (PSM) techniques to assess the unique impact of microcredit on women's empowerment. The data sources included both primary and secondary data. The study found that female microcredit borrowers were more successful in creating financial assets and acquiring property. Additionally, microloans enhanced their mobility, increased their independent purchasing power, boosted their participation in decision-making processes, improved their living standards, and raised their legal awareness of domestic abuse. However, the study did not compare borrowers with non-borrowers who are members of the microfinance institution.

Owusu *et al.* (2020) examined the role of microfinance in fostering women's empowerment in Ghana, aiming to identify both challenges and prospects associated with these initiatives. The study adopted a qualitative approach, employing semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to gather data from microfinance clients and stakeholders across various regions in Ghana. With a sample size of 150 participants, consisting of both microfinance beneficiaries and key informants from microfinance institutions, the research explored how access to financial services impacted women's economic and social empowerment. Findings suggested that while microfinance contributed positively to women's financial inclusion and decision-making autonomy, challenges such as limited access to credit, gender-based constraints, and varying levels

of institutional support hindered comprehensive empowerment outcomes. The study critically appraised these findings, highlighting the need for tailored microfinance policies that address socio-cultural barriers and enhanced sustainable empowerment strategies. However, limitations include the qualitative nature of the study, which may not capture quantitative impacts comprehensively across diverse regions and contexts in Ghana.

Patel and Patel (2020) conducted a study aimed to evaluate the impact of microfinance on women's empowerment, specifically from a decision-making perspective. This research involved 512 Self-Help Group (SHG) members from the Aravalli and Mehsana districts of North Gujarat, including respondents from 12 villages in Bayad, Bhiloda, Kadi, and Mehsana talukas. Utilizing a paired sample t-test and an empowerment index, the study found that women's decision-making abilities significantly improved after joining the SHGs. Additionally, it was noted that women who participated in SHGs for longer periods and attended more meetings per year experienced greater empowerment compared to others. The study suggests that encouraging more women to join SHGs and ensuring regular meetings at convenient times can enhance their decision-making abilities. However, the study's limitations include its geographical focus on only two districts, which may not be representative of broader trends, and its reliance on self-reported data, which could introduce bias. Additionally, the study did not account for other potential variables influencing women's empowerment.

Rahayu (2020) examined the origins, initiators, and visions of Baitul Maal Wat Tamwil (BMT), Indonesia's first Islamic microfinance institutions IMFI and their connection to women's empowerment, focusing on four BMTs in Yogyakarta. Using a qualitative approach, the research involved case studies of four BMTs. The research identified four key groups instrumental in the development of Indonesian BMTs: ICMI (Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals), Islamic mass organizations, NGOs, and local governments, driven primarily by the issues of loan sharks and poverty alleviation. Despite women being crucial clients, none of the studied BMTs explicitly included women's empowerment in their organizational visions, indicating that their preference

for women clients is motivated by pragmatic business considerations rather than an understanding of gender inequality. The study's limitations include its focus on only four BMTs, which may not represent all BMTs in Indonesia, and its qualitative approach, which might not capture the broader quantitative impacts of BMTs on women's empowerment.

Debnath *et al.* (2019) conducted an empirical study to investigate the factors influencing microcredit accessibility in rural households and its impact on women's empowerment in Bangladesh. The study was based on 300 respondents, among them 180 were borrowers and 120 were non-borrowers. Both descriptive and econometric models were utilized to fulfill the study's objectives, with data collected from primary and secondary sources through surveys. The impact of microcredit was assessed across five dimensions: financial assets, mobility, independent purchasing ability, participation in household decision-making, and legal awareness. The findings reveal that microcredit significantly aids rural women in establishing decision-making rights and enhancing legal awareness. However, the results were mixed for the other three dimensions, suggesting that microcredit does not necessarily empower women in these areas. However, the study did not include non-borrowing members of the microfinance institution in its analysis.

Shaheen *et al.* (2018) explored the role of microfinance in economically empowering women in Lahore, Pakistan. The study was based on 175 female clients of the Akhuwat Foundation.. Descriptive and econometric models were used to achieve the study's objectives, with data gathered from primary and secondary sources through surveys. The impact of microcredit was evaluated across five dimensions: financial assets, mobility, independent purchasing ability, participation in household decision-making, and legal awareness. The findings indicate that microcredit in Lahore predominantly helps women establish their decision-making rights and enhances legal awareness. However, the results were mixed for the other three dimensions, suggesting that microcredit does not necessarily empower women in these areas. The study did not include non-borrowing members of the microfinance institution in its analysis.

Sultana *et al.* (2017) studied on the impact of microfinance on women's empowerment through poverty alleviation in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The primary objective was to compare the economic, social, and knowledge status of members and non-members of Self Help Groups (SHGs). The research was carried out in Chennai, where the SHG movement has seen rapid progress. The control group consisted of non-SHG members living in the same locality as SHG members. The aim was to determine whether SHG membership had a significant impact on the lives of these women. Primary data were collected from 800 respondents using schedules/questionnaires through purposive random sampling. The data covered SHG member profiles, savings, loans, and the economic and social benefits derived from SHGs. This primary data was supplemented with secondary data from SHG records, NGOs, and government offices. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were performed on the data. Logistic regression was used to identify factors affecting women's empowerment among all SHG members, including Muslim and non-Muslim respondents. The study concluded that microfinance primarily facilitated knowledge and social empowerment rather than economic empowerment. It significantly contributed to building confidence, courage, skill development, and overall empowerment. Microfinance is recognized as a vital means of enabling the poor to become self-employed. However, the study did not examine the changes in the economic condition of SHG members over time.

2.2.2 National Context

Chaudhary (2022) studied on the contribution of microfinance to women's empowerment in Janakpur Municipality, Nepal. The research employed a descriptive research design to assess the impact of microfinance on empowering women in the sub-metropolitan city of Janakpur. The sample consisted of 265 women who were members of various microfinance institutions in the area, selected through convenient and purposive sampling techniques. Data collection methods included structured questionnaires using a 5-point Likert scale, organizational documents, personal observations, and unstructured interviews. Questionnaires were distributed both manually and online. The study focused on aspects such as financial security, decision-making authority within the family, assertive involvement in legal and political spheres, and economic mobility of women before and after their engagement with microfinance. The findings indicated that microfinance has played a significant role in empowering women in Janakpur by providing access to information and increasing social and economic awareness through various programs. However, the study noted areas for improvement in microfinance policies and operations. A limitation of the study was its focus on the entire female population of Janakpur Municipality without considering differences in economic status and ethnicity among women.

Thapa and Chowdhary (2022) studied to evaluate how microfinance programs affect the economic and social empowerment of women entrepreneurs. A structured questionnaire survey was administered to 124 women entrepreneurs selected randomly from those receiving loans through various microfinance institutions using a group lending approach in Rupandehi district, Nepal. Rupandehi is renowned as a pioneer in microfinance services, having established the first microfinance institution in Nepal nearly three decades ago. The study employed statistical tools such as One-sample t-test, Paired Sample t-test, Wilcoxon test, and McNemar test for data analysis. The results indicated that microfinance contributes to increased business turnover, investment, savings, expenditures, and asset ownership among women entrepreneurs. Social dimensions of empowerment also showed improvement, including women's decision-making autonomy, family and social relationships, mobility, and children's education and health. These

findings underscored microfinance as a potent instrument for fostering women's entrepreneurship through both economic and social empowerment. However, the study's scope was limited to women entrepreneurs, excluding women engaged in farming and other micro-income activities, thus not fully exploring the broader impacts of microfinance on different segments of women.

Chapagain and Dhungana (2020) investigated the impact of a microfinance program on the living standards of clients, drawing insights from Nepalese MFIs. The study involved 480 respondents, including 240 microfinance clients with a minimum of five years of involvement in institutions across rural areas of Kaski district, and an equal number of controlled respondents with similar backgrounds selected randomly. Data collection utilized semi-structured questionnaires, observations, and focused group discussions, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative data. The study employed the Randomized Control Trial method and employed statistical tools such as parametric tests, non-parametric tests, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to assess the effectiveness of microfinance interventions on rural household living standards. Results indicated that microfinance significantly contributed to improving household standards in rural areas through self-help group approaches and enhancing employment opportunities. However, the study encompassed both male and female populations, despite microfinance clients primarily comprising females, thus not focusing exclusively on women's impacts.

Guvaju and Sherpa (2020) studied to achieve two main objectives: to analyze how women entrepreneurs contribute to lifestyle changes and to evaluate socio-economic activities, as well as to assess the effectiveness of microfinance in improving women's living standards. Primary data were collected from three microfinance institutions: Nari Chetana Laghu Bitta, Durga Mandir, and Nava Kantipur, with a sample size of 100 respondents surveyed. Quantitative analysis was performed using a Likert five-point scale questionnaire, alongside descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. Correlation was examined among variables such as changes in the lifestyle of women entrepreneurs, socio-economic activities, the effectiveness of microfinance (independent variables), and

women's empowerment (dependent variable). The study also included comparative analyses based on age, marital status, and educational qualifications. The research concluded that there is a positive relationship between women's empowerment and the effectiveness of microfinance, changes in the lifestyle of women entrepreneurs, and socio-economic activities. However, the study acknowledged limitations, such as conducting surveys via email and telephonic conversations rather than face-to-face interviews, and focusing solely on four variables—women's empowerment, changes in the lifestyle of women entrepreneurs, socio-economic activities, and the effectiveness of microfinance—without exploring other aspects of women's empowerment.

Jain (2020) studied to assess the impact of microfinance credit and savings on the socio-economic development of Nepali women in the eastern region of Nepal. Using a purposive sampling method, responses were collected from 97 women who had been independently using microfinance services for at least three years. The findings indicate that the utilization of microfinance services, including credit and savings, contributes to women's empowerment. Despite efforts by MFIs to uplift poor and marginalized women, only a small proportion of them are currently able to fully utilize financial services independently. The study suggests that for microfinance to significantly enhance women's empowerment, a larger number of women need to autonomously utilize their financial resources, thereby gaining greater bargaining power in household and outdoor decision-making. However, the study primarily focused on decision-making aspects of empowerment, overlooking other dimensions such as autonomy, mobility, and ownership of assets like land or houses.

Lamichhane (2020) conducted a descriptive study to assess the current status of women's empowerment, outline future strategies, and analyze the impact of microfinance on women's social, political, and economic status. Based on his personal experience and existing literatures, the study emphasized the positive relationship between microfinance and women's empowerment. According to the study, members of microfinance institutions (MFIs) exhibit greater control over savings and business income, play a more significant role in family decision-making, experience increased freedom from family

control, engage more actively in social and political activities, and expand their involvement in external endeavors. Microfinance is depicted as a catalyst for social change and women's empowerment. However, the study's conclusions were not supported by empirical evidence but rather relied on theoretical frameworks and logical explanations.

Sherpa (2019) studied the impact of microfinance programs on the economic and social empowerment of participants in Kirtipur Municipality. The study selected 150 women members using a judgmental sampling method. It employed descriptive and explanatory research designs to achieve its objectives. The findings indicated that MFIs predominantly focus on savings, lending practices, and effective training services. Participants perceived both social and economic empowerment through microfinance programs, although they noted limited impact on information empowerment. The study highlighted a significant relationship between microfinance services and women's empowerment. However, it primarily concentrated on economic and social dimensions of empowerment while neglecting other dimensions such as psychological and political aspects.

Aryal (2018) conducted a study to investigate the impact of microfinance programs on the economic, decision-making, and business involvement of rural women from Gulmi district, both before and after their participation in microfinance initiatives. It also examined the influence of women's education levels on their performance within microfinance. The study utilized self-designed questionnaires administered to village women, supplemented by insights from previous research. Primary data was gathered through household surveys using structured questionnaires and interviews among 120 members of Global IME Bank and Suryodaya Microfinance in Chandrakot Municipality. The research findings indicated notable improvements not only in economic outcomes but also in social dimensions. Despite varying interest rates charged by companies, the results demonstrated positive impacts on income and savings. However, the study acknowledged challenges faced by poor villagers, who encounter higher interest rates and limited access to lending compared to urban women. A limitation of the study was its

focus solely on microfinance programs operated by Global IME Bank and Suryodaya Microfinance in Chandrakot Municipality, which restricted its generalizability.

Gyanwali (2018) studied the impact of microfinance institutions on women's economic empowerment in Butwal Sub-Municipality. The study employed both descriptive and analytical research methodologies, utilizing data collected through household surveys from 400 respondents. The research concluded that there is a significant and positive correlation between access to credit facilities and women's economic empowerment. Income status was also found to be positively associated with women's economic empowerment. However, the study did not find a significant relationship between savings facilities and women's economic empowerment. Additionally, capacity building programs and access to insurance facilities were positively correlated with women's empowerment. Despite these findings, the study primarily relied on primary data and did not comprehensively capture other determinants of empowerment such as independence in purchase decisions, mobility, and legal awareness among women.

Shakya (2016) studied relationship between microfinance and women empowerment. The study utilized both qualitative and quantitative approaches, incorporating both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was collected through telephonic interviews from 49 microcredit borrower women: 31 from Kathmandu and 18 from Chitlang, Makawanpur. Secondary data was gathered from books, journals, and other scholarly sources. The study highlighted that rural villager, predominantly engaged in agriculture, are often more cautious about continuing credit services due to their dependence on the agricultural sector. In contrast, urban women engaged in commercial enterprises display greater determination to sustain loans, even amidst challenges such as natural disasters like floods. Overall, the analysis demonstrated a positive impact of microfinance on women's economic and social standards of living. Many women who previously lived under societal constraints, adhering to family directives, have transformed into small-scale entrepreneurs. Their confidence levels have increased, enabling them to participate in family decision-making. However, the study did not compare borrowers and non-

borrowers, nor did it assess changes over time—before and after accessing microcredit facilities—which limits its comprehensive analysis.

Kafle (2015) examined the impact of micro loans on women's economic activities. It has specifically highlighted how women's income generating activities through small loans help to improve their status in household and local communities. The data were collected from 11 women engaged in VDRC-Nepal's microcredit program through semi-structured interviews, two focus group discussions and field observation. Findings of the empirical study have shown that the access to small loans for income generating activities has positive impact on women's empowerment. Women's participation in micro credit has increased their mobility contributing to the change in social values. Further, women's active participation in local issues mobilization has changed community perception on women's roles and responsibilities. However, familial pressures sometimes led women to use small loans for purposes other than income generation, thereby increasing their vulnerability. Despite providing financial services, microfinance often did not fully meet women's expectations and needs. One limitation of the study was its small sample size of 11 women participating in the NGO's microcredit program in Jamuniya, potentially limiting its broader applicability to the entire population of the area.

Limbu (2014) studied to explore the impact of microfinance on poverty reduction and women's empowerment in Bayarban VDC, Morang district. The research involved a sample of 117 women who had participated in microfinance programs for six years. Using descriptive analytical techniques, the study assessed various dimensions of empowerment, including economic engagement, health awareness, sanitation practices, and gender equality consciousness. The findings indicated that microfinance initiatives had a positive impact on the participants. Women involved in microfinance reported increased economic activities and opportunities to break free from household constraints by organizing into groups for productive and social activities. Moreover, there was evidence of heightened awareness regarding healthcare and sanitation, leading to reduced smoking and alcohol consumption among the participants. Despite these positive outcomes, the study's reliance on descriptive analysis limited its ability to establish causal

relationships between microfinance participation and observed changes. The absence of comparative data from before participants accessed microcredit facilities further constrained the depth of analysis.

Adhikari and Shrestha (2013) conducted a mixed-methods study to explore the economic impact of microfinance in Nepal, specifically focusing on the Manamaiju Village Development Committee in Kathmandu. Their research integrated quantitative and qualitative data collected from primary sources such as interviews and surveys, supplemented by secondary sources. The study encompassed 186 participants, comprising 121 microfinance loan recipients and 65 non-recipients. Findings revealed that microfinance borrowers experienced significant economic improvements, particularly through the establishment of small businesses, leading to higher socio-economic statuses compared to non-recipients. However, the study's emphasis on entrepreneurial activities among loan recipients overlooked other uses of microfinance, such as agriculture, and did not explicitly analyze gender-specific impacts despite including both men and women in the sample. These insights underscore the transformative potential of microfinance in enhancing economic well-being while highlighting the need for broader inclusivity and more nuanced gender analyses in microfinance research.

2.3 Research Gap

On review of the abovementioned literatures, on topics related to economic empowerment of women through microcredit, these studies underscore the complex interplay between microfinance interventions and women's empowerment. While microfinance contributes positively to economic outcomes like income generation and asset accumulation, its impact on broader empowerment facets like decision-making autonomy and social mobility varies widely. Cultural and socio-economic contexts significantly shape these outcomes, influencing the effectiveness of microfinance programs in fostering comprehensive empowerment.

On reviewing the past research, particularly domestic, following gaps are identified:

- Exclusion of non-business activities: Many studies, including Thapa and Chowdhary (2022) and Adhikari and Shrestha (2013), focused primarily on women engaged in business activities, overlooking those involved in farming and other non-business pursuits.
- Lack of segment-specific analysis: Several studies, such as Chaudhary (2022) and Aryal (2018), did not consider differences in economic status and ethnicity among women or focused solely on specific geographic or programmatic areas, limiting broader applicability.
- Reliance on descriptive analysis: Studies like Limbu (2014) and Lamichhane (2020) relied heavily on descriptive analysis or theoretical frameworks without empirical evidence, limiting the establishment of causal relationships.
- Limited scope of empowerment dimensions: Study by Sherpa (2019) and Jain (2020) concentrated on specific aspects of empowerment, such as economic and social dimensions, while neglecting others like psychological, political, autonomy, mobility, and asset ownership.
- Survey methodology limitations: Guvaju and Sherpa (2020) conducted surveys via email and telephone, which might lack the depth of face-to-face interviews.
- Small sample sizes: Studies such as Kafle (2015) and Jain (2020) had small sample sizes, limiting the generalizability of their findings.
- Inclusion of both genders: Chapagain and Dhungana (2020) included both male and female populations, diluting the specific findings related to women's impacts.
- Focus on specific programs: Aryal (2018) and Adhikari and Shrestha (2013) restricted their focus to specific microfinance programs or institutions, which limits the generalizability of their findings.
- Lack of longitudinal analysis: Studies like Shakya (2016) and Limbu (2014) did not compare conditions before and after accessing microcredit facilities or changes over time, limiting a comprehensive analysis of impacts.

- None of them studied solely in the backward and marginalized community like Rajbanshi Community where the level of financial awareness is very low.

To fulfill the abovementioned gaps, this study takes a holistic approach by examining both economic and social factors, such as leadership, family decision-making, ownership of household resources, and changes in household consumption quality, while comparing non-borrowers and analyzing pre- and post-microcredit access scenarios.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology employed in this study, detailing the techniques and procedures applied throughout the research. It encompasses the selection of the study area, research design, types and sources of data utilized, sampling methodology and process, techniques for data collection, and methods for presenting the collected data.

3.2 Theoretical/ conceptual framework

A conceptual framework serves as a researcher's theoretical blueprint that integrates existing literature to explain a particular phenomenon. It involves synthesizing relevant theories, concepts, and empirical findings to provide a structured understanding of the research topic. Empowerment theory underscores the role of financial resources in enhancing women's socio-economic status. Previous studies, provide empirical evidence on microcredit's impact on income generation, asset accumulation, decision-making, and social mobility, offering a robust foundation for analyzing the specific effects of microcredit on the economic empowerment of women.

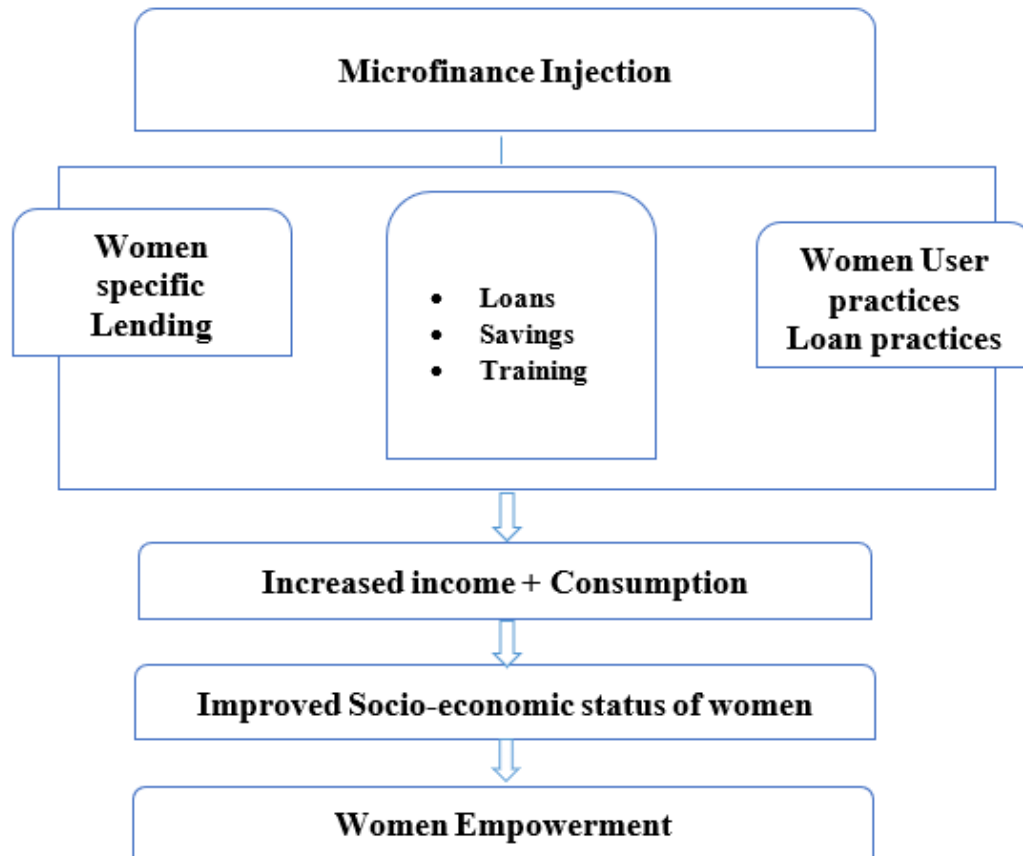
Empowerment entails: having control or gaining further control; having a voice and being heard; the ability to define and create from a women's perspective; influencing social decisions beyond traditional gender roles; and being recognized and respected as equal citizens and contributors to society (Griffen, 1987).

Economic empowerment for women encompasses their ability to participate equitably in established markets, control and access productive resources, secure meaningful employment opportunities, exert autonomy over their time, lives, and bodies, and enhance their voice, agency, and active participation in economic decision-making across various levels, ranging from household dynamics to international arenas (Mahbub, 2021)

A brief outline of the conceptual framework is drawn as follows:

Figure 3.1

Conceptual Framework



Source: Khan et al. (2020)

The figure 3.1 visually represents the sequential steps from microcredit access to empowerment outcomes, emphasizing the pathways through which economic empowerment of women is facilitated. The process starts with the injection of microfinance, specifically through women-specific lending. This involves providing loans, savings, and training tailored to women's needs. Women then utilize these financial services to practice effective loan management. This leads to increased income and consumption, subsequently improving the socio-economic status of women. Ultimately, these improvements contribute to the overall empowerment of women, enabling them to have greater autonomy and influence in both their personal and professional lives.

This conceptual framework provides a structured overview of how microcredit can contribute to the women empowerment, highlighting the interplay between various factors and processes involved in the thesis topic.

3.3 Research Design

The study uses descriptive and analytical research design employing both qualitative as well quantitative data collected from the survey. The study is designed as to give a clear picture of the impacts of microcredit facilities for economic empowerment of women from Rajbanshi community with the help of primary data with useful suggestions and recommendation.

3.4 Nature and Sources of Data

The study is based upon both primary and secondary data. The source of primary data is from the household survey in the study area through interview with defined questionnaire, observation, interaction and so on. Secondary data is sourced through books and periodicals, various websites, journals, articles, dictionaries, population census (CBS, 2021), local level profiles (GRM, 2023), DDC profiles etc.

3.5 Data Collection Method

3.5.1 Study Area

The study specifically targets Rajbanshi women living in ward number 1 of Gauriganj rural municipality, located in the Jhapa district of Nepal (Annex III). Despite their significant presence in the region, previous studies have not adequately explored their specific socio-economic conditions, challenges, and opportunities, particularly in relation to issues such as economic empowerment. Additionally, there are multiple MFIs operating in this area since last 5-10 years, which are mostly women centric. By focusing on this community, the study aims to provide valuable insights that could contribute to better understanding and addressing the needs of Rajbanshi women in rural Nepal.

3.5.2 Sampling Design

There are total of 3,974 Rajbanshi female population residing in the Gauriganj rural municipality of Jhapa district (CBS, 2021). And as per age-group wise distribution, women from age 20-60 years in the Gauriganj rural municipality are 27.9 percent (GRM, 2024). Hence, the total population of the target group i.e. Rajbanshi females in the age ranging from 20-60 are 1,109. Now calculating the sample size taking 95 percent confidence level as per W.W. Daniel's sample size calculation formulae, at margin of error of 9 percent, the sample size comes out to be approximately 107. However, this study takes the sample of 120 women, using simple random sampling technique from ward number 1 of the Gauriganj rural municipality. Out of the total sample of 120 women, 114 are connected to the microfinance facility, either they are borrower at present or not; balance six respondent women are not connected to the microfinance facility. The target respondents are in the age range of 20-60 years and who are permanent residents of that area.

Table 3.2

Daniel's sample size calculation:

Parameter	Value
Population size	1,109
Margin of error	9% (0.9)
Confidence level	95%
Z value (for 95% confidence)	1.96
Initial sample size (n)	118.58
Finite population correction	Yes
Adjusted sample size	107.17

The formula for calculation of the sample size is as follows:

Step 1: The formula to calculate the initial sample size (n) for an infinite population is:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1-p)}{e^2} \text{-----eq (n)}$$

Where,

- Z is the Z value (Z = 1.96 for 95% confidence level)
- p is the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population (if unknown, typically p = 0.5 is used for maximum variability)
- e is the margin of error (e = 0.09)

Step 2: To apply finite population correction:

The formula for adjusted sample size is:

$$n_{adj} = \frac{n}{1 + \frac{n-1}{N}}$$

Where,

- n is the initial sample size
- N is the population size (N = 1,109)

3.5.3 Data Collection Tool

The primary data is collected through the household survey using questionnaires (Annex I). The questionnaire includes a). general information of the respondent, b) economic background, c) information related to microcredit programs and d) changes in the quality of household consumptions due to microcredit program. The collection of secondary data is done through various published and unpublished materials related to the subject matter of the study. The major source of secondary data is retrieved through gender gap report (WEF, 2024), Nepal Census (CBS, 2021) etc. Secondary data in the hard copy form was requested from the concerned government authorities, banks, microfinance institutions and co-operatives.

3.6 Tools of Analysis

The collected data has been processed using a combination of statistical, descriptive, and analytical tools. Diagrammatic and graphical representations have been utilized to ensure clear and proper presentation of the findings. The Difference-in-Differences (DID) model has been used as the primary statistical tool. The data set used for DID analysis is presented in Annex IV Microsoft Excel has been employed for data processing.

The formula for the DID analysis is as follows:

$$\text{DID} = \text{Difference}_T - \text{Difference}_C \text{-----eq(n)}$$

Where,

T = treatment group (respondents who are using or have used microcredit facilities in the last five years)

C= Control group (respondents who have never availed microcredit)

Difference_T (D_T) = Average After_T – Average Before_T

Difference_C (D_C) = Average After_C – Average Before_C

CHAPTER IV

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the gathered data aimed at achieving the primary research objectives. Data were collected under specific headings and subheadings to comprehensively address the research goals, systematically analyzing the various transformations observed following engagement with Microfinance Providers (MFPs).

4.2 Overview of the Study

Over the past five decades, Nepal has seen significant changes in women's empowerment. Historically marginalized, women in Nepal have gradually gained more rights and opportunities through persistent advocacy and policy interventions. Various policies focusing on education, economic opportunities, and gender equality have been implemented to improve women's status. For instance, the Nepalese constitution ensures 33 percent representation of women in government and non-government sectors (Dhamala, 2019).

At the policy level, several initiatives have been enacted to support women's empowerment. These include educational reforms, economic opportunities, and measures to combat domestic violence. In Nepal, women's empowerment is measured by their equal access to and control over economic and financial resources. The Constitution of Nepal, adopted in 2015, guarantees women's rights as fundamental, ensures equality for all citizens, and prohibits gender discrimination. These legal provisions have led to significant progress in the status of women's rights and gender equality, particularly in the political sphere (MoWCSC, 2024). The government's commitment is evident in programs like "Empowered Women Prosperous Nepal," aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment that was developed and implemented in Nepal

between 2002 and 2013 by the ADB and the Department of Women Development of the MoWCSC (ADB, 2016).

Microfinance institutions (MFIs) have played a crucial role in this transformation. By providing microcredit, savings options, and training, MFIs have empowered women economically, enabling them to invest in small businesses and improve their financial stability. This has led to increased income, consumption, and overall socio-economic status, contributing significantly to women's empowerment (Acharya, 2019).

Nationally, Nepal's microfinance sector has evolved since the 1970s, expanding with the establishment of Grameen Bikas Banks and other MFIs. The country now has 55 MFIs (NRB, 2024) working alongside various banks and cooperatives to promote financial inclusion and alleviate poverty, particularly among women and marginalized communities. These efforts are aligned with national policies aimed at fostering economic growth and gender equality.

Focusing on Gauriganj Rural Municipality, this study examines the microfinance landscape in a region with a population of 35,506, where 52.4 percent are women. The major occupation is agriculture, and the literacy rate is 74.6 percent. The Rajbanshi community, constituting about 21 percent of the population (GRM, 2024), faces significant socio-economic challenges despite residing on fertile lands. This section presents a detailed analysis of the economic indicators of Rajbanshi women before and after microfinance intervention typically over the 10 years from 2013 AD to 2023 AD. It evaluates the differences in income, expenditure, savings, occupation, and quality of consumption among members and non-members of microfinance institutions.

The data presentation and analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the role of microfinance in empowering women economically in Gauriganj Rural Municipality. By comparing various economic indicators before and after microfinance intervention, typically over the 10 years from 2013 AD to 2023 AD. The study aims to highlight the transformative potential of microcredit and identify areas where further efforts are needed

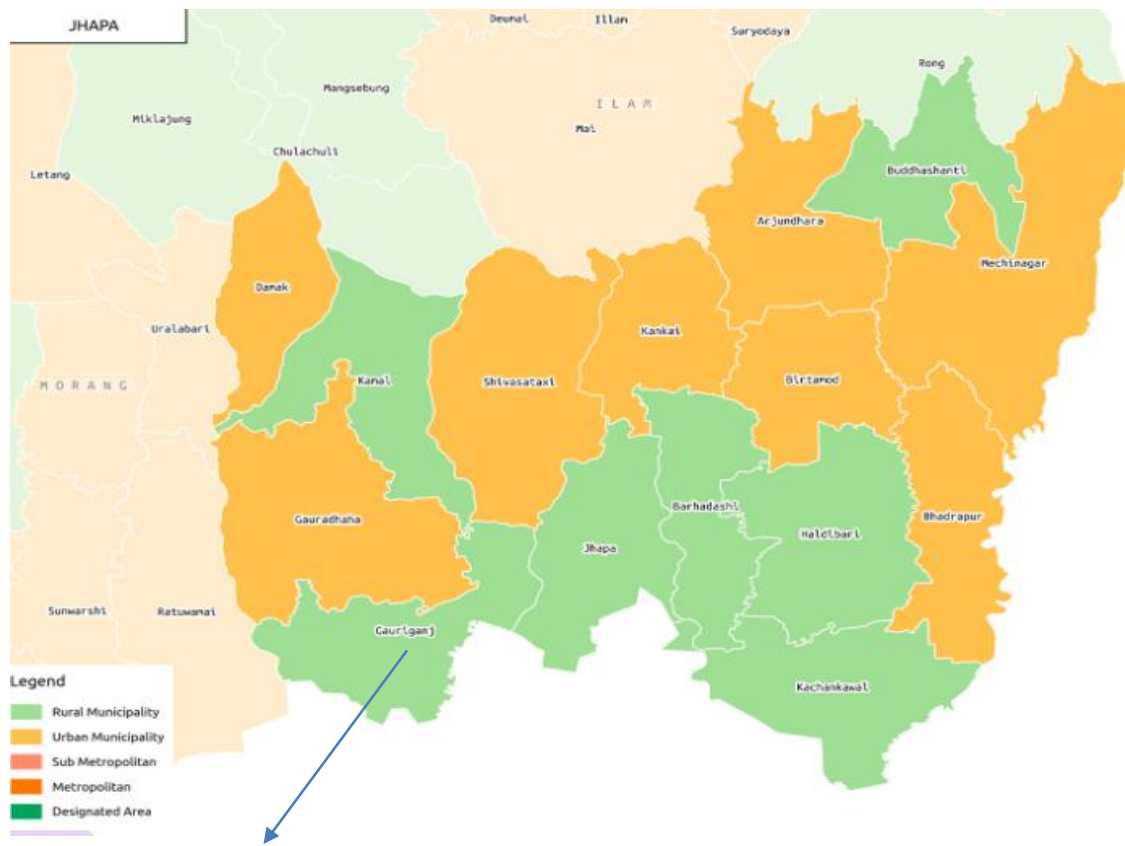
to achieve greater gender equality and socio-economic development in the Rajbanshi community and beyond.

4.3 Description of the Study Area

Gauriganj Rural Municipality lies on the southern belt of Jhapa district with a total area of 101.35 square km. The southern border of which is India. There are total of 8,547 households residing in this rural municipality. Total population is 35,506, out of which female population is 52.4 percent. The major occupation is agriculture and cattle farming while major communities are Rajbanshi, Santhal, Tajpuriya, Chhetri and Bramhin (CBS, 2021). There are a total of 25 community schools, 20 private schools and 2 Madarasas. The literacy rate is 74.6 percent which remains slightly lower than the district average of 75.2 percent (GoN, Gauriganj Rural Municipality, 2024).

Figure 4.3.1

Map of Jhapa District with Local Levels

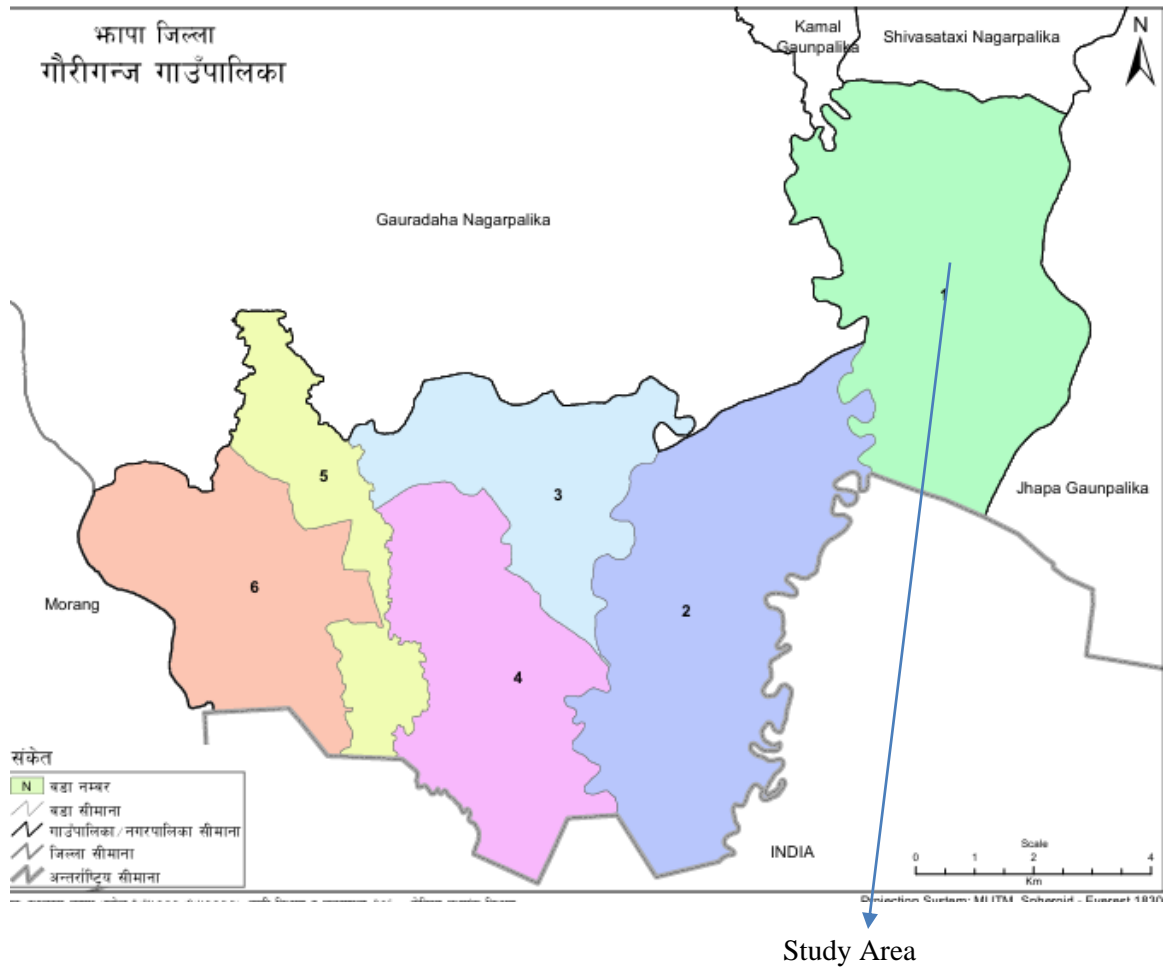


Gauriganj Rural Municipality

Source: <https://ehrpinspection.nra.gov.np/maps?district=4>

Figure 4.3.2

Map of Gauriganj Rural Municipality



Source: <https://nepalindata.com/resource/Administrative-Map---Gauriganj--Jhapa--Province-1/>

In contrast to other caste and ethnic groups like Brahmins, Chhetris, Newars, Rais, Limbus, among others, the Rajbanshis in Jhapa are characterized by their relatively lower political, social, and economic status. Over the past five decades, there have been gradual changes in their circumstances; however, they predominantly rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. The community primarily resides in fertile lands of Jhapa, Nepal, where they have established their settlements. Despite these agricultural roots, they continue to face socio-economic challenges that hinder their overall development.

4.4 Demographic Characteristics of the Households

4.4.1 Age structure of the respondents:

The socioeconomic status of women is significantly influenced by age, particularly during active and productive years, which are crucial for both individual and national development. To understand the impact of microfinance on women, it is essential to increase participation among women across different age groups, ensuring a comprehensive study. The table below illustrates the distribution of informants by age.

Table 4.1:

Age structure of the respondents:

Age Group	Number of Respondents	Percent
20-24	11	9
25-29	12	10
30-34	21	18
35-39	17	14
40-44	12	10
45-49	11	9
50-54	11	9
55-60	25	21
Total	120	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.1 shows the largest group is 55-60 years old comprising around 21 percent of the total respondent women. This is followed by the age group of 35-39 years with approximately 18 percent of the total respondents. Furthermore, this table shows that approximately 61 percent of the women are within 45 years old category.

4.4.2 Marital Status of Respondents

Marital status plays a crucial role in determining women's socioeconomic status, especially in patriarchal societies where access to resources hinges on marital status. Examining marital status is essential to studying the impact of microloans on women's

income-generating activities and household welfare. The following table outlines the marital status of the informants in table (4.2).

Table 4.2:

Marital status of the respondents:

Marital Status	Number of Respondents	Percent
Married	101	84
Unmarried	13	11
Widowed/ Separated	6	5
Total	120	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.2 shows that most of the respondents are married. Out of the 120 respondents, 101 women were married which translates into 84 percent of the total sample. This is followed by the number of unmarried respondents with around 13 percent share and the remaining 5 percent are widowed or separated.

4.4.3 Educational Status of Respondents

Education plays a pivotal role in determining individuals' economic status and overall life standards. It serves as a critical factor influencing various aspects of socioeconomic development, including employment opportunities, income levels, and access to resources. The educational backgrounds of respondents in this study are diverse, reflecting a range of educational attainment levels. This diversity underscores the importance of examining how different levels of education impact individuals' economic outcomes and their ability to participate effectively in income-generating activities. By analyzing respondents' educational status, researchers can better understand its implications for economic empowerment and development initiatives aimed at enhancing livelihoods and promoting social mobility in table (4.3)

Table 4.3:*Level of Education of the respondents*

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percent
Illiterate	17	14
General Education	76	63
SLC or Higher Education	27	23
Total	120	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

As shown in the table 4.3, majority of the respondents are literate, however, women with SLC or higher level of education is still low at 23 percent. In the sample size of 120 women, 17 were illiterate which is around 14 percent of the total sample.

4.4.4 Head of the Family

The role of the head of the family is crucial in influencing the economic empowerment of women. In Nepal, the head of the family often holds decision-making power over financial matters, including access to resources and opportunities for women. This dynamic can either facilitate or hinder women's ability to achieve economic independence and empowerment. Understanding how familial leadership structures impact women's economic participation and access to resources is essential for designing effective policies and interventions that promote women's economic empowerment in table (4.4).

Table 4.4:*Head of Household*

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percent
Respondent	16	13
Husband	56	47
Father (in Law)	41	34
Mother (in Law)	7	6
Total	120	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.4 illustrates the distribution of decision-making authority within households among respondents. It shows that husbands are the primary decision-makers in 47 percent of households, followed by fathers-in-law in 34 percent of cases. Respondents themselves

hold decision-making authority in 13 percent of households, while mothers-in-law play this role in 6 percent of cases.

4.5 Earnings, Savings, Level of Resources, Access to credit facilities its utilization:

4.5.1 Access to land, its ownership and fertility

Access to land significantly impacts women's empowerment, particularly in rural areas. Ownership and control over land enhance women's economic stability, providing a source of income and security. This, in turn, boosts their decision-making power within households and communities. Land access also facilitates access to credit, as land can serve as collateral. Furthermore, it improves social status and reduces vulnerability to domestic violence and economic dependency. In the context of microfinance, land ownership can amplify the benefits of financial support, enabling women to invest in agricultural or business activities, thereby fostering economic independence and overall empowerment. The details of access to land are presented in table (4.5).

Table 4.5:
Access to Land

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percent
Has land	104	87
Doesn't have land	16	13
Total	120	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.5 presents data on land access among respondents, indicating that 87 percent (104 individuals) have land while 13 percent (16 individuals) do not. This distribution highlights a significant majority of respondents who have access to land, which can influence economic opportunities and stability. Understanding these ownership patterns is essential for assessing the impact of land ownership on women's economic empowerment and livelihoods.

Land ownership plays a significant role in the economic empowerment of women. Land ownership grants individuals not only economic security but also social status and

decision-making power within households and communities. For women, especially in patriarchal societies, owning land can mean greater autonomy, increased access to credit and resources, and enhanced participation in economic activities such as agriculture and entrepreneurship. However, unequal land rights and inheritance laws till recent past has restricted women's access to land, limiting their economic opportunities. The details of land ownership are presented in table (4.6).

Table 4.6:
Land ownership details

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percent
Self-Owned	16	15
Owned by other family member	88	85
Total	104	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.6 details the ownership status of land among respondents, showing that 15 percent (16 individuals) own land themselves. In contrast, 85 percent (88 individuals) indicate that land is owned by other family members. This distribution underscores the prevalence of land ownership within families rather than individual ownership. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for evaluating how land ownership structures impact women's economic agency and access to resources.

Land fertility plays a crucial role in women's empowerment, particularly in agrarian societies. Fertile land enhances agricultural productivity, enabling women to generate higher incomes and improve household food security. This economic upliftment increases their financial independence and bargaining power within the family and community. Women who manage fertile land can invest in better healthcare, education for their children, and improved living conditions. Furthermore, fertile land allows for diverse crop production, contributing to nutritional diversity and overall well-being. Empowered through the productive use of fertile land, women can break cycles of poverty, leading to sustained economic growth and social empowerment. The details of land fertility are presented in the table (4.7).

Table 4.7:
Land Fertility:

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percent
Fertile	87	84
Not Fertile	17	16
Total	104	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.7 provides information on the fertility status of land owned by respondents, showing that 84 percent (87 individuals) have land classified as fertile. In contrast, 16 percent (17 individuals) who own land classified as not fertile. This distribution highlights the varying agricultural potential among respondents' land holdings, which can significantly impact agricultural productivity and economic opportunities.

4.5.2 Ownership of other resources:

Mobile phone ownership is vital for women's economic empowerment. It enhances access to information, financial services, and social networks, facilitating entrepreneurship and productivity. Women can access market prices, manage finances, and receive education and skills training via mobile phones. This connectivity fosters informed decision-making, collaboration, and support, significantly boosting women's socio-economic status and autonomy. The details of ownership of mobile phones are presented in table (4.8).

Table 4.8:
Ownership of mobile phones

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percent
Smart Phone	78	65
Feature Phones	32	27
Doesn't have mobile	10	8
Total	120	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.8 shows the distribution of mobile phone ownership among respondents, indicating that 65 percent (78 individuals) own smartphones. Additionally, 27 percent (32 individuals) use feature phones, while 8 percent (10 individuals) do not have any mobile

phone. This data highlights a high prevalence of smartphone ownership, reflecting access to advanced communication technologies among the majority of respondents.

Vehicle ownership is crucial for women's economic empowerment, increasing mobility and market access. It enables women to transport goods, access jobs, and participate in social events, enhancing economic activities and income. Vehicles save time, reduce physical burdens, and improve access to essential services, boosting productivity and quality of life. This autonomy and improved socio-economic status empower women economically and socially. The details of ownership of vehicles are presented in table (4.9).

Table 4.9:
Ownership of vehicle

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percent
Bicycle	91	76
Motorbike/ Scooter	26	22
3/4-Wheeler	1	1
Doesn't Have vehicle	2	2
Total	120	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.9 displays the distribution of vehicle ownership among respondents. It shows that 76 percent (91 individuals) own bicycles, 22 percent (26 individuals) have motorbikes or scooters, and 1 percent (1 individual) owns a 3/4-wheeler. Only 2 percent (2 individuals) do not own any vehicle, indicating that the majority of respondents have some form of personal transportation, predominantly bicycles.

4.5.3 Awareness of microcredit program

Awareness of microcredit programs is crucial for the economic empowerment of women. Understanding and accessing these programs can provide women with the necessary financial resources to start or expand businesses/ agricultural activities, improve their incomes, and gain financial independence. Increased awareness also facilitates better utilization of available credit, leading to enhanced entrepreneurial activities, greater

control over financial decisions, and improved socio-economic status. The details of awareness of microcredit program among the respondents is presented in table (4.10).

Table 4.10:
Awareness of microcredit program

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percent
Aware	114	95
Not Aware	6	5
Total	120	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.10 shows that 95 percent (114 individuals) of respondents are aware of microcredit programs, while 5 percent (6 individuals) are not. This indicates a high level of awareness about microcredit programs among the majority of respondents.

4.5.4 Motivation to join microcredit programs

Motivation to join microcredit programs is linked to women's empowerment, as it provides financial resources, business training, and support networks. This access enhances income-generating activities, decision-making power, and socio-economic status, driving economic independence and self-sufficiency. The details of reason to join microcredit program among the respondents is presented in table (4.11).

Table 4.11:
Motivation to join microcredit program

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percent
To become financially independent	23	20
To improve family condition	14	12
To generate more income	73	64
Other	4	4
Total	114	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.11 outlines the motivations for joining microcredit programs among 114 respondents, i.e. who are aware of the microcredit activities. It shows that the primary motivation is to generate more income, cited by 64 percent (73 individuals). Additionally,

20 percent (23 individuals) seek financial independence, 12 percent (14 individuals) aim to improve their family conditions, and 4 percent (4 individuals) have other motivations like to be a part of a support system.

4.5.6 Purpose of Microcredit Program

Microcredit and savings are interlinked in fostering the economic empowerment of women. Microcredit programs provide women with access to small loans, which they can invest in income-generating activities or use to start businesses. Concurrently, encouraging savings through these programs helps women build financial resilience, accumulate capital, and manage economic shocks more effectively. By combining microcredit with savings mechanisms, women can enhance their financial stability, increase their decision-making power within households, and achieve greater economic independence. The details of purpose of microcredit program among the respondents is presented in table (4.12).

Table 4.12:
Purpose of microcredit program

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percent
Saving only	16	14
Credit only	45	39
Both saving and credit	43	38
Other	10	9
Total	114	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.12 presents the preferences of 114 respondents regarding their use of microcredit services. It shows that 39 percent (45 individuals) utilize credit only, while 38 percent (43 individuals) use both saving and credit services. Additionally, 14 percent (16 individuals) opt for saving only, and 9 percent (10 individuals) use other services. This distribution highlights the diverse ways respondents engage with microcredit programs to meet their financial needs.

4.5.7 Impact on income levels

Under this heading, the study examines the impact of microcredit programs on the monthly income levels of respondents, comparing income levels before and after their involvement, typically over the 10 years from 2013 AD to 2023 AD. Through statistical analysis using mean values and percentages, the study assesses the financial changes experienced by participants. After participating in microcredit program, changes in mean income and the percentage of respondents experiencing income growth are calculated to measure the program's impact. This analysis provides quantitative evidence of how microfinance initiatives contribute to enhancing the economic well-being of participants by boosting their monthly incomes. The details of impact on incomes levels among the respondents is presented in table (4.13).

Table 4.13:

Monthly income before and after joining microcredit program

Income in NPR	Before		After	
	Number of Respondents	Percent	Number of Respondents	Percent
Upto 5,000	28	25	13	11
5,001-10,000	37	32	29	25
10,001-15,000	28	25	29	25
15,001-20,000	12	11	23	20
20,001 and above	9	8	20	18
Total	114	100	114	100
Mean income- NPR	11,210		13,991	

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.13 compares respondents' monthly incomes before and after participating in a microcredit program in Nepalese Rupees (NPR). It shows a decrease in lower income brackets and an increase in higher income categories after the program. The mean income rose from NPR 11,210 before the program to NPR 13,991 after, highlighting the program's positive impact on improving participants' average monthly earnings.

4.5.8 Impact on saving levels

Under this heading, the study examines the impact of microcredit programs on the saving levels of respondents, comparing their saving behaviors before and after program

involvement, typically over the 10 years from 2013 AD to 2023 AD. Using statistical analysis including mean values and percentages, the study assesses the financial changes experienced by participants in terms of their savings. It calculates changes in mean savings and the percentage of respondents who have increased their savings to measure the program's impact. This analysis provides quantitative evidence of how microfinance initiatives contribute to improving participants' saving habits and enhancing their financial stability and resilience over time. The details of impact on incomes levels among the respondents is presented in table (4.14).

Table 4.14:
Annual saving before and after joining microcredit program

Annual savings in NPR	Before		After	
	Number of Respondents	Percent	Number of Respondents	Percent
Upto 5,000	9	8	4	4
5,001-10,000	18	16	15	13
10,001-15,000	18	16	17	15
15,001-20,000	16	14	14	12
20,001-30,000	23	20	20	18
30,001 and above	30	26	44	39
Total	114	100	114	100
Mean Annual Savings- NPR	22,824		29,026	

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.14 compares respondents' annual savings before and after participating in a microcredit program in NPR. It shows a decrease in lower savings brackets and an increase in higher brackets after the program. With the increased income levels, the mean annual savings rose from NPR 22,824 before the program to NPR 29,026 after, indicating a substantial improvement in participants' saving levels due to their involvement in the microcredit program.

Performing Difference-in Difference (DID) analysis to analyze change in the level of annual savings of the respondents who are using or have used microcredit facilities in the

last five years vs. those who have never availed microcredit. The formula for the DID analysis is as follows:

$$\text{DID} = \text{Difference}_T - \text{Difference}_C$$

Where,

T = treatment group (respondents who are using or have used microcredit facilities in the last five years)

C= Control group (respondents who have never availed microcredit)

$$\text{Difference}_T (D_T) = \text{Average After}_T - \text{Average Before}_T$$

$$\text{Difference}_C (D_C) = \text{Average After}_C - \text{Average Before}_C$$

Table 4.15:
DID calculation for various saving strata

Annual Savings in NPR	Treatment Group			Control Group			DID
	Average After _T	Average Before _T	D _T	Average After _C	Average Before _C	D _C	D _T - D _C
Upto 10,000	8,167	6,278	1,889	9,889	8,667	1,222	667
10,001-15,000	15,667	12,467	3,200	15,333	14,333	1,000	2,200
15,001-20,000	22,308	17,846	4,462	20,667	18,333	2,333	2,128
20,001-30,000	32,684	25,105	7,579	34,250	28,750	5,500	2,079
30,001 and above	59,391	45,696	13,696	48,250	40,500	7,750	5,946
Aggregate	30,216	23,409	6,807	26,667	22,667	4,000	2,807

Source: Calculation based on Annex IV

The data in table (4.15) shows that the microcredit program significantly boosted the annual savings of the treatment group compared to the control group across all income categories. In the "Upto 10,000" category, the treatment group's savings increased by NPR 1,889, resulting in a DID of NPR 667. For the "10,001-15,000" category, the increase was NPR 3,200 with a DID of NPR 2,200. In the "15,001-20,000" category, savings rose by NPR 4,462, yielding a DID of NPR 2,128. The "20,001-30,000" category saw an increase of NPR 7,579 and a DID of NPR 2,079. The highest impact was in the "30,001 and above" category, with an increase of NPR 13,696 and a DID of NPR 5,946. Aggregately, the treatment group's savings increased by NPR 6,807, resulting in an

aggregate DID of NPR 2,807. This indicates the microcredit program's effectiveness in enhancing financial stability and savings capacity.

4.5.9 Use of Credit Facility

Under this heading, volume of the credit facility utilized is analyzed. 77 out of 114 respondents engaged in the MFI have availed loans at the time of the study. This indicates that approximately 67.5 percent of the respondents have taken advantage of the credit offerings provided by the MFI. This utilization rate provides insight into the prevalence and acceptance of microfinance loans among the study participants, reflecting their engagement with financial services aimed at enhancing economic opportunities and financial inclusion. The data underscores the significance of microfinance in providing access to capital for individuals who may otherwise have limited or no access to traditional banking services, thus potentially facilitating economic empowerment and development within the community. The details of usage of credit facility by the respondents is presented in table (4.16).

Table 4.16:
Credit facility availed as of now

Loan amount in NPR	Number of Respondents	Percent
Upto 20,000	5	6
20,001-40,000	12	16
40,001-60,000	16	21
60,001-80,000	11	14
80,001-100,000	13	17
100,001 and above	20	26
Total	77	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.16 summarizes loan amounts in NPR among respondents. It shows a majority borrowing higher amounts, with 26 percent receiving loans of NPR 100,001 and above. Smaller loan amounts below NPR 20,000 were less common, representing only 6 percent of respondents. The distribution underscores the range of financial support provided by microcredit programs to meet diverse participant needs.

4.5.10 Microcredit’s impact on income levels

Under this section, the analysis focuses on understanding how the usage of credit relates to the income levels of respondents engaged in the microcredit program. Out of the total 114 respondents involved in the program, 88 have utilized credit facilities either currently or in the past five years. This indicates that approximately 77.2 percent of the respondents have accessed microcredit within the specified timeframe. The analysis explores the correlation between credit utilization and income levels among these respondents. It investigates whether borrowing from microfinance institutions (MFIs) has contributed to an increase in income, stability of income streams, or diversification of income sources. Factors such as the amount of credit availed, its effective utilization in income-generating activities (such as small businesses or agricultural ventures), and the subsequent impact on household or individual earnings are considered. By examining this relationship, the study aims to assess the effectiveness of microcredit in improving economic outcomes and livelihoods within the community. It seeks to provide insights into how access to financial services can potentially enhance income levels and promote financial inclusion among individuals who may otherwise have limited access to formal banking services. The details of impact on incomes levels among the respondents is presented in table (4.17).

Table 4.17:

Comparison of income levels, after joining microfinance program- loanees vs non-loanees

Income in NPR	Availing Credit		Not Availing credit	
	Number of Respondents	Percent	Number of Respondents	Percent
Upto 5,000	5	6	8	31
5,001-10,000	24	27	5	19
10,001-15,000	26	30	3	12
15,001-20,000	19	22	4	15
20,001 and above	14	16	6	23
Total	88	100	26	100
Mean monthly income -NPR	14,352		12,769	

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.17 compares the monthly income levels of respondents who availed of microcredit ("Availing Credit") versus those who did not ("Not Availing Credit"), in NPR among the respondents who were aware and engaged in the microfinance program. It shows that a higher percentage of respondents availing credit had monthly incomes ranging from NPR 5,001 to NPR 15,000 compared to those not availing credit, who predominantly earned up to NPR 5,000. Among those availing credit, the mean monthly income was NPR 14,325, higher than the NPR 12,769 mean income for those not availing credit. This suggests that microcredit has a positive impact on increasing income levels among participants, contributing to their economic stability and well-being.

Performing Difference-in Difference (DID) analysis to analyze change in the income levels of the respondents who are using or have used microcredit facilities in the last five years vs. those who have never availed the microcredit. The formula for the DID analysis is as follows:

Table 4.18:
DID calculation for various income strata

Monthly incomes in NPR	Treatment Group			Control Group			DID $D_T - D_C$
	Average After T	Average Before T	D_T	Average After C	Average Before C	D_C	
Upto 5,000	5,733	4,000	1,733	5,267	3,867	1,400	333
5,001-10,000	10,800	8,514	2,286	10,750	9,500	1,250	1,036
10,001-15,000	17,000	13,348	3,652	16,400	13,600	2,800	852
15,001 and above	27,200	22,800	4,400	26,857	23,857	3,000	1,400
Aggregate	14,352	11,443	2,909	12,406	10,500	1,906	1,003

Source: Calculation based on Annex IV

The data reveals that microcredit facilities have positively impacted the monthly incomes of the treatment group across various income categories compared to the control group. For incomes up to NPR 5,000, the treatment group experienced a slight increase of NPR 333 more than the control group. In the NPR 5,001-10,000 range, the impact was more pronounced, with an increase of NPR 1,036. For incomes between NPR 10,001-15,000, the treatment group's income rose by NPR 852 more than the control group. The most significant impact was observed in the NPR 15,001 and above category, with an increase of NPR 1,400. Overall, the aggregate data shows that the treatment group's average

income increased by NPR 2,909, compared to the control group's increase of NPR 1,906, resulting in a Difference-in-Differences (DID) of NPR 1,003. This aggregate DID suggest a substantial positive impact of microcredit on the treatment group's income, reinforcing the effectiveness of microcredit programs in enhancing economic outcomes.

4.5.11 Purpose of Credit

Under this heading, the analysis focuses on understanding the specific reasons for which respondents have utilized credit facilities. Out of the total 120 respondents surveyed, 77 were actively availing credit at the time of the survey. This indicates that approximately 64.2 percent of the respondents were currently using credit from the microfinance institution (MFI). The analysis further explores the breakdown of how these respondents allocated their borrowed funds across various purposes, such as business expansion, household expenses, education, healthcare, or other needs. By examining the purpose of credit utilization, the study aims to highlight the diverse economic activities and personal investments supported by microfinance, thereby assessing its impact on enhancing livelihoods and meeting the financial needs of individuals within the community. The details of purpose of credit among the respondents is presented in table (4.19).

Table 4.19:
Purpose of Credit

Purpose of credit	Number of Respondents	Percent
Business	13	17
Agriculture	41	53
Multiple	5	6
Other	18	23
Total	77	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.19 outlines the distribution of respondents based on the purposes for which they utilized credit. Agriculture emerged as the primary purpose, with 53 percent of respondents using credit in this sector. Business accounted for 17 percent of credit usage, while 23 percent reported other purposes (mostly consumption and financing for education/ foreign employment as communicated), and 6 percent used credit for multiple

reasons. This breakdown reflects diverse economic activities supported by credit among the respondents surveyed.

4.6 Change in Consumption Pattern:

4.6.1 Change in quality of food:

Under the heading, the analysis explores the relationship between access to microcredit and its perceived impact on the quality of food consumption among the respondents. This section examines how borrowing from microfinance institutions (MFIs) influences the types and nutritional value of food consumed by individuals or households. It investigates whether access to credit enables respondents to afford healthier food options, improve dietary diversity, or enhance overall food security. The analysis may also consider factors such as changes in purchasing power, dietary habits, and nutritional outcomes linked to the availability of credit. By studying this aspect, the research aims to assess the broader socio-economic implications of microfinance on improving living standards, nutritional health, and well-being within the community.

Table 4.20:

Change in quality of food consumption after joining microcredit program

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percent
Improved	77	64
No change	43	36
Total	120	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

A majority, 64 percent, reported an improvement in the quality of their food consumption. Meanwhile, 36 percent indicated no change in their food consumption quality post-program. This distribution highlights the positive impact of microcredit programs on enhancing the dietary quality of participants

4.6.2 Change in construction material of house:

Under the section, the analysis examines how access to microcredit influences the type and quality of housing among the respondents. This involves investigating whether

borrowing from microfinance institutions (MFIs) enables individuals or households to upgrade their housing infrastructure, such as shifting from traditional materials to more durable or modern construction materials. The analysis may assess changes in housing quality, including improvements in structural integrity, safety standards, and living conditions as perceived by the respondents. Factors considered might include affordability of construction materials, access to skilled labor, and regulatory frameworks affecting housing development. By exploring these aspects, the study aims to gauge the impact of microcredit on enhancing housing conditions, promoting socio-economic development, and improving overall quality of life within the community.

Table 4.21:

Change in type of house after joining microcredit program

Type of roofing	Before		After	
	Number of Respondents	Percent	Number of Respondents	Percent
Roof of Straw	57	48	22	18
Roof of Tin	49	41	58	48
Concrete	14	12	40	33
Total	120	100	120	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4.21 depicts changes in respondents' housing types before and after their participation in a microcredit program, categorized into roofs of straw, tin, and concrete. It shows significant shifts, with fewer respondents having straw roofs (from 48 percent to 18 percent) and more adopting tin (from 41 percent to 48 percent) and concrete roofs (from 12 percent to 33 percent) post-program. This highlights the program's role in facilitating housing upgrades, enhancing living conditions through improved roofing materials.

4.7 Discussion:

Summing up the analysis following are the key outcomes/ results/ validation of the study:

- **Income changes:** The analysis reveals a significant increase in mean monthly income from NPR 11,210 to NPR 13,991 after participating in the microcredit

program. This indicates a positive impact on the economic well-being of the participants.

- **Savings:** Participants also experienced an improvement in savings, with mean annual savings increasing from NPR 22,824 to NPR 29,026. This underscores enhanced financial resilience and capability among program beneficiaries.
- **Consumption and quality of life:** There was a noticeable improvement in the quality of life indicators such as food consumption quality, with 64 percent of respondents reporting an enhancement. Moreover, housing conditions improved, evident from the shift towards more durable roofing materials (tin and concrete).

These findings align with previous literature on microfinance's impact on women's economic empowerment. Studies have consistently shown that microcredit programs not only increase income and savings but also enhance decision-making power and socio-economic status among women. The results from this study corroborate these assertions, highlighting the multifaceted benefits of microfinance interventions.

Overall, the study demonstrates that microfinance programs play a crucial role in empowering women economically in Nepal, as evidenced by improvements in income, savings, consumption patterns, and housing conditions. These findings underscore the importance of continued support for such programs to sustain and expand their impact on women's lives.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This section reviews how microcredit empowers Rajbanshi women in Gauriganj Rural Municipality, Nepal, focusing on economic gains, shifts in household dynamics, and enhanced consumption patterns. It concludes with recommendations to improve microcredit programs for sustainable economic empowerment of women from marginalized community.

5.2 Summary

This study investigates the economic empowerment of women from the Rajbanshi community through microfinance in Gauriganj Rural Municipality, Jhapa, Nepal. The primary objective was to assess the impact of microcredit services on women's economic independence and societal roles. A sample of 120 women was surveyed using structured questionnaires and interviews to gather quantitative and qualitative data. Descriptive analysis methods such as percentages, pie charts, means, and Venn diagrams were employed to analyze the data.

Data collection involved selecting a representative sample and administering structured questionnaires and interviews to gather comprehensive insights into the participants' economic activities, household dynamics, and perceptions of microfinance. The study employed statistical tools to analyze the data, focusing on changes in income levels, savings, investments, and women's roles within their households and communities.

The major findings of the study are summarized below:

Objective 1: To evaluate the changes in household earnings and savings due to increased access to microcredit facilities.

- Household earnings: Access to microcredit led to a significant increase in household earnings among Rajbanshi women. The mean monthly income rose from NPR 11,210 to NPR 13,991 after participating in microcredit programs. This increase was observed across various income brackets, indicating a broad impact on income levels.
- Savings levels: Microcredit programs also positively impacted savings levels. Before joining microcredit programs, a majority of respondents saved below NPR 20,000 annually. After participation, there was a notable shift towards higher savings, with many respondents now saving between NPR 20,001 and NPR 30,000 annually. The mean annual saving spiked to NPR 29,026 upon joining microfinance program from NPR 22,824 before. This reflects improved financial management and stability among participants.

Objective 2: To assess the impact of microcredit on the economic and social empowerment of Rajbanshi women in Gauriganj Rural Municipality

- Autonomy and decision-making: Microcredit enhanced women's autonomy and decision-making abilities within households. Participants reported greater control over financial matters, with a significant proportion stating they could make independent financial decisions regarding household expenditures and investments. This autonomy contributed to their economic independence and self-reliance.
- Mobility and access to resources: Improved access to microcredit facilitated increased mobility and access to resources among women. Many participants used microcredit to invest in small businesses or agricultural activities, which not only boosted their incomes but also expanded their access to markets and economic opportunities beyond their immediate communities.
- Household consumption quality: Participants noted an improvement in household consumption quality following their involvement in microcredit programs. This

improvement was particularly evident in dietary habits and housing conditions. Many reported upgrading from straw to tin or concrete roofs, enhancing living standards and resilience against environmental challenges.

These findings underscore the multifaceted impact of microcredit programs on the economic and social empowerment of Rajbanshi women in Gauriganj Rural Municipality.

5.3 Conclusion

The study underscores the transformative impact of microfinance programs on the economic empowerment of Rajbanshi women in Gauriganj Rural Municipality, Jhapa. It highlights that these programs not only enhance economic status but also foster financial autonomy among women, enabling them to initiate and sustain income-generating activities. This shift from economic dependence to independence is crucial for broader gender equality and inclusive economic growth in rural areas of Nepal.

Policy implications drawn from these findings suggest a need for continued support and expansion of microfinance initiatives targeted at marginalized communities like the Rajbanshi. Government policies should prioritize enhancing access to financial services tailored to the needs of rural women, including comprehensive training in financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills. Moreover, integrating gender-responsive approaches within microfinance policies can further empower women by addressing socio-cultural barriers and promoting equitable participation in economic activities.

5.4 Recommendation

Based on the comprehensive discussions and analysis conducted throughout this thesis, two key recommendations are proposed:

- Tailored microcredit program: Develop specialized microcredit programs for Rajbanshi women, featuring flexible repayment schedules aligned with crop harvesting periods. Integrate business training and mentorship to enhance financial stability and entrepreneurial skills, ensuring that financial products meet

the specific economic and cultural needs of the community. Conduct workshops on financial management, savings strategies, and market linkages to build entrepreneurial skills. This integrated approach aims to increase the efficacy of microcredit investments and empower women economically.

- Capacity building and skills development: Implement financial literacy and entrepreneurial training workshops tailored to the educational levels of Rajbanshi women. These workshops should improve financial decision-making and encourage diverse income-generating activities, fostering economic independence and enhancing decision-making capabilities within households. Encourage women to explore diverse income-generating activities beyond traditional roles, thereby fostering economic independence and expanding their decision-making capabilities within household finances.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can contribute to enhancing the economic and social empowerment of Rajbanshi women in Gauriganj Rural Municipality. These initiatives aim to address the specific challenges identified in the study, fostering sustainable livelihoods and promoting inclusive growth within the community.

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Annex I: Questionnaire

A. General information of the respondent:

1. Introduction of the respondent

Name.....

Age..... Gender..... Ward Number:.....

2. Marital Status

a) Married

b) Divorce

c) Widow

d) Separate

3. Family size:

Male..... Female.....

4. Head of household:

a) Respondents

b) Husband

c) Mother-in-Law

d) Father in Law

5. Educational status

a) Illiterate.

b) Literate

If literate,

a) SLC

b) Higher Education

6. Source of income of household

a) Farming (agriculture)

b) Other

If other,

a) Business

b) Services sectors

c) Foreign employment

B. Economic background of the respondent

1) Do you have land?

a) Yes

b) No

If yes, how much land do you have?

.....

2) Who is the owner?

- a) Husband b) Myself c) Others.....

3) Is it fertile land?

- a) Yes b) No

4) Do you have any surplus?

- b) Yes b) No

If yes, how much?

5) Do you sell it?

- c) Yes b) No

If yes, how much do you earn?

6) Do you have mobile?

- a) Yes b) No

If yes, is it smart?

- a) Yes b) No

What is the price?

7) Do you have vehicle?

- a) Four wheel b) Two wheel c) No

C. Information related to microcredit program

1) Do you know microcredit program?

- a) Yes b) No

If yes, how many programs are there in your area?.....

2) Are you a member of microcredit program?

- a) Yes b) No

D. Changes observed in the quality of household consumptions due to microcredit program

- 1) Has there been increase in quality of food consumption after joining micro credit program?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 2) Has there been change in structure of your house? If yes what types of,
 - a) Before.....
 - b) After.....

E. Respondent's view

What are the issues and what are the needs to be addressed?

- a).....
- b).....
- c).....

Annex II: Raw Data

S.N.	Name	Age	Marital Status	Family Size		Head of household	Education al status	Source of income	Land Ownershi p	Self Owned ?	Land fertilit y	Sale proc eeds?	If Yes, earnin g	Mobile in use	Vehicle in use
				Mal e	Femal e										
1	Indrawati	51	Married	3	3	Husband	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	15,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
2	Ishworwati	58	Married	3	2	Husband	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	25,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
3	Anita Kumari	38	Married	3	4	FIL	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	20,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
4	Adhika	60	Widow	2	4	Respondent	Illiterate	Farming	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	25,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
5	Dipa Kumari	53	Married	1	3	Husband	Illiterate	Farming	No		Yes	Yes	40,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
6	Uma Kumari	60	Married	4	3	Husband	Literate	Farming	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	65,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
7	Uma	44	Married	1	3	Respondent	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	55,000	No	Bicycle
8	Kandul	58	Married	2	2	Husband	Illiterate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	25,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
9	Ajo Devi	48	Married	2	3	Husband	Literate	Farming/ FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	60,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
10	Rajwati	43	Married	4	3	Husband	Illiterate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	65,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
11	Ujwolta	33	Married	4	2	Husband	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	60,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
12	Dhanwati	57	Widow	1	3	Respondent	Illiterate	Farming/ FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	40,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
13	Mayabati	37	Married	1	3	FIL	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	55,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
14	Urmila Kumari	45	Married	4	2	Husband	Illiterate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	30,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle

S.N.	Name	Age	Marital Status	Family Size		Head of household	Education al status	Source of income	Land Ownershi p	Self Owned ?	Land fertilit y	Sale proceeds?	If Yes, earnin g	Mobile in use	Vehicle in use
				Mal e	Femal e										
15	Hem Kumari	37	Married	2	3	MIL	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	50,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
16	Urmila	22	Married	2	3	MIL	SLC and Higher Education	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	60,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
17	Kamala Kumari	46	Married	3	2	Husband	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	30,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
18	Usha	26	Unmarried	2	2	MIL	SLC and Higher Education	Business	Yes	No	No	No		Smart phone	Bicycle
19	Krishna Kumari	54	Married	3	3	Respondent	Illiterate	Farming/ Other	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	25,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
20	Tarawati	54	Married	2	2	Husband	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	45,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
21	Kalpana	21	Married	2	2	FIL	SLC and Higher Education	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	15,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
22	Phulo Devi	47	Married	3	2	Respondent	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	80,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
23	Nemwati	52	Widow	2	2	Respondent	Literate	Farming	No		Yes	Yes	45,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
24	Mina Kumari	33	Married	2	2	FIL	Literate	Farming	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	70,000	No	Bicycle
25	Kabita	28	Married	2	4	FIL	SLC and Higher Education	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	40,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
26	Dhankumari	40	Married	2	2	Husband	Literate	Business/ FE	No		No	No		Smart phone	Bicycle
27	Kama Devi	59	Widow	2	3	Respondent	SLC and Higher Education	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	85,000	No	Bicycle
28	Dendasari	55	Unmarried	3	4	Respondent	Literate	Farming/ Business/ FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	45,000	Smart phone	Bicycle

S.N.	Name	Age	Marital Status	Family Size		Head of household	Education status	Source of income	Land Ownership	Self Owned ?	Land fertility	Sale proceeds?	If Yes, earning	Mobile in use	Vehicle in use
				Male	Female										
29	Dokosari	55	Married	3	3	Husband	Literate	Farming/ Other	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	100,000	No	Bicycle/ Motorbike or scooter
30	Devanti	32	Married	2	3	FIL	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	85,000	No	Bicycle
31	Shiva Kumari	59	Married	3	2	Husband	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	100,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
32	Rajwati	43	Married	3	5	Husband	Literate	Business/ FE	Yes	No	No	No		Smart phone	Bicycle
33	Bharati	30	Married	2	2	Husband	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	145,000	Smart phone	Bicycle/ Motorbike or scooter
34	Premwati	45	Married	2	2	Respondent	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	110,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
35	Rajkumari	43	Married	3	2	Husband	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	95,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
36	Ram Kumari	59	Married	2	2	Husband	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	85,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
37	Bishnu kumari	56	Married	2	3	Husband	Literate	Farming	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	95,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
38	Bhawana	30	Unmarried	3	4	FIL	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	120,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
39	Indrawati	58	Married	2	3	Husband	Illiterate	Farming	No		Yes	Yes	50,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
40	Shansari	39	Married	2	3	FIL	Literate	Business	Yes	No	Yes	No		Smart phone	Bicycle
41	Gita Kumari	51	Married	3	2	Husband	Literate	Business/ FE	Yes	No	Yes	No		Smart phone	Bicycle
42	Maina Kumari	34	Married	2	3	FIL	Literate	Farming	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	55,000	No	Bicycle

S.N.	Name	Age	Marital Status	Family Size		Head of household	Educational status	Source of income	Land Ownership	Self Owned ?	Land fertility	Sale proceeds?	If Yes, earning	Mobile in use	Vehicle in use
				Male	Female										
43	Dhulo	53	Married	3	2	Husband	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	110,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
44	Sushila	37	Married	4	2	Husband	Literate	Business	Yes	No	No	No		Smart phone	Bicycle
45	Krishnamaya	58	Married	1	5	Husband	SLC and Higher Education	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	90,000	No	Bicycle
46	Sharmila	21	Unmarried	2	2	FIL	SLC and Higher Education	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	125,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
47	Babita Kumari	33	Married	3	2	Husband	Literate	Farming	No		Yes	Yes	95,000	No	Bicycle
48	Mina	28	Unmarried	3	3	FIL	SLC and Higher Education	Farming	No		Yes	Yes	95,000	No	Bicycle
49	Asmita	20	Married	4	3	FIL	SLC and Higher Education	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	60,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
50	Mina Kumari	35	Married	2	2	Husband	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	105,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
51	Yasoda	42	Married	2	2	Husband	Literate	Business/FE	Yes	No	Yes	No		Smart phone	Motorbike or scooter
52	Phul Kumari	46	Married	4	2	Husband	SLC and Higher Education	Farming/Service	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	75,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
53	Lalita	37	Married	2	5	FIL	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	110,000	Smart phone	Bicycle/Motorbike or scooter
54	Nil Kumari	53	Married	3	3	Husband	Literate	Business/FE	Yes	No	Yes	No		Smart phone	No
55	Ambika	27	Married	4	3	FIL	SLC and Higher Education	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	115,000	Smart phone	Bicycle

S.N.	Name	Age	Marital Status	Family Size		Head of household	Education al status	Source of income	Land Ownershi p	Self Owned ?	Land fertilit y	Sale proceeds?	If Yes, earnin g	Mobile in use	Vehicle in use
				Mal e	Femal e										
56	Badami Devi	36	Married	2	2	Husband	Literate	Farming	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	115,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
57	Keshbati	59	Married	3	3	Respondent	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	120,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
58	Debaka	56	Married	2	3	Respondent	SLC and Higher Education	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	110,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
59	Devbati	32	Unmarried	3	2	FIL	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	105,000	Smart phone	Bicycle/ Motorbi ke or scooter
60	Sunita	21	Married	1	5	FIL	SLC and Higher Education	Business/ Service	Yes	No	Yes	No		Smart phone	No
61	Lila	22	Unmarried	2	3	FIL	Literate	Farming/ FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	20,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
62	Goma Devi	37	Married	2	3	Husband	Illiterate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	95,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
63	Menuka	31	Married	3	3	FIL	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	125,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
64	Sushila Kumari	43	Married	2	2	Husband	Literate	Farming/ FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	120,000	Smart phone	Bicycle/ Motorbi ke or scooter
65	Bulosari	37	Married	3	3	FIL	Literate	Business	Yes	No	Yes	No		Smart phone	Bicycle
66	Dhan Kumari	28	Married	2	5	FIL	SLC and Higher Education	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	130,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
67	Durga	34	Married	2	1	FIL	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	140,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
68	Purni	45	Married	2	3	Husband	Literate	Business/ FE	No		No	No		Smart phone	Bicycle

S.N.	Name	Age	Marital Status	Family Size		Head of household	Education al status	Source of income	Land Ownershi p	Self Owned ?	Land fertilit y	Sale proc eeds?	If Yes, earnin g	Mobile in use	Vehicle in use
				Mal e	Femal e										
69	Parwati	45	Married	2	2	Husband	Literate	Business	Yes	No	No	No		Smart phone	Bicycle
70	Draupadi	32	Married	2	3	FIL	Literate	Business/ FE	Yes	Yes	No	No		Smart phone	Bicycle
71	Memwati	35	Married	5	3	Husband	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	140,000	Smart phone	Bicycle/ Motorbi ke or scooter
72	Manasari	56	Married	1	3	Husband	Illiterate	Farming	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	30,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
73	Binda Kumari	37	Married	4	2	FIL	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	135,000	Smart phone	Bicycle/ Motorbi ke or scooter
74	Tilaksari	54	Married	2	2	Husband	Illiterate	Farming	No		Yes	Yes	35,000	Feature Phone	Bicycle
75	Dhumri	57	Married	3	3	Husband	Illiterate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	120,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
76	Muna	31	Married	3	4	FIL	Literate	Business/ FE	Yes	Yes	No	No		Smart phone	Bicycle/ Motorbi ke or scooter
77	Laxmi Kumari	33	Married	2	5	FIL	Literate	Farming/ FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	95,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
78	Thepisiari	54	Married	2	3	Respondent	Literate	Business/ FE	Yes	No	Yes	No		Smart phone	Motorbi ke or scooter
79	Rama	22	Married	4	3	FIL	SLC and Higher Education	Business/ Service	Yes	No	No	No		Smart phone	Motorbi ke or scooter
80	Taneja	56	Married	1	2	Respondent	Literate	Farming	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	145,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
81	Kushum Kumari	41	Married	1	3	Husband	Literate	Farming/ FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	95,000	Smart phone	Bicycle

S.N.	Name	Age	Marital Status	Family Size		Head of household	Education al status	Source of income	Land Ownershi p	Self Owned ?	Land fertilit y	Sale proceeds?	If Yes, earnin g	Mobile in use	Vehicle in use
				Mal e	Femal e										
82	Nirmala	27	Unmarried	1	3	FIL	SLC and Higher Education	Service	Yes	No	No	No		Feature Phone	Bicycle
83	Dendasari	55	Married	3	3	Husband	Literate	Farming/ Business	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	130,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
84	Kusawari	58	Married	4	3	Respondent	Literate	Farming/ Service	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	45,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
85	Rama	28	Married	3	3	FIL	Illiterate	Business	Yes	No	Yes	No		Feature Phone	Bicycle
86	Memata	42	Married	4	3	Husband	Literate	Farming/ FE	No		Yes	Yes	140,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
87	Chandrawati	38	Married	2	2	FIL	Literate	Business/ FE	No		No	No		Smart phone	Bicycle
88	Debwati	57	Married	3	4	Husband	Illiterate	Farming/ Business/ FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	55,000	Smart phone	Bicycle/ Motorbike or scooter
89	Mangalsari	49	Married	2	3	Husband	Literate	Business/ FE	Yes	No	No	No		Smart phone	Bicycle
90	Pramila	33	Married	3	5	MIL	Literate	Farming/ FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	75,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
91	Manju	29	Married	3	5	FIL	SLC and Higher Education	Business/ Service	Yes	No	No	No		Smart phone	Motorbike or scooter
92	Sita Kumari	50	Widow	2	3	Respondent	Literate	FE/ Other	Yes	No	Yes	No		Smart phone	Bicycle
93	Makhan	29	Married	4	3	FIL	SLC and Higher Education	Business/ Service	Yes	No	No	No		Smart phone	Motorbike or scooter
94	Durga	36	Married	4	3	Husband	Literate	Farming/ FE/ Other	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	45,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
95	Parala	44	Married	3	3	Husband	Literate	Farming/ FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	105,000	Smart phone	Bicycle

S.N.	Name	Age	Marital Status	Family Size		Head of household	Education al status	Source of income	Land Ownershi p	Self Owned ?	Land fertilit y	Sale proc eeds?	If Yes, earnin g	Mobile in use	Vehicle in use
				Mal e	Femal e										
96	Dev Kumari	57	Married	3	3	Husband	Illiterate	Farming/ FE	No		Yes	Yes	145,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
97	Sushila Kumari	35	Married	3	2	Husband	Literate	FE	Yes	No	No	No		Smart phone	Bicycle/ Motorbike or scooter
98	Durga	33	Married	4	3	FIL	Literate	Business/ FE	Yes	No	Yes	No		Smart phone	Bicycle
99	Malati Kumari	35	Married	2	1	Husband	Literate	Farming/ FE	No		Yes	Yes	110,000	Smart phone	Bicycle/ Motorbike or scooter
100	Mina	20	Unmarried	3	3	MIL	Literate	Farming/ Business/ Service	No		Yes	Yes	110,000	Smart phone	Motorbike or scooter
101	Khilasari	58	Married	4	3	Husband	Illiterate	Farming/ FE	No		Yes	Yes	80,000	No	Bicycle
102	Badami Devi	48	Married	3	2	Husband	Literate	Business/ FE	Yes	No	Yes	No		Smart phone	Motorbike or scooter
103	Bhutansari	49	Married	2	2	Husband	Literate	Business/ FE	Yes	No	Yes	No		Smart phone	Bicycle
104	Makhan	42	Widow	2	3	Respondent	Literate	Farming/ FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	80,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
105	Dimple	25	Married	3	3	MIL	SLC and Higher Education	Farming/ FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	115,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
106	Nirmala	28	Unmarried	2	2	FIL	SLC and Higher Education	Farming/ FE	No		Yes	Yes	100,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
107	Dev Kumari	33	Married	3	2	Husband	Literate	Business	Yes	No	No	No		Smart phone	Motorbike or scooter
108	Usha Devi	41	Married	2	3	Husband	Literate	Farming/ FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	140,000	Smart phone	Bicycle

S.N.	Name	Age	Marital Status	Family Size		Head of household	Educational status	Source of income	Land Ownership	Self Owned ?	Land fertility	Sale proceeds?	If Yes, earning	Mobile in use	Vehicle in use
				Male	Female										
109	Manju Kumari	34	Married	2	5	MIL	Literate	Business	Yes	No	Yes	No		Smart phone	No
110	Ben Kumari	34	Married	2	5	FIL	SLC and Higher Education	Farming/ Business/ Service	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	130,000	Smart phone	Motorbike or scooter/ Car
111	Mamata Kumari	39	Married	2	3	Husband	Literate	Business/ FE	Yes	No	Yes	No		Smart phone	Motorbike or scooter
112	Sunita	30	Married	2	3	Husband	SLC and Higher Education	Farming/ Business/ Service	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	145,000	Smart phone	Bicycle/ Motorbike or scooter
113	Mina Devi	30	Married	4	3	FIL	Literate	Farming/ FE	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	115,000	Smart phone	Bicycle
114	Kopila	27	Unmarried	3	2	FIL	SLC and Higher Education	Business/ Service	Yes	No	No	No		Smart phone	Motorbike or scooter
115	Gita	30	Married	3	2	FIL	SLC and Higher Education	Farming/ Service	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	100,000	Smart phone	Motorbike or scooter
116	Kabita	20	Married	2	5	FIL	SLC and Higher Education	Business/ Service	Yes	No	Yes	No		Smart phone	Motorbike or scooter
117	Susila	23	Unmarried	3	2	FIL	SLC and Higher Education	Service	No		Yes	No		Feature Phone	Bicycle
118	Tara Devi	55	Married	2	3	Respondent	Literate	FE	Yes	Yes	No	No		Smart phone	Bicycle
119	Rita	21	Unmarried	2	3	FIL	SLC and Higher Education	Business/ Service	Yes	No	No	No		Smart phone	Motorbike or scooter
120	Nemwati	58	Married	3	2	Husband	Illiterate	Service	Yes	No	No	No		Smart phone	Bicycle

S.N.	Name	Aware about MFI?	Motivation to join MFI	Use of MFI	Monthly income		Saving type	Frequency of saving	Annual Saving		Used credit	Credit Purpose	Improved quality of food consumption After MFI?	Change in house type	
					Before joining MFI	After			Before	After				Before	After
1	Indrawati	Yes	To earn more income	credit	1,000	1,000	Group	Monthly	3,000	3,000		Agriculture	No	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
2	Ishworwati	Yes	To earn more income	credit	2,000	2,000			2,000	2,000	10,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
3	Anita Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	credit	2,000	3,000			5,000	8,000	10,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
4	Adhika	Yes	To earn more income	credit	2,000	3,000	Group	Monthly	5,000	8,000	20,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
5	Dipa Kumari	Yes	Other	credit	3,000	4,000	Group	Monthly	3,000	4,000	30,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
6	Uma Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	credit	5,000	6,000			9,000	11,000	20,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
7	Uma	Yes	To earn more income	credit	5,000	6,000	Group	Monthly	8,000	9,000	40,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
8	Kandul	No			2,000	2,000							No	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
9	Ajo Devi	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	5,000	6,000	Group	Monthly	16,000	19,000	40,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
10	Rajwati	Yes	To earn more income	credit	5,000	6,000			8,000	10,000	50,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
11	Ujwolta	Yes	To be independent	credit	5,000	7,000			5,000	7,000	40,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
12	Dhanwati	Yes	To earn more income	Saving	3,000	3,000	Group/ Individual	Monthly	8,000	8,000			No	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw

S.N.	Name	Aware about MFI?	Motivation to join MFI	Use of MFI	Monthly income		Saving type	Frequency of saving	Annual Saving		Used credit	Credit Purpose	Improved quality of food consumption After MFI?	Change in house type	
					Before joining MFI	After			Before	After				Before	After
13	Mayabati	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/Credit	5,000	7,000	Group	Monthly	3,000	4,000	50,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
14	Urmila Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	other	3,000	3,000			9,000	9,000			No	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
15	Hem Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	other	4,000	4,000			7,000	7,000			No	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
16	Urmila	Yes	Other	credit	5,000	7,000	Group	Monthly	13,000	18,000			No	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
17	Kamala Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	other	4,000	4,000	Group	Monthly	9,000	9,000			No	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
18	Usha	Yes	To earn more income	credit	5,000	7,000			14,000	19,000			No	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
19	Krishna Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	other	4,000	4,000	Group	Monthly	8,000	10,000			No	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
20	Tarawati	Yes	To earn more income	other	4,000	4,000			10,000	10,000			No	Roof of Straw	Concrete
21	Kalpana	Yes	Other	credit	5,000	7,000			17,000	24,000			No	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
22	Phulo Devi	Yes	To earn more income	credit	7,000	8,000			12,000	13,000	30,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
23	Nemwati	Yes	To earn more income	other	4,000	5,000	Group	Monthly	10,000	12,000			No	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
24	Mina Kumari	Yes	To be independent	credit	6,000	8,000			10,000	13,000	40,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin

S.N.	Name	Aware about MFI?	Motivation to join MFI	Use of MFI	Monthly income		Saving type	Frequency of saving	Annual Saving		Used credit	Credit Purpose	Improved quality of food consumption After MFI?	Change in house type	
					Before joining MFI	After			Before	After				Before	After
25	Kabita	Yes	To be independent	Saving	5,000	5,000	Group/ Individual	Monthly	17,000	17,000			No	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
26	Dhankumari	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	6,000	8,000	Group	Monthly	11,000	14,000	40,000	Other	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
27	Kama Devi	Yes	To earn more income	credit	7,000	8,000			12,000	13,000	50,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
28	Dendasari	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	6,000	8,000	Group	Monthly	6,000	8,000	60,000	Business/ Other	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
29	Dokosari	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	8,000	8,000	Group	Monthly	14,000	19,000	60,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
30	Devanti	Yes	To earn more income	credit	7,000	8,000	Group	Monthly	18,000	21,000	60,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
31	Shiva Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	credit	8,000	9,000			19,000	22,000	40,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
32	Rajwati	Yes	to improve family condition	Saving/ Credit	8,000	10,000	Group	Monthly	17,000	22,000	50,000	Other	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
33	Bharati	No			5,000	5,000							No	Roof of Straw	Concrete
34	Premwati	Yes	To earn more income	credit	9,000	10,000			31,000	35,000	50,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
35	Rajkumari	Yes	To earn more income	credit	8,000	10,000			10,000	12,000	60,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Concrete

S.N.	Name	Aware about MFI?	Motivation to join MFI	Use of MFI	Monthly income		Saving type	Frequency of saving	Annual Saving		Used credit	Credit Purpose	Improved quality of food consumption After MFI?	Change in house type	
					Before joining MFI	After			Before	After				Before	After
36	Ram Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	credit	7,000	10,000			21,000	30,000	60,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Tin	Concrete
37	Bishnu kumari	Yes	To earn more income	credit	8,000	10,000			28,000	35,000	60,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
38	Bhawana	No			5,000	5,000							No	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
39	Indrawati	Yes	To earn more income	other	4,000	6,000			12,000	14,000			No	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
40	Shansari	Yes	To earn more income	credit	8,000	10,000			14,000	18,000	70,000	Business	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
41	Gita Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	7,000	10,000	Group	Monthly	11,000	16,000	80,000	Other	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
42	Maina Kumari	Yes	To be independent	Saving	5,000	7,000	Group	Monthly	8,000	11,000			No	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
43	Dhulo	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	9,000	11,000	Group/ Individual	Monthly	12,000	15,000	40,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Concrete
44	Sushila	Yes	to improve family condition	credit	9,000	11,000			5,000	7,000	60,000	Business	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
45	Krishnamaya	Yes	To earn more income	credit	8,000	11,000			9,000	12,000	80,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
46	Sharmila	Yes	To be independent	credit	10,000	11,000	Group	Monthly	23,000	25,000			No	Roof of Straw	Concrete
47	Babita Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	8,000	11,000	Group	Monthly	18,000	25,000	90,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Concrete

S.N.	Name	Aware about MFI?	Motivation to join MFI	Use of MFI	Monthly income		Saving type	Frequency of saving	Annual Saving		Used credit	Credit Purpose	Improved quality of food consumption After MFI?	Change in house type	
					Before joining MFI	After			Before	After				Before	After
48	Mina	Yes	To earn more income	credit	8,000	11,000			22,000	30,000	90,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
49	Asmita	Yes	To be independent		5,000	7,000			9,000	13,000			No	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
50	Mina Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	9,000	11,000	Group/ Individual	Monthly	19,000	24,000	100,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
51	Yasoda	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	10,000	12,000	Group	Monthly	16,000	19,000	20,000	Business	Yes	Roof of Tin	Concrete
52	Phul Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	10,000	12,000	Group	Monthly	5,000	6,000	40,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Concrete
53	Lalita	Yes	To earn more income	credit	9,000	12,000	Group	Monthly	13,000	17,000	50,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Straw
54	Nil Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	10,000	12,000	Group	Monthly	24,000	29,000	60,000	Other	Yes	Roof of Tin	Concrete
55	Ambika	Yes	To be independent	credit	10,000	12,000			12,000	14,000	80,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
56	Badami Devi	Yes	To earn more income	credit	10,000	12,000			23,000	27,000	80,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
57	Keshbati	Yes	To earn more income	credit	10,000	12,000			24,000	29,000	100,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Tin	Concrete
58	Debaka	Yes	To earn more income	credit	9,000	13,000			28,000	41,000	50,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin

S.N.	Name	Aware about MFI?	Motivation to join MFI	Use of MFI	Monthly income		Saving type	Frequency of saving	Annual Saving		Used credit	Credit Purpose	Improved quality of food consumption After MFI?	Change in house type	
					Before joining MFI	After			Before	After				Before	After
59	Devbati	Yes	To earn more income	credit	9,000	13,000			21,000	30,000	70,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
60	Sunita	Yes	to improve family condition	Saving/ Credit	10,000	13,000	Group	Monthly	22,000	28,000			No	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
61	Lila	Yes	To be independent	Saving/ Credit	13,000	13,000	Group	Monthly	34,000	50,000			No	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
62	Goma Devi	No			8,000	8,000							No	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
63	Menuka	Yes	To earn more income	credit	10,000	14,000			31,000	44,000	70,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
64	Sushila Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	10,000	14,000	Group	Monthly	34,000	47,000	80,000	Agriculture / Other	Yes	Roof of Straw	Concrete
65	Bulosari	Yes	to improve family condition	credit	12,000	14,000			23,000	27,000	100,000	Business	Yes	Roof of Tin	Concrete
66	Dhan Kumari	Yes	To be independent	credit	5,000	14,000			16,000	20,000	110,000	Agriculture	Yes	Concrete	Concrete
67	Durga	Yes	To earn more income	credit	12,000	14,000			27,000	32,000	110,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Tin	Concrete
68	Purni	Yes	To earn more income	credit	10,000	15,000			32,000	49,000	110,000	Other	Yes	Concrete	Concrete
69	Parwati	Yes	To earn more income	credit	12,000	15,000			19,000	23,000	230,000	Business	Yes	Roof of Straw	Concrete

S.N.	Name	Aware about MFI?	Motivation to join MFI	Use of MFI	Monthly income		Saving type	Frequency of saving	Annual Saving		Used credit	Credit Purpose	Improved quality of food consumption After MFI?	Change in house type	
					Before joining MFI	After			Before	After				Before	After
70	Draupadi	Yes	To be independent	credit	12,000	15,000	Group	Monthly	10,000	13,000	260,000	Other	Yes	Roof of Straw	Concrete
71	Memwati	Yes	To earn more income	credit	12,000	16,000			42,000	56,000	60,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
72	Manasari	Yes	To earn more income	other	3,000	10,000			14,000	16,000			No	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
73	Binda Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	11,000	16,000	Group	Monthly	29,000	42,000	80,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
74	Tilaksari	Yes	To earn more income	other	3,000	10,000	Group	Monthly	28,000	35,000			No	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
75	Dhumri	No			10,000	10,000							No	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
76	Muna	Yes	To be independent	Saving/ Credit	12,000	16,000	Group	Monthly	27,000	36,000	100,000	Other	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
77	Laxmi Kumari	Yes	To be independent	Saving/ Credit	15,000	16,000	Group	Monthly	13,000	15,000	130,000	Agriculture / Other	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
78	Thepisari	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	11,000	16,000	Group	Monthly	25,000	36,000	130,000	Other	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
79	Rama	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	15,000	17,000	Group	Monthly	38,000	43,000	40,000	Business	Yes	Roof of Straw	Concrete
80	Taneja	Yes	To earn more income	credit	12,000	17,000			7,000	10,000	90,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Tin	Concrete

S.N.	Name	Aware about MFI?	Motivation to join MFI	Use of MFI	Monthly income		Saving type	Frequency of saving	Annual Saving		Used credit	Credit Purpose	Improved quality of food consumption After MFI?	Change in house type	
					Before joining MFI	After			Before	After				Before	After
81	Kushum Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	15,000	17,000	Group/ Individual	Monthly	52,000	59,000	90,000	Other	Yes	Concrete	Concrete
82	Nirmala	Yes	To be independent	Saving	10,000	11,000	Group/ Individual	Monthly	29,000	32,000			No	Roof of Straw	Concrete
83	Dendasari	Yes	To earn more income	credit	15,000	18,000			11,000	13,000	70,000	Business	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
84	Kusawari	Yes	Other	Saving	12,000	14,000	Group/ Individual	Monthly	29,000	34,000			No	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
85	Rama	Yes	To be independent	credit	15,000	18,000			14,000	17,000	90,000	Business	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
86	Memata	Yes	to improve family condition	Saving/ Credit	14,000	18,000	Group/ Individual	Monthly	20,000	26,000	90,000	Other	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
87	Chandrawati	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	13,000	18,000	Group	Monthly	44,000	60,000	90,000	Other	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
88	Debwati	Yes	to improve family condition	Saving	10,000	14,000	Group	Monthly	32,000	45,000			No	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
89	Mangalsari	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	13,000	18,000	Group/ Individual	Monthly	47,000	65,000	90,000	Business	Yes	Concrete	Concrete
90	Pramila	Yes	To be independent	Saving/ Credit	17,000	18,000	Group	Monthly	11,000	14,000	150,000	Other	Yes	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
91	Manju	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	14,000	19,000	Group	Monthly	27,000	36,000	80,000	Business	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
92	Sita Kumari	Yes	to improve family condition	Saving	15,000	16,000	Group/ Individual	Monthly	18,000	19,000			No	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin

S.N.	Name	Aware about MFI?	Motivation to join MFI	Use of MFI	Monthly income		Saving type	Frequency of saving	Annual Saving		Used credit	Credit Purpose	Improved quality of food consumption After MFI?	Change in house type	
					Before joining MFI	After			Before	After				Before	After
93	Makhan	Yes	To be independent	Saving	12,000	16,000	Group	Monthly	37,000	50,000			No	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
94	Durga	Yes	To earn more income	Saving	15,000	17,000	Group/ Individual	Monthly	14,000	16,000			No	Roof of Straw	Roof of Tin
95	Parala	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	15,000	19,000	Group/ Individual	Monthly	18,000	23,000	110,000	Other	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
96	Dev Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	15,000	20,000	Group	Monthly	47,000	62,000	120,000	Agriculture	Yes	Roof of Tin	Concrete
97	Sushila Kumari	Yes	To be independent	Saving/ Credit	20,000	20,000	Group	Monthly	19,000	22,000	160,000	Other	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
98	Durga	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	15,000	20,000	Group	Monthly	43,000	58,000	300,000	Other	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
99	Malati Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	Saving	14,000	19,000	Group	Monthly	32,000	43,000			No	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
100	Mina	Yes	to improve family condition	Saving	20,000	22,000	Group	Monthly	32,000	39,000			No	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
101	Khilasari	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	17,000	21,000	Group	Monthly	33,000	40,000			No	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
102	Badami Devi	Yes	to improve family condition	Saving/ Credit	14,000	21,000	Group	Monthly	44,000	66,000	150,000	Other	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
103	Bhutansari	Yes	to improve family condition	Saving/ Credit	18,000	22,000	Group	Monthly	48,000	58,000	110,000	Other	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin

S.N.	Name	Aware about MFI?	Motivation to join MFI	Use of MFI	Monthly income		Saving type	Frequency of saving	Annual Saving		Used credit	Credit Purpose	Improved quality of food consumption After MFI?	Change in house type	
					Before joining MFI	After			Before	After				Before	After
104	Makhan	Yes	to improve family condition	Saving/ Credit	18,000	23,000	Group	Monthly	30,000	39,000	90,000	Agriculture / Other	Yes	Roof of Tin	Roof of Tin
105	Dimple	Yes	To be independent	Saving/ Credit	20,000	23,000	Group	Monthly	24,000	34,000			No	Roof of Tin	Concrete
106	Nirmala	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	22,000	24,000	Group	Monthly	29,000	35,000			No	Concrete	Concrete
107	Dev Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	credit	20,000	24,000	Group	Monthly	36,000	43,000	190,000	Business	Yes	Concrete	Concrete
108	Usha Devi	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	20,000	24,000	Group	Monthly	67,000	81,000	190,000	Agriculture	Yes	Concrete	Concrete
109	Manju Kumari	Yes	To be independent	credit	20,000	28,000			43,000	60,000	280,000	Business	Yes	Concrete	Concrete
110	Ben Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	25,000	30,000	Group	Monthly	32,000	46,000	120,000	Business	Yes	Roof of Straw	Concrete
111	Mamata Kumari	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	25,000	32,000	Group	Monthly	51,000	65,000	260,000	Other	Yes	Roof of Tin	Concrete
112	Sunita	Yes	to improve family condition	Saving	22,000	25,000	Group	Monthly	20,000	26,000			No	Roof of Tin	Concrete
113	Mina Devi	Yes	To earn more income	Saving/ Credit	30,000	34,000	Group/ Individual	Monthly	47,000	64,000	210,000	Agriculture / Other	Yes	Roof of Tin	Concrete
114	Kopila	Yes	To be independent	Saving/ Credit	25,000	35,000	Group	Monthly	75,000	105,000			No	Concrete	Concrete
115	Gita	Yes	To be independent	Saving/ Credit	45,000	50,000	Group	Monthly	100,000	110,000	40,000	Agriculture	Yes	Concrete	Concrete

S.N.	Name	Aware about MFI?	Motivation to join MFI	Use of MFI	Monthly income		Saving type	Frequency of saving	Annual Saving		Used credit	Credit Purpose	Improved quality of food consumption After MFI?	Change in house type	
					Before joining MFI	After			Before	After				Before	After
116	Kabita	Yes	To be independent	Saving	20,000	25,000	Group	Monthly	29,000	36,000			No	Concrete	Concrete
117	Susila	Yes	To be independent	Saving	25,000	26,000	Group/ Individual	Monthly	42,000	44,000			No	Roof of Tin	Concrete
118	Tara Devi	Yes	to improve family condition	Saving	25,000	26,000	Group/ Individual	Monthly	48,000	50,000			No	Concrete	Concrete
119	Rita	Yes	to improve family condition	Saving	20,000	29,000	Group	Monthly	31,000	45,000			No	Concrete	Concrete
120	Nemwati	No			35,000	35,000			70,000	70,000			No	Concrete	Concrete

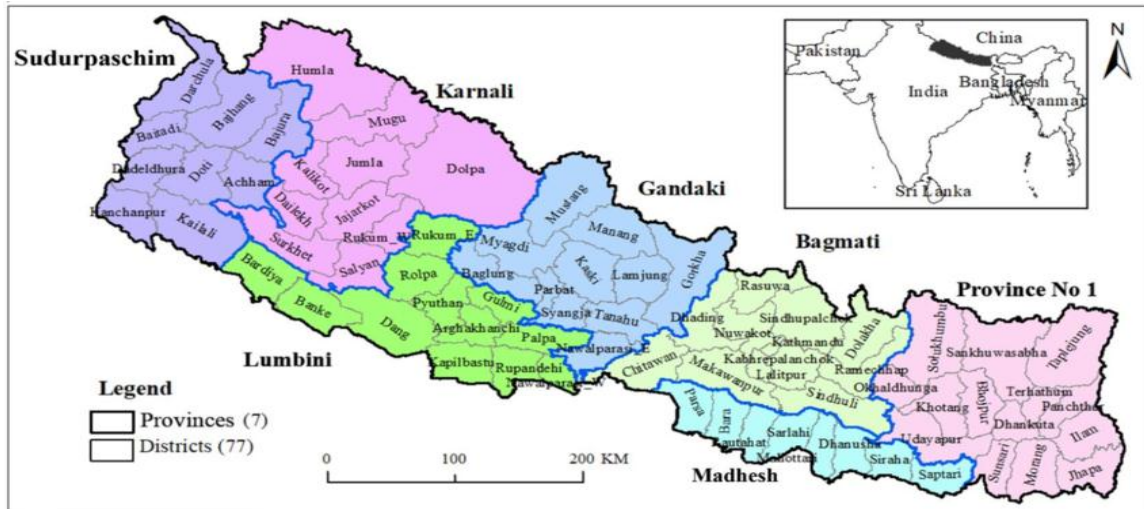
Source: Field survey, 2024

Note: Incomes and savings are recorded in the nearest 1,000.

Annex III: Map of Study Area

Figure:

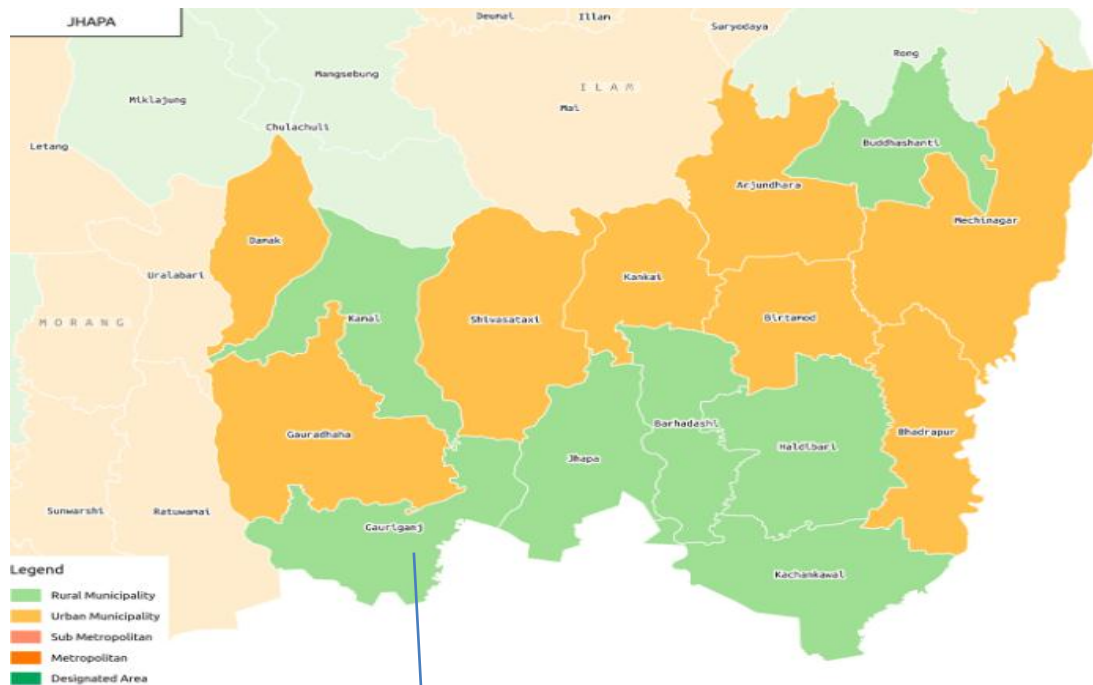
Map of Nepal with Jhapa District



Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Location-map-of-Nepal-showing-the-seven-provinces-and-77-districts_fig1_361907754

Figure:

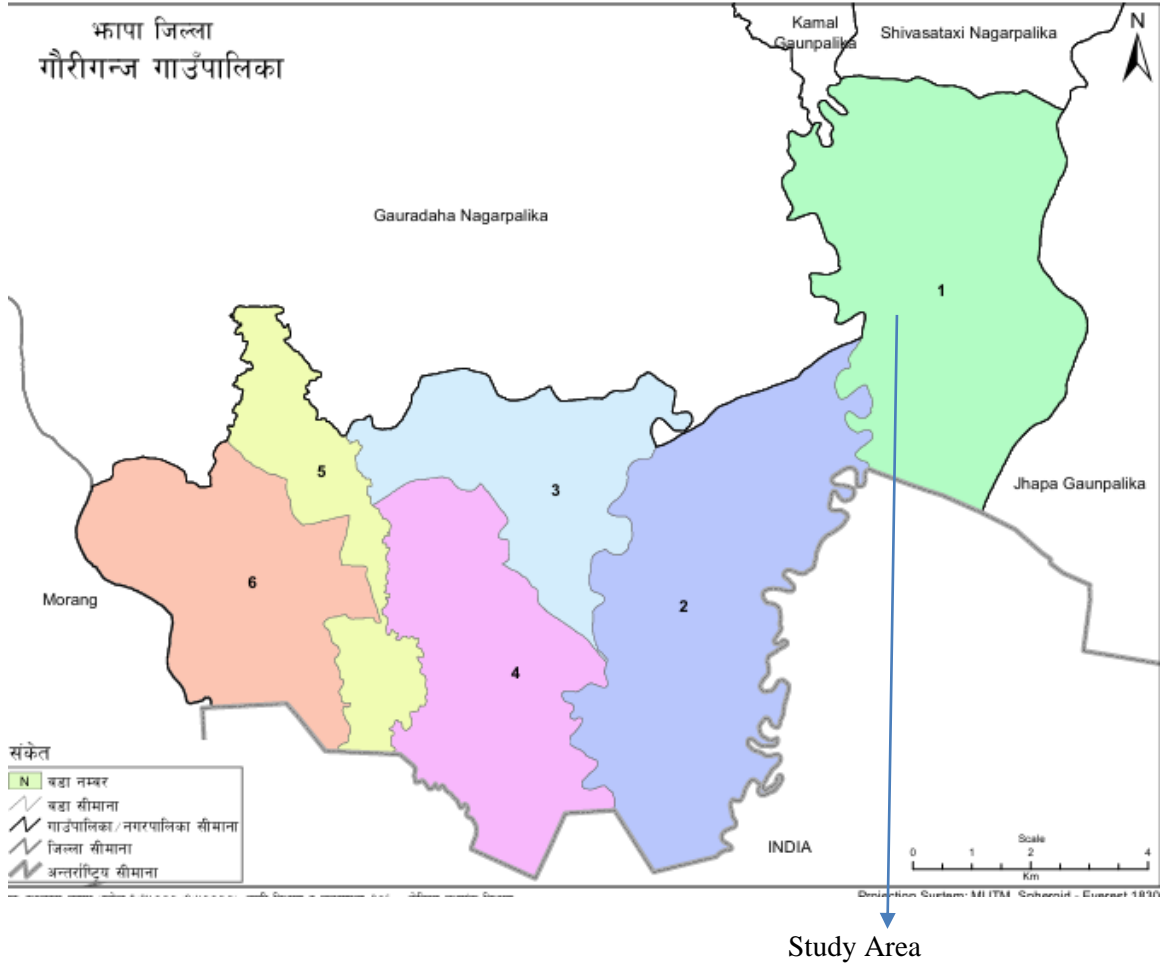
Map of Jhapa District with Local Levels



Gauriganj Rural Municipality

Source: <https://ehrpinspection.nra.gov.np/maps?district=4>

Figure:
Map of Gauriganj Rural Municipality



Source: <https://nepalindata.com/resource/Administrative-Map---Gauriganj--Jhapa--Province-1/>

Annex IV: Data Set for Difference In Difference Analysis

Income level before and after availing microcredit (including those who have availed credit in the last five years):

Treatment group - who used loans			Control group- who hasn't used loan so far		
Participant	Before NPR	After NPR	Participant	Before NPR	After NPR
1	1,000	1,000	1	2,000	2,000
2	2,000	2,000	2	3,000	3,000
3	2,000	3,000	3	3,000	3,000
4	2,000	3,000	4	3,000	10,000
5	3,000	4,000	5	3,000	10,000
6	5,000	6,000	6	4,000	4,000
7	5,000	6,000	7	4,000	4,000
8	5,000	6,000	8	4,000	4,000
9	5,000	6,000	9	4,000	4,000
10	5,000	7,000	10	4,000	5,000
11	5,000	7,000	11	4,000	6,000
12	5,000	7,000	12	5,000	5,000
13	5,000	7,000	13	5,000	7,000
14	5,000	7,000	14	5,000	7,000
15	5,000	14,000	15	5,000	5,000
16	6,000	8,000	16	5,000	5,000
17	6,000	8,000	17	8,000	8,000
18	6,000	8,000	18	10,000	11,000
19	7,000	8,000	19	10,000	14,000
20	7,000	8,000	20	10,000	10,000
21	7,000	8,000	21	12,000	14,000
22	7,000	10,000	22	12,000	16,000
23	7,000	10,000	23	14,000	19,000
24	8,000	8,000	24	15,000	16,000
25	8,000	9,000	25	15,000	17,000
26	8,000	10,000	26	20,000	22,000
27	8,000	10,000	27	20,000	25,000
28	8,000	10,000	28	20,000	29,000
29	8,000	10,000	29	22,000	25,000
30	8,000	11,000	30	25,000	26,000
31	8,000	11,000	31	25,000	26,000
32	8,000	11,000	32	35,000	35,000
33	9,000	10,000			

Treatment group - who used loans			Control group- who hasn't used loan so far		
Participant	Before NPR	After NPR	Participant	Before NPR	After NPR
34	9,000	11,000			
35	9,000	11,000			
36	9,000	11,000			
37	9,000	12,000			
38	9,000	13,000			
39	9,000	13,000			
40	10,000	11,000			
41	10,000	12,000			
42	10,000	12,000			
43	10,000	12,000			
44	10,000	12,000			
45	10,000	12,000			
46	10,000	12,000			
47	10,000	13,000			
48	10,000	14,000			
49	10,000	14,000			
50	10,000	15,000			
51	11,000	16,000			
52	11,000	16,000			
53	12,000	14,000			
54	12,000	14,000			
55	12,000	15,000			
56	12,000	15,000			
57	12,000	16,000			
58	12,000	16,000			
59	12,000	17,000			
60	13,000	13,000			
61	13,000	18,000			
62	13,000	18,000			
63	14,000	18,000			
64	14,000	19,000			
65	14,000	21,000			
66	15,000	16,000			
67	15,000	17,000			
68	15,000	17,000			
69	15,000	18,000			
70	15,000	18,000			
71	15,000	19,000			
72	15,000	20,000			

Treatment group - who used loans			Control group- who hasn't used loan so far		
Participant	Before NPR	After NPR	Participant	Before NPR	After NPR
73	15,000	20,000			
74	17,000	18,000			
75	17,000	21,000			
76	18,000	22,000			
77	18,000	23,000			
78	20,000	20,000			
79	20,000	23,000			
80	20,000	24,000			
81	20,000	24,000			
82	20,000	28,000			
83	22,000	24,000			
84	25,000	30,000			
85	25,000	32,000			
86	25,000	35,000			
87	30,000	34,000			
88	45,000	50,000			

Source: Field survey, 2024

Note: Income measured at nearest 1,000.

Annual savings level before and after availing microcredit (including those who have availed credit in the last five years):

Treatment group - who used loans			Control group- who hasn't used loan so far		
Participant	Before NPR	After NPR	Participant	Before NPR	After NPR
1	2,000	2,000	1	7,000	7,000
2	3,000	3,000	2	8,000	8,000
3	3,000	4,000	3	8,000	10,000
4	3,000	4,000	4	8,000	11,000
5	5,000	8,000	5	9,000	9,000
6	5,000	8,000	6	9,000	9,000
7	5,000	7,000	7	9,000	13,000
8	5,000	7,000	8	10,000	10,000
9	5,000	6,000	9	10,000	12,000
10	6,000	8,000	10	12,000	14,000
11	7,000	10,000	11	14,000	16,000
12	8,000	9,000	12	14,000	16,000
13	8,000	10,000	13	17,000	17,000
14	9,000	11,000	14	18,000	19,000
15	9,000	12,000	15	20,000	26,000
16	10,000	13,000	16	28,000	35,000
17	10,000	12,000	17	29,000	32,000
18	10,000	13,000	18	29,000	34,000
19	11,000	14,000	19	29,000	36,000
20	11,000	16,000	20	31,000	45,000
21	11,000	13,000	21	32,000	45,000
22	11,000	14,000	22	32,000	43,000
23	12,000	13,000	23	32,000	39,000
24	12,000	13,000	24	37,000	50,000
25	12,000	15,000	25	42,000	44,000
26	12,000	14,000	26	48,000	50,000
27	13,000	18,000	27	70,000	70,000
28	13,000	17,000			
29	13,000	15,000			
30	14,000	19,000			
31	14,000	19,000			
32	14,000	18,000			
33	14,000	17,000			
34	16,000	19,000			
35	16,000	20,000			
36	16,000	19,000			

Treatment group - who used loans			Control group- who hasn't used loan so far		
Participant	Before NPR	After NPR	Participant	Before NPR	After NPR
37	17,000	24,000			
38	17,000	22,000			
39	18,000	21,000			
40	18,000	25,000			
41	18,000	23,000			
42	19,000	22,000			
43	19,000	24,000			
44	19,000	23,000			
45	19,000	22,000			
46	20,000	26,000			
47	21,000	30,000			
48	21,000	30,000			
49	22,000	30,000			
50	22,000	28,000			
51	23,000	25,000			
52	23,000	27,000			
53	23,000	27,000			
54	24,000	29,000			
55	24,000	29,000			
56	24,000	34,000			
57	25,000	36,000			
58	27,000	32,000			
59	27,000	36,000			
60	27,000	36,000			
61	28,000	35,000			
62	28,000	41,000			
63	29,000	42,000			
64	29,000	35,000			
65	30,000	39,000			
66	31,000	35,000			
67	31,000	44,000			
68	32,000	49,000			
69	32,000	46,000			
70	33,000	40,000			
71	34,000	47,000			
72	34,000	50,000			
73	36,000	43,000			
74	38,000	43,000			
75	42,000	56,000			

Treatment group - who used loans			Control group- who hasn't used loan so far		
Participant	Before NPR	After NPR	Participant	Before NPR	After NPR
76	43,000	58,000			
77	43,000	60,000			
78	44,000	60,000			
79	44,000	66,000			
80	47,000	65,000			
81	47,000	62,000			
82	47,000	64,000			
83	48,000	58,000			
84	51,000	65,000			
85	52,000	59,000			
86	67,000	81,000			
87	75,000	105,000			
88	100,000	110,000			

Source: Field survey, 2024

Note: Annual savings measured at nearest 1,000.