

**Role of Microfinance in Women's Economic Empowerment: A Case  
Study of Muslim Colony**



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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this thesis entitled: “*Role of Microfinance in Women’s Economic Empowerment: A Case Study of Muslim Colony*” submitted by Khadija Abdul Razzak is accepted in its present form by the Department of Development Studies, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad as satisfying the requirements for partial fulfillment of the degree in Master of Philosophy in Development Studies.


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## **Dedication**

*“I dedicate my research to parents, who supported me through my education”*

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## **Abstract**

Microfinance plays important role in empowerment of women, socially and economically. This research aims to investigate the role of micro loans in women empowerment. This research study is based on primary study which is composed with the help of interviews, conducted with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries from the study area. The study has used thematic analysis and descriptive statistics to analyze the data. The study found that out of 20 women, who received loans from different organizations, only 2 ladies received education loans for their kids, 3 ladies received health loans and other received, business and marriages loans from microfinance organizations.

The study found that microfinance is playing a very significant part in empowering women with respect to affording their children education, health and other expenses. The study found that women, after receiving loans, are treated more softly and are also encouraged to take part in social and economic activities for their household.

Keywords: Micro financing, Small loans Women empowerment,

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Background of the Study:**

Poverty and gender gap are the persistent problems faced by women all around the world; mostly in under-developed countries, these issues are more intensive. To alleviate poverty and up bringing the economic development, organisation have provided opportunities that allow the women to empower and their current status which was also, recognized by the stance of Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) 2010.

It is commonly understood that the empowerment of women helps society to come up with empower generations of females across families and empowerment can become the status of women. Microfinance is an approach to empower women to deal with their finances more effectively and take benefit of economic opportunities by employing or operating small businesses, which helps to promote economic development, and growth in the economy. Microfinance is the simply giving small volume of loans to jobless or low-income individuals to facilitate their livelihoods and this is quite workable mechanism to alleviate poverty.

This kind of lending process was formalized by Dr Mohammed Yunus in Bangladesh during the 1970s which provided some specific types of financial goods and amenities, mostly the credit to poor people to empower them and help them setup some sort of small business. The Delivery of credits or other type of financial services and small volume of products to the deserving poor families, which are settled in rural and semi-urban or urban areas, to make them able, that they can increase their income level and to improve their living standards [Swapna, K (2017)]. The uniqueness of the Microfinance programs is indicated by which, the policy of targeting low income people and societies, who do not have access to the formal lending services and system. Women empowerment in relation to economic advancement is critically necessary to achieve the most important goals of the economy which include economic growth, eradication of poverty, increasing access to health-care and education and finally to increase the welfare of country population [Marmot, M., Friel, S., Bell, R., Houweling T. A., Taylor, S., & Commission on Social Determinants of Health. (2008)].

According to Mersland, R., & Strøm, R. Ø. (2010) in microfinance sector have reported that women empowerment through microfinance is one of the very effective tools used for the improvement of economic growth and also counteract for neutralizing the effects of



economic instability in the economy. Microfinance programs target women because of the following reasons; The repayment rate of the women is significantly higher than male candidates for the same type of programs. Secondly, it promotes the concept of equity in terms of providing equal employment opportunities to both the genders men and women.

This is a very important issue especially in context of developing countries. The third important thing, as women are more concerned about the wellbeing of their family so investing in women creates a “multiplier effect” that can further improve the efficiency of credit funds Rehman, H., Moazzam, A., & Ansari, N. (2015). This is because women usually play the role of managing in their households. Their empowerment is directly associated with benefits of those, who are directly dependent upon women. Especially, in case of women who are earning income. These ladies are most powerful catalysts for development process. The logic behind the model of development of the rationality of women is to use limited resource for the maximum benefits of all family. Economically empowered women and allowing them with greater control on their income they earn, their preferences about reproductive health is basically the freedom of life and choice which should be provided to everyone. This will allow them to improve their children’s lives. Thus, income provision to women can be a rational investment to choose to invest in the human capital of their off-springs. For example, women empowered are investing in education and training of their kids for specific jobs to earn and repay in future.

All these investments contribute towards long term economic advancements in the economy, which is also a better future hope for their families and the communities, which ultimately has very serious economic implications for countries AJWS (2006). The Economic empowerment of a person enables his/her to take part for economic development of the country. It also builds up a good level of capacity to contribute for the growth of national benefits. This program also recognizes the value of their contributions, respect their dignity and make it possible to negotiate a fairer distribution of growth benefits and resources. Economic empowerment increases women’s access to economic resources and job markets opportunities to explore. This has been a truly well recognized fact, when the participation ratio of women is lower than men; the economies pay a cost in terms of limiting the scale of economic growth and development. In literature gender equality has also been linked to higher Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, higher per capita income, and greater competitiveness of the markets. Development statistics show that women in

present days are 66 percent of the world's total workers, and women are producing 50 percent of the world food, however, very unpleasantly women earn only 1 percent of the income earned and women own only 1 percent of the world property on average. Whether the concern is to improve the education in under developed countries or struggling global climate change, or addressing nearly any other confronts, the problem faced across all the countries, empowering women and it is an important part of the equation for optimal wellbeing Summers, L. H. (1994).

A woman is considered economically empowered, when she has both the abilities, to succeed in her personal life and advance her power to make and act on economic decisions at household level, district level or national level. When a woman is economically empowered it means strengthening women's personal rights and enabling women to have control over their choices and they can exercise their finance to influence in creating an equitable society and thus ultimately contributes towards long term economic advancements of the country. The problems of discrimination and gender inequalities are still faced by women in many societies. Even some of the women are experiencing multiple discriminations and social exclusion in same time because of factors such as ethnicity or caste.

Increasing skills and access to economic resources (income) as well improving the economic institutional environment would empower women to compete, succeed and advance economically, also assisting women in their ability of decision making in order to benefit from economic growth and development.

Women's economic empowerment is tangled with their social and political empowerment. It's very important to consider those influencing factors, which restrict women's aptitude to reach the benefit of market.

To achieve the goals of gender equality and to promote women rights, economic empowerment of every gender is equally important. Economic Growth and development themselves are the key supporters of gender equality in provision for ideas to flow. This is still a serious issue in Pakistan, urban areas are not even that much improved. This research looks into the fact that which types of loans women have availed, and does it empower them? Remarkable hard work has been done by Government and Non- Government organizations to endorse women empowerment particularly in rural areas. Micro financing

is the best example of such efforts and intervention (Meenu et al., 2011). Despite approving, disbursing, and monitoring loans, village banks also have the potential to build their social capital and opportunities for collaborative networks integration for their borrowers, which makes it very easy for borrowers as well as lenders to trace, communicate and facilitate each other in time of need to support the idea of gender equality. Even, educated people are against the stance of gender equality but without any doubt, many organization are struggling tirelessly to make it possible at some point of time, that society accept the fact of gender equality and women autonomy.

Present study aims to evaluate the impact of microfinance on women's economic empowerment in context of an interest free Microfinance Program of different organizations. In developing countries like Pakistan women are facing many issues from gender inequality to the socio-political status that hinders their economic growth and development. Akhuwat, National Rural Support Program, and ASHA Pakistan are microfinance programs, which provide small grants and small loans in the form of Qarz-e-Hasna, which means zero interest loans. The above mentioned micro financing organizations are large in terms of high number of employees for the job. The foundation has never refused loan application on the basis of gender or race and color differences but might be because of technical mistakes people often make, while filling a form. These foundations provide different types of loans to low income people specially women to empower them socially and economically. The following types of loans are given by Akhuwat foundation in rural areas of Islamabad.

1) Family Enterprise Loan: These loans are often given to establish a new business or for the expanding an existing one. The provision such loans is to emphasis the future well for the person with better ideas, that can at least make them able to repay the loans.

2) Agriculture Loan: The agriculture loan is provided to small farmers and tenants in according to the eligibility criteria in order to purchase their agricultural inputs and ancillary expanses.

3) Housing Loan: The main function of this loan is to provide a financing facility for the renovating of houses, construction of rooms, a good quality safe roofs and reasonable high of walls etc. The loan is only provided to the poor families, who have a piece of land or house up to 5 Marla and the size of the family should be above 8 individuals. The land is

required as mortgaged until the repayment of loans taken for the purpose. There is also a limit of time to repay the loans.

**Education Loan:** The main aim of this loan is to extend and provide interest free loans to some highly commendable students. Those having an excellent academic record and belong to a low-income family. Mostly the loans are given to the students, who are as much underprivileged that their parents are unable to bear his education expenses. The loan can be paid back to AIM in easy installments.

**Health Loan:** This loan is only provided to those deserving poor people who are suffering from a serious disease and disorders and they don't have the contingency of savings

**Marriage Loan:** This facility of loan is only offered to those parents, who are facing difficulty for arranging assets and money for the marriage main ceremonies and allowances for their daughters and sons.

**Emergency Loan:** This type of loan is only provided to those families, who are faces ill-fated trials and tragedies. The example of sudden loss in their businesses or in some other immediate contingency situations these loans are utilized. [Present study explores the understanding about microfinance in relation to women's economic empowerment. To conduct an assessment about the influence of empowerment that contributes to the intra-household decision making ability of women in context of ultimate economic advancement by promoting gender equality and sustainable economic]

## **1.2 Research Problem:**

The impact of microfinance in women's empowerment is significant for the sustainable economic growth and mitigating the negative effects of crisis as it allows women more autonomy and control over their families' wellbeing. Despite the fact, that microfinance might also trigger the gender-based violence and domestic violence towards women in the participating households. The main aim of this study is to assess the impact of microfinance program on women's empowerment and how empowerment contributes to the intra-household decision making ability of women in the context of ultimate economic advancement with the advance microfinance policies and programming strategies by promoting gender equality, alleviation of poverty and sustainable economic growth.

### **1.3 Research Questions:**

- a) What is the relationship between microfinance and women empowerment?
- b) How microloans empower women economically?
- c) How empowerment contributes to the intra-household decision making ability of women in context of economic advancement?

### **1.4 Research Objectives:**

The purpose of this study is to focus on the perspectives and experiences of beneficiaries (i.e. loan participants): The research objectives are stated as:

- d) To understand and evaluate the impact of microfinance program in relation to women's empowerment.
- e) To assess the influence of empowerment on intra-household decision making power of women in context of economic advancement.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study:**

This study will serve as a baseline document to understand the impact of microfinance program in relation to women's economic empowerment in Islamabad. It will also help us to understand the influence of empowerment on the intra-household decision making ability of women in context of ultimate economic advancement through microfinance program. This study is important in terms of knowing the relevance of microfinance on families' overall wellbeing and ultimate economic conditions.

Thus, addressing the impact of microfinance on women's empowerment would help in promoting gender equality, alleviation of poverty and sustainable economic growth by developing and implementation of the advance microfinance policies and programming strategies in Pakistan Microfinance network.

### **1.6 Key Terms**

These key terms are two or more definitions which help to explain that how the researcher relates these terms according to the focus area of his/her study.

### **Microfinance:**

The term microfinance specifies the offer of financial services to clients with low income levels Nader (2008). Microfinance is the prerequisite of financial and non-financial services by Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) to low income groups without tangible

collateral but whose activities are associated to income generating ventures (Ledgerwood, (1999), Khandker, 2006).

These financial services include savings, credit, payment facilities, remittances and insurance. The non- financial services mainly entail training in micro enterprise investment and business skills. The majority of women with low level of education are not in formal employment. They therefore resort to informal employment that requires financial resources. They can access to microfinance services, since they lack collateral against which to access credit facilities from Commercial banks. The financial resources are necessary for start-up of new businesses and expansion of existing businesses; hence improving the client's living standards (UNICEF, 1997).

The primary assignment is to kindle and sustain the sector development process. To facilitate the capacity building of members and stockholders, who can participate actively in the global microfinance world. Subsequent to their flexible and innovative approach, including packages such as group guaranteed loans, microfinance institutions have provided access to financial services to individuals and groups that were hitherto excluded from financial services (Kagondoki, 2008, Dunford, 2001). This study the second explained meaning of microfinance given by (Ledgerwood, 1999, Khandker, 2006) to make it operational. The study has considered the term as the financial support received by the person from any organization in Islamabad.

### **Empowerment:**

According to Kabeer (1999), "women empowerment is a process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such ability". Targeting women is a way to stimulate and sustain development process.

"Putting resources into poor women's hand while promoting gender equality in the household and in society is a result of large development payoffs. Expanding women's opportunities in public works, agriculture, finance, and other sectors accelerate economic growth, helping to mitigate the effects of current and future financial crises".(World Bank 2011). Economic empowerment gives women an opportunity for increased participation in family decision making, and it is expected that women who are employed and who receive cash earnings are more likely to have control over household resources.

Studies of (Nathalia Carvalho Moreira, 2011) were based on the view of (Anju Malhotra,

2002) in which they define empowerment through four dimensions which results from individual and collective actions.

1. Economic: A women controls the income and resources of the family, accessibility of women to job and credit.
2. Socio cultural: Liberty of movement and visibility and access to social spaces.
3. Family/Interpersonal: decisions making domestic as well as personal.
4. Psychological: Self-esteem and psychological wellbeing, criticism of injustice and potential to mobilize.

This study borrows the concept of women's economic empowerment which based on intra-household decisions in which women participate through microfinance program. Women's decision-making autonomy can be gauged by control on their earning; household purchases, spending/investment. This study is focused on two important things which encompass the economic empowerment and domestic violence.

#### **1.7 Organization of the Write up:**

This study is presented as follows: In section one background of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, significance of the study and key terms have been discussed. Section two provides the review of literature, summary of literature and research gap and conceptual framework. In section three the researcher will discuss the locale and data and how methodology will be used to achieve the objectives of this stud

## **Chapter 2: Review of Literature:**

This chapter focuses on literature on microfinance and its role in economic empowerment of women. A literature review is a scholarly paper, which consolidates the knowledge exists and it also includes practical findings, and additionally hypothetical and methodological contributions in a particular subject. The review of a literature is a secondary source, and it does not account new exploratory work. The principle point of existing literature is to build up reliability and to prove a familiarity with the body of knowledge. A literature review tells the reader that the researcher knows the research topic extremely well. The objective of the literature review is to demonstrate the method for prior researchers and how to connect it with present study (Latham, 2007).

This review is an effort and it encloses the determinants of micro financing and other important aspects of women's empowerment and it indicates prior studies, which are conducted in numerous countries. "Providing access to microfinance for women that can be measured in order to elevate poverty" (Mayoux 1997).

According to the World Bank (2001) the definition of empowerment is "the process which is used to increase the capability of an individual or group in order to make the right choices and to alter these choices into their chosen actions and outcomes". Sen (1993) suggests the capacity choosing is dependent on the capability of a person i.e. personal characteristics and social arrangement. Kabeer (2001) defines empowerment as "it is a process of development in a person's capability to make considerable life choices in a context". Kabeer highlighted three main elements as (1) the idea or change for conditions of disempowerment (2) Strategic choice of life as a human agency (3) the capacity of making the right decision. Narayan (2002) offers an institutional definition of an empowerment as an increase of the assets and capability of an individual to contribute or to exchange with, to influence or control and to hold responsible the institution's that can affects their lives. Thus, the freedom of choice of an individual and action to shape their welfare which is ruthlessly condensed powerlessness in relation to a range of institutions.

Microfinance is basically designed to support women banking system Aghion and Morduch (2005, p.179). The women constitute a significant portion of microfinance being client and beneficiaries. According to a report by Yunus (2001), the studies showed that 95% of the garments clients were women and the margin increases to 96% later in the end of



2011. The studies showed that about 71% of the total borrowers are women in the world, 84% of the poorest are also women borrowers, contrary to the statement above most of the time microfinance does not reach the poorest. Microfinance institutions target women because of their low default rate. Most of the microfinance programs were built by the empower women. Aghion and Morduch (2005) upholds that microfinance empowers women through variations in household choices, trading power and an increase in overall resources, affects the human capital returns and influences the attribute and norms.

Findings Akudugu (2011) also confirms that the capital form microfinance has the positive contributions towards the livelihood through improvement in access to health care education and increase in income levels. Research conducted by Norwood (2011) reveals that the membership in the microfinance does not enhance the idea of Abokobi and pantang, both suburbs of the Accra. Peprah (2012) affirms that microfinancing significantly improves the wellbeing of the women in Mfantseman municipality of Ghana.

Cheston and Kuhn (2002) noted that in Philippine those women who have empower their selves have gained confidence and leadership experience through micro financing and capacity building, some among were elected as leaders at communal level elections. Same is the situation in Bangladesh as the women feel empowered as they can articulate their need in their own accord.

(Ankita Siddhanta, 2017) inspected the relationship of women empowerment and their children's nutritional status in eastern India and Bangladesh. The results revealed stunting and chronic malnourishment among children in Eastern India than Bangladesh, while empowering women reduced the child stunting in Bangladesh.

According to the Shroff (2009) women empowerment improves the wellbeing of household and it also improves the better outcome children. Women with power often make better decisions that benefit them and their children's. Furthermore, an empowered woman is associated with good health outcomes, it is believed to be an important factor that determines the utilization of the child health. The can influence their as well as their children's health directly through intra household resource allocation and indirectly through their own health and nutritional status.

Ankita Siddhanta (2017) stated in her paper that it is difficult to and critical to understand

the status and empowerment of women in their house hold and society. The study of the paper shows how women can nurture their children's through empowerment.

According to (Thamyris Maués dos Santos, 2017) policies that are made to prioritize women as owners in programs from poverty. The programs were designed to provide a partial economic empowerment. The benefit of these programs provided women with greater management over family decision making; the program helped the women feel benefited and the feeling of sustainability for having money, security for the family monthly needs.

Microfinance is a set of banking practices that are designed in order to provide small loans to the poor and also accepts deposits (Cheston and Kuhn, 1995). Microfinancing are generally for poor's specifically poor women and these women's have particularly acknowledged the strategy for alleviating poverty and also for women's economic empowerment. (Cheston and Kuhn, 1995).

These microfinance institutions around the globe are very resourceful for developing products and services and they also avoid restrains that keeps people from acquiring the financial services i.e. security requirement, socio-cultural constraints, lemmatized mobility and literacy. However many countries and institution and organizations provide financial services in terms and conditions that are not in favor of women (Burjorjee, 2002).

There are three paradigms, empowerment paradigm through feminist perspective, poverty alleviation and financial sustainability that have role in understanding the notion of empowerment. By comparing and combination of these three paradigms of economic empowerment can improve the wellbeing of a women and her family and it can also improve the social status of that women.

Lindai Mayoux (Sep. 2005) investigated that: "microcredit is empathically connected to women's financial prosperity in Cairo". She contended that microcredit has turned out to be basic to mitigate poverty and enhances family's welfare and outcomes. Likewise it also offers help to the subject and assumes a critical part in women empowerment, particularly the tendency towards family wellbeing and children's education.

Kazi (2007) stated that microfinance is a vital element to new developmental strategies because it allows women more independence and control over their economic wealth. Kazi (2007) pointed out that an effective business not just addsto female's better welfare, but it

also contributes in economic empowerment both directly and indirectly. Starting and expansion in working capital is necessarily important for women 's empowerment. Accessing financial credit and business training can help women to expand and promote their trades, increase decision-making power and earning them respect in the home and community.

A report by REPOA (2005) on poverty alleviation in northern Tanzania indicated that microfinance programs have a positive effect on decision-making role of a women, marital stability, and control over capitals and flexibility. This report recognizes woman 's role towards her household 's income which is an important factor in economic empowerment of a women.

It is indicated in Global Gender Gap Report (2012) that there is a moderate development on shutting gender gaps, though developed nations demonstrated great progression as far as women's financial advancement however not every one of them record progress as far as various different perspectives of women's empowerment are concerned. The above review bolsters the general supposition that microcredit has effect on women socio-economic wellbeing. However, there are some other factors, that affects economic empowerment of a women and these are examined with the help of literature. Microfinance has played significant role in poverty alleviation and in women's empowerment (Mayoux 2001). Dominican Republic indicates that when a woman's business flourishes and she makes a revenue, it goes directly to her family and her children are better educated when women contribute in family income while men typically give only 50%–70% of their income to their households and families. Grasmuck and Espinal (2000). The Women's Entrepreneurship Development Trust Fund reports that 'increase in women income can benefits her children, specifically in education, nutrition, healthcare, and clothing' Cheston and Kuhn (2002).

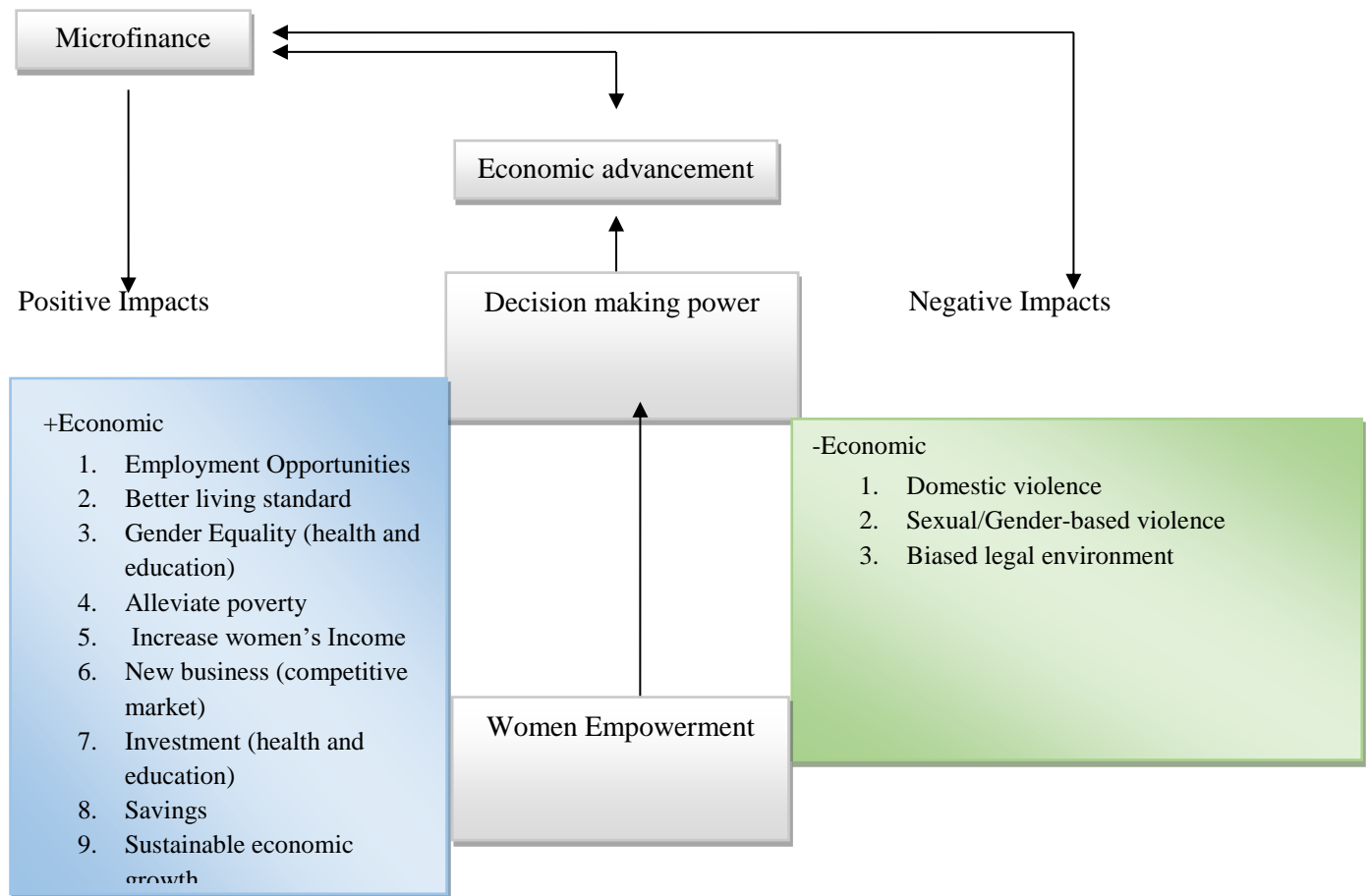
Khan, Asad and Haider (2011) studied the impact of Akhuwat in changing gender relations. Akhuwat is a philanthropic association and so far the central resource of raising funds is through local philanthropy that lends credits as Qarz-e-Hasna. For Akhuwat, "microfinance is a way to an end; the end is economically and financially strong society, based on sharing the different resources". Akhuwat is gender delicate as far as donors, and receivers and in their loaning policies as they never refused any loan request based on gender and the first

credit was provided to a woman of Rs. 10,000. Khan et al, (2010) evaluated progress in individuals' behavior towards the participation of their women in choice and indicates that almost 38%- 58% of individuals started connection their women in decision making. Thus subsequent taking credit from Akhuwat, made it possible for 46.1% girls to appear in schools. Success ratio can be measured by its reimbursement rate which is 99.83%.

### **2.1 Summary of Literature & Research Gap:**

There is a very intensive literature available regarding impact of microfinance on economically empowered women. Many studies have focused on the effectiveness of Microfinance in the context of women empowerment such as poverty alleviation, employment opportunity, gender equality, increase in families' wellbeing (i.e. their health and education) that causes economic growth. This research fills the gap by debating on the impact of microfinance program and its relation to women's economic empowerment and influence of empowerment on the intra-household decision making ability of women in context of ultimate economic advancement through microfinance program in the rural area of Islamabad, Pakistan. The study contributes to the existing body of literature by discussing the decision making power and violence in society has association with micro financing opportunities provided to women.

## 2.2 Conceptual Framework:



Explanations:

Women's economic empowerment upsurges the prosperity and well-being of the entire nation. These are some of the economic factors and producers which are essential for mitigating the negative effects of the crisis.

The framework portrays the relationship among demographic variables (age, education, marital status, family type, source of income), microfinance and economic empowerment of women is imperative to encourage gender equality and alleviate poverty which is also one of the important MDG. Also impact of economic variables e.g. Income, investment, saving, consumption pattern and assets related to the decision-making ability of women. Gender equality (health, education), alleviation of poverty, employment opportunities, better living standard, sustainable economic growth are the positive impacts of microfinance in women's economic empowerment.

Microfinance may also trigger negative impacts towards women i.e. gender based violence,

domestic violence. The interview schedule pertaining to questions of the demographic features of the female clients as name, age, education, marital status, family type, source of income, social status, also health and educational worries of female and their children were being explored about Akhuwat strategies and variations in their life style. Then there were general questions about need and purpose of microfinance. Then questions related to economic empowerment are composed of income, savings, investment, consumption pattern and asset related issues were gauged.

#### Women's Income and control

An increase in income of a women and her control over her family spending can lead her towards improving her children's nutrition, education and work in-order to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty, majority of women are poor and improving their economic conditions may help in directly reducing female poverty and wellbeing. The higher the level of gender equality the lower will be the poverty and food insecurity.

#### Gender Equality:

The most viable source and feasible strategy to reduce gender in equalities is to empower women economically. This type of empowerment tools is also considered as an effective means to reinforce women's rights and achieve gender equality. Economic Growth and development by themselves are greater support to gender equality stance. Increase in income level enables poor to send their kid to a good quality schools regardless of thinking about their gender. The education of females has its own economic implications because the manufacturing and service sectors tend to expand in a growing economy, which attracts more women workers into the formal labor force. Service delivery can also progress, leading to better health and education outcomes both for women and men. By provision of same education and opportunities the gender in equalities can be reduced and equality concepts can be promoted,

#### Gender-based Violence:

Economic gender gap is a result of diverse socio-economic constraints that limit women's ability to make use of available markets base opportunities. There are huge disparities across genders rights and resources. Females, working in agriculture and living in rural areas are still facing difficulties in gaining same type of specialization and knowledge, as male individuals are receiving. Women also face institutional constraints such as biased legal environments that limit women's ability to own or control assets and productive

resources, or to engage in a workplace that can provide them good returns in it. The ability of women has suppressed by the rule and norms of culture in many places. Brothers are still stronger than sisters and have good enough to spend on their own choices. It has been a common observation in Pakistani society that brother's cousins hit their females on small issues, and the life of women is still under punishment specie in many un education societies Faan, J et al, (2012).

#### Domestic Violence:

To obtain a complete picture of how a household's well-being is affected by a microfinance policy, the analyst must consider possible impacts on many dimensions of living standards- including food consumption, working hours, health and security- and for diverse household members. Some of the effects may be unintended and unfortunate. For example, even when a microfinance program directed toward increase women's income and influence within their families, it might also trigger domestic violence toward women in some participating households. Participation in a cash transfer program might fail to increase a woman's total income and consumption expenditure, but it is also possible that these programs can raise the wellbeing of a woman. if it allows her to reduce non-economic working hours or send her child to school it might also raise her current income but not her current consumption if she chooses to save and invest out of the increased income (thereby raising future income and consumption is important from future wellbeing perspective.

## Chapter 3: Data and Methodology

### 3.1 Methodology:

Methodology is all the methods used in the research process Steele, F., Amin, S., & Naved, R. T. (1998). It is a systematic way to solve the research problems. According to Kielmann et al., (2012) methodology include collection of data, the estimations and data analysis sampling methods and the research design. Research methodology is systematic inquiry to find solutions and answers to the research questions.

Qualitative research method is used following the study of Hulme, D. (2000). while conducting a qualitative research, a case study approach is preferred. The reason behind this approach selection is because it allows an in-depth interview, to gain enough information and explanation of microfinance and women's economic empowerment in context of Akhuwat foundation. Primary data analyses are conducted using a sample comprising 20 women who are availing the microfinance and 10 women, which are non-beneficiaries of Akhuwat and others micro foundation schemes Study participants are divided into three groups:

The first is a *Control Group* consisting of 10 women who had become clients of a microfinance institution within the past few months less than one year. These women are termed as "*new clients*". The second *Treated Group* consisted of 10 women who had been receiving loans for one or more years. This period was deemed long enough to allow for identifiable changes associated with their involvement with a microfinance institution. These women are termed as "*one-year+ clients*".

The third group consists of 10 women, which are not the beneficiaries of microfinance program. In present study the researcher aims to understand and evaluate the impact of microfinance program in relation to women's economic empowerment and the various factors that affect the decision-making ability of women in context of ultimate economic advancement through microfinance program in the rural area of Islamabad, Pakistan. Present study has taken the different organization beneficiaries to validate the findings how much these are truly implemented there; the unit of analysis in the present study is individual women, who are beneficiaries and for control non-beneficiaries are also taken in to account.



### **3.2 Locale:**

The data is collected from Muslim Colony, one of the branches/attached rural area of Islamabad. The reason for selection this locale is the implementation of microfinance program in empowering women in the remote areas of Islamabad which are being neglected in past studies.

### **3.3 Units of Data Collection:**

The unit is the piece of defined phenomena where data is to be collected. The study adopts semi-structured interviews as a measure for collection of information. The interviews are unstructured comprising of open and close ended questions.

UDC1: This Unit of data collection is female clients/beneficiaries of microfinance institution for more than one year. The author has used this UDC as strata one and the data are taken through a random selection process, where everyone had the equal chances to get selected.

UDC2: This unit of data collection was comprised of Non-beneficiaries of the program and this was strata two and the data was collected through a random selection process.

UDC3: This group consists of beneficiaries of the program from less than one year. This unit of data collection comprised of staff of program which is third strata of the study.

### **3.4 Sampling Technique:**

Stratified random sampling technique is used for this study, since it is a proper technique for drawing sample from large population with time and cost constraints. Stratified random sampling is used for this research to make strata of beneficiaries/respondents on the basis of years availing the loan i.e. new clients, one-year+ clients from microfinance institutions. Others include the staff of microfinance institutions i.e. donors/microfinance loan officers.

### **3.5 Interview guide:**

Interview guide assists what to ask, how to pose question and what to state next. The guide helps researchers' fundamental subjects expected to cover areas of probe and maintain focus on respondents (Rajasekar et al., 2006). Before leading semi-structured qualitative interviews, I made an arrangement of questions that it is helpful to coordinate the issues and discussion towards particular subject that I need to learn during interviews.

The data is collected from the female beneficiaries of Akhuwat. 3 Staff members of microfinance institutions are also selected as the respondents and conduct the interviews. Respondents 18 years old, and most were between the ages of 26 and 50 years. Since many of the questions pertained to a client's relationship with her husband, only women who were married or living with a male partner, are the participants. The interviews are semi-structured comprising of open and close ended questions.

#### **3.1.1 Semi structured interviews:**

This study adopts semi-structured interviews being asked to the beneficiaries as a measure for collection of information. The interviews are comprised of open and close ended questions. This is the primary source of data collection.

### **3.6 Research design**

A descriptive research design is used in this case study.

### **3.7: Data Analysis:**

This research has used the <sup>1</sup>descriptive statistics and thematic analysis approach to present and interpret the results derived from the collected data through interviews. The study has

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<sup>1</sup> See table 4.1 and 4.2

used this approach as the study is based on case study type research. The researcher thinks that these techniques will help out to portray the results in easily understandable manner.

**3.8: Ethical Consideration:**

The essential point during research is ethical consideration, for example, obligation, privacy and trustworthiness. The author has also tried to take care of values and social conventions and their religious values while taking part interviews.

## Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

### Introduction

This chapter comprises results taken from the interviews, which are reported in three sections. Section one is descriptive statistics and t test results, with correlation tables. Section two presents the case study of beneficiaries and section three presents the case studies of non-beneficiaries and in the end of the chapter the results of current study is compared with other studies results.

### 4.1 Results: Section one descriptive statistics

**Table 4.1 Demographic information study respondents**

Averages	Beneficiaries (More than one year)	Beneficiaries (Less than one year)	Non- beneficiaries
Personal Income(Monthly)	15000.400	12000.900	8000.00
Savings per month	1500.00	500.00	0.00
Loans payable	10000.00	22000.00	35000.00 <sup>1</sup>
School going kids	4.00	2.00	4.00
Working members at household	2.00	1.89	1
Number of patients at household	0.53	1.00	1.00

Source: Author's Survey

<sup>1</sup> Loans taken from relatives and neighbors

### Interpretation:

The results show that personal income of the women beneficiaries of micro loans was 15000 PKRs per month; these ladies have taken the loan from organization few years ago or for more than one year. The 2<sup>nd</sup> group of beneficiaries, with less than one year earns 12000 PKRs every month. The third group of non-beneficiaries is earning only 8000.00

PKRs. The study results show that beneficiaries for more than one year are saving 1500 PKRs every month. The beneficiaries with less time are saving fewer amounts of 500 PKRs and non-beneficiaries are not saving from their personal income.

Beneficiaries of long time have to pay RS 10000 back as loans, the 2<sup>nd</sup> group has to pay RS 220000 loans and non-beneficiaries are over burdened by the loans of neighbors and relatives, which an average is 35000. This loan is more than their income they are trapped in the loan circle for long time. The study also shows that beneficiaries of more than one year have 4 on average school going kids while those of the beneficiaries less than one year have 2 on average school going kids and the non-beneficiaries have on average 4 school going kids. The study also shows that the beneficiaries more than one year have on average 2 working members of the household while those of the beneficiaries of less than one year is 1.89 while those of the non-beneficiaries have only one member of the house hold. On average the number of number of patients at households of the beneficiaries more than one year have 0.53 which indicates healthy life span while those of the beneficiaries less than one year shows 1 patient at household which is same as those of the non-beneficiaries.

Table no 4.2 Reasons of women interested in receiving Microfinance (loans)

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Non-beneficiaries</b>
High decision power	3.00	3
Higher mobility	1.00	1
Backup plan	2.00	0
Business	4.00	1
Kids' education	6.00	3
Health issues	3	2
Son/daughter marriage	1	0
Total n=30	20	10

Source: Author Survey N is number of respondents

The results at table 4.2 show, the reason of interest or intention to receive micro loans among beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. 3 among beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries selected High decision power while 1 among beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries selected High mobility, 2 among beneficiaries selected for backup plan while non-beneficiaries didn't select any backup plan.

Among beneficiaries 4 people selected business as their reason of interest in receiving micro loan, while only 1 person among non-beneficiaries selected Business as a reason of interest in micro financing. 6 people showed interest in receiving loan for their kids' education while 2 among non-beneficiaries selected kids' education as their reason of interest in microfinance. The table also shows that 3 people from beneficiaries selected their reason of interest as Health issues while 2 people from non-beneficiaries selected Health as their reason of interest in micro financing. While one beneficiaries borrowed loan for the son/daughter marriage as their reason of interest. Overall the above table results show that most of the ladies are intended to receive more loans for kid's education, while few are interested to start new businesses through micro loans.

#### **4.2 Role of women empowerment through micro financing in accessing the basic health care to their households:**

According to the recent estimates by World Health Organization, more than 100 million people are forced into poverty by illness and their struggle to pay for health care never ends. People lagging behind due to the basic health infrastructure are worsen enough in their health conditions and this trap of resource distribution leads them in everlasting state of poverty. Access to basic health system is a key component of alleviating poverty. Good health of a nation is the major factor of driving economic development. For under developed countries the main goal is to provide an affordable and accessible health care, which is a difficult task to achieve. However, it is not impossible.

The results of our study interviews are as follow, that majority of the household heads are women in list of beneficiaries of any program for micro financing, with very little education background and the ladies work as daily wage labors or are self-employed as entrepreneur. Most of the households are facing common issues of poor person, people do not have any toilet facility in their houses, and these people are still facing the issue of clean drinking water, which they still manage from a shared tap in the village or hand pump/well.

The majority of the women households reported that they still have to use their current income and savings, either to pay for their health expenditures or loan taken from neighbors. However, the multiplicity of sources shows that households were often unable to fund all their health expenditures from their current income and savings alone. Households selling assets or borrowing money with interest in order to finance their healthcare were facing with hardship financing for health expenditures and these were most of the non-beneficiaries of any program. So, there is a big difference between beneficiaries and non-beneficiary's health combating strategies. On the other hand, there are beneficiary's women as the head of household that are able to finance their family healthcare costs solely from their current income generated by the entrepreneurship and their husband's businesses, which was boosted by the Akhuwat loans. These ladies are savings and/or they still borrowing without interest (from relatives or friends/neighbours) but these households are with no hardship for financing overall.

The study also found that women, who have availed the loans facility few years back, are able enough to generate income through investments in different things, which help them to overcome the issues of unexpected expenditures. In case of health issue suddenly money is required at that time no one runs to an organization for loan but most of the time people consult with relatives and friends. After the first ad people have applied for health loans only 3 person received health loan through qarz e hasana from Akhuwat foundation and only one person has repaid the two other women are still repaying in installments.

Through micro financing the beneficiary's women can access health more easily. The respondent argued that after receiving business loan for small shop, my son insisted me to buy him a mobile phone. After few days I realized that it has also helpful for the access of health care, when his father got heart attack at 1pm at night on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019, the only way to communicate the right person was mobile phone and my son call a driver and we took him to hospital. That night I was really shocked, but I prayed for organization that have help many people across the world. If couldn't do anything by our own selves and someone make you able of doing that, we should be thankful and appreciative (BiBi Sameera). The study also found that respondents, which were non-beneficiaries of micro financing programs, are still facing problems of health expenditures and many came to know about the programs availability from researcher. One of the respondent lady said,

that when you don't have educated ones to tell you about facilities available then this is the situation, people are getting support from Government, but no one ask us how much we need this support. Good friends and relatives have died along ago, who were helpful in every situation. Furthermore, she argued that she was rejected by her neighbors, when she asked for loan for only one week because she was not feeling well. However, she managed from someone else. Despite the fact, people are facing with such genuine issues in their lives they can't access health-care, they can't access loans without help until good awareness programs are not focused on specifically poor and uneducated.

A women beneficiary of Akhuwat foundation answered to the questions about the use of received loans, that she has used it in husband transport accessories shop and due to shop her husband has earned good level of trust, which has helped them in taking recent loan from other shopkeeper for his/her son's health expenditure, when her son faced road accident on more cycle in December 2018. She argued that without previous loans it wasn't possible to create small business and trust in the market. And it might not have happened that someone will give us loan of 30000 rupees without shop and business because the person know that we will pay him.

#### **4.3 Microfinance and women's economic empowerment in Muslim Colony Islamabad:**

There are three ladies who received loans for small businesses of their own, one of the lady started beauty parlor a year ago, and with the loan provided by Khushali bank she argued that loans have changed her life. She is now boss of her business and she has provided jobs to two of her neighbors. Working and Feeling like boss is empowerment of women she says. Even though she has faced many issue in running the business, but she says, when a person is well aware of his/her job to do for the coming day, he/she feel indulge in a society and it is a good feeling for the person that he/she is useful for the society. One of the respondent from beneficiaries argued that she has taken business loan for a small shop, she owns on the doorsteps of her home. She argued that she was homeless few years back; she was leaving in a rented house for which she was paying 1200 rent at that time for each month. This shop was made by small daughter in her house in box and that box eventually became a bigger box general store. After meeting with her relative in a wedding ceremony, she came to know, that they have taken a loan from a foundation and they suggested the same to her. The respondent said, that she requested her husband to ask someone to help



him in this regard. A person who was working in a bank as security guard with a company helped him for taking a loan. She said, I fulfilled all the requirement of the loans and finally received the loan after 3 months. She invested the amount in her daughter's shop.

This shop became better market place for people around her rented house; she argued that now she has her own bed room house, which her husband contracted on leased land with her money. Now Zuhra bibi feel empowered in many ways but economically, she is the happiest among all her sisters. Beside feeling the empowerment, she is empowered in terms of resources she has saved and generated with loan money. Zuhra bibi argued that micro financing, enabled her to participate in informal Micro financing and comity installments scheme. The amount of comity is decided on the first meeting among ladies in society and the amount of comity can be 100, 500, 1000, 2000 or 5000 etc per day, per week or per month. The amount of comity collected by one female on the first date of month and then drawn as lottery on the last date of the month each month each person gets the amount and one person can receive it once.

After finishing the whole season, the installment amount is revised, either increased or decreased or unchanged. This installment scheme was started by a woman called Ramsha bibi, Zuhra participated in this and started paying the installment of 100 rupees per week this installment was drawn daily basis. When this installment was finally drawn in her favor, she used that money of 33 women 3300 for mobile purchase. Zuhra said that after purchasing mobile it is easier to deal your business and clients. Microfinance provides enough opportunities to choose the business that a person can run and can easily repay the loans. The respondents argued that she has repaid all the loans; she has received from Khushali bank. Now Zuhra Naseem bibi is planning to get other loans for her new business, which is also started by her daughter Shaila Naseem. This is the business of dressmaking. Shehla Naseem is 14 years old after 7 years she has started her 2<sup>nd</sup> business of her life and she want to make it a bigger fashion designer shop. This concludes that micro financing plays important and encouraging role in empowerment of women economically and socially.

#### **4.4 Role of Microfinance in women's empowerment for kid's education:**

The study found that micro financing has encouraged the female households' heads to

enroll their kids in good schools and educate further for better future. This study found that there are 2 cases, who were the beneficiaries of education loans for their kids. The loan was taken by the parents in order to invest in their business and the generated profit from the business, which is utilized to by the household head and invest it in their children education most of the time. However, the education loan receiver has used the loans specifically, for their kids' education. Studies done in South India by Holvoet, (2004) established, the same results, that there are some effects of a particular feature of micro financing programs on the children education, when parents take loans for education and use it for some other purpose, which might also be helpful for their empowerment. the study examines how microfinance have impacts on children educations, how the credit enters the households and who brings it in, the results also show that it doesn't matter in case of direct bank borrower credit delivery, however a large sum of difference can be found when a mother access the credit through women groups. Another study conducted in Bangladesh by Abul Bashar Bhuiyan (2013) on Grameen microcredit bank on the performance of the borrower's literacy of children. The output of the studies has the positive impacts in terms of increasing income and consumption on the other hand the finding also showed a positive impact on result on the borrower efforts about their safety and more conscious for their children schooling.

#### **4.5 Microfinance and domestic violence:**

Role of micro financing has been acknowledged for reduction of domestic violence in studies in form of reducing the worries of education and health expenses. Sometimes the decisions are made by one parent member and other does not appreciate it and the results in grievances. The decision of investing in kid education or not on funds and loans are mostly an issue but there was not case study, or respondent, which was taken into worst conditions of domestic violence or we can there was not one, which was the victim of this issue, which indicates that micro financing do not lead to domestic violence. However, respondents replied that it helps to reduce the domestic violence because of the job provision and work provision or reduction of worries for health care expenses. The respondents argued that the domestic violence and gender-based violence both can be reduced through these programs.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion and Policy Recommendations**

## **5.1 Conclusion:**

The study is conducted in rural areas of Islamabad, where the role of micro financing for women empowerment is examined. The study concluded that micro financing from different organizations, has affected beneficiaries' women positively. The beneficiaries, who received loans a year ago are more settled as compare to the non-beneficiaries. The study found that women, who received loans few months ago are still struggling for better opportunities to invest the received loans. This research established the fact, that micro financing from any organization, with lower interest to zero interest is preferred by every individual in Muslim colony.

Micro finance empowers the female household head as well as the other members of a household. Empowerment is feeling for the ladies, who considered themselves as the important part of the society. Micro financing has played important role in establishing new businesses and in boosting up the old businesses of the receivers. Micro loans have helped individuals in accessing good health care and education, which can be seen inform of decision making as well. The beneficiaries/receiver of the loans and funds are quite different from the non-receivers in terms of confidence and approach at the same place. The study also came across the evidences form the survey that, organizations provide loans to empower women and it is also an important for encouragement and empowerment of businessladies. The study concludes that those organizations, which provide loans are playing critically important role in women empowerment.

## **5.2 Policy Recommendation:**

The study recommends Government organization and NGOs to trace the provided loans; the loan received for a purpose must be used for that purpose, which is possible through monitoring and feedback mechanism. The study encourages NGOs and other banks to supply micro loans to deserving people, because people are intended to receive small loans. The community networks should be established for transparency of information between

receivers and lenders to create a system, where the lender know, where his money is used. The study recommends NGOs and government organizations to create awareness about loans types and process. The study suggests that social and financial group intermediation may lead to high educational outputs mainly for girls. Bothe the loan borrowers were individually interviewed, the respondents suggested changes should be brought in availing these loans.

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Appendix A1:

Name:

Age:

Marital Status: (single/married/divorced/widow)

Occupation:

Education: (primary/middle/secondary/higher)

How many children do you have?

Do you own land? Does your husband own land? (if “yes”) Size? House ownership status? Rented owned or leased,

if rented how much rent do you pay per months?

Are you the household head?

Are you the only earning head of the house?

How many members of family are earning?

Do you have control over your earning?

What is your monthly income?

What is your source of income?

Is your income sufficient to meet households need?

How much of your income do you spend on health care every month? How much of your income do you spend on kids’ education every month? Do you save from your income?

Have you taken any type of loans from neighbors?

If yes how much you liable to pay in future?



Have you taken any sort of loans from any organization?

From which different sources have you received credit? What do you know about Microfinance?

From where did you come to know about this facility? Is it helpful for the people to earn better?

Do you get enough amounts to run your business?

What type of business usually women start from this credit?

How long have you been taking loans from organization?

How many loans have you taken till now?

Have you repaid any instalment?

How many loans have you been able to repay?

When did you take your latest loan?

How large was your latest loan?

How you manage to take this finance?

Have you received any other help from some other organization/Source than Akhuwat?

Do you save? If yes, Where?

Is your husband saving?

Are you saving in the same account?

What are you planning to do with your savings?

Who is responsible for the repayments? What do you feel about that?

Do you think that through these small businesses you could become the potential part of the society?

Does this facility make you better to fulfill the earning targets and provide enough space to handle household chores?

From where do you get your water? How far do you have to go to get water?

Have you experienced some forms of untouchability? (If “yes” please explain)

Do you think that micro financing has reduce your worried about health care expenses? Have you taken any health care loans?

For what type of dieses, you received the loan?

Do you think that micro financing has reduce your worried about education expenses? Have you ever taken education loans?

Do you think that micro financing has reduce your worried about daughter/son marriage expenses?

Have you ever taken loan for son/daughter marriage?

From whom?