Chapter 4

Methodology
Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1 Introduction
4.2 Statement of Problem
4.3 Research Objectives
4.4 Research Hypotheses
4.5 Rationale
4.6 Research Design
4.7 Justification for Paradigm and Methodology
  4.7.1 Research Design
  4.7.2 Sampling Element
  4.7.3 Sampling Size
  4.7.4 Sampling Technique
  4.7.5 Data Source
    4.7.5.1 Questionnaire Development
    4.7.5.2 Scale Development
  4.7.6 Data Analysis
  4.7.7 Time frame of Data Collection
4.8 Ethical Considerations
4.9 Limitations
4.10 Conclusion
Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the methodological foundations and issues that are pertinent to this study. The objectives and hypotheses are listed in order to draw attention to the major variables considered in the study as seen in the literature review. This is followed by the rationale, research design, methodology, ethical considerations and limitations.

4.2 Statement of Problem

The study wants to find out the impact of micro-finance on empowerment of rural women in Gujarat.

4.3 Research Objectives

The present study focuses on micro-finance services and its impact on the clients. The following objectives are identified for this research:

1. To study the micro-finance services in a comprehensive manner and understand the dimensions of women empowerment
2. To study the impact of micro-finance on empowerment of women
3. To identify the interventions of micro-finance institutions which have a bearing on women empowerment
4. To study the inter-relationship between different dimensions of empowerment
5. To compare the impact of micro-finance on empowerment of women based on three different institutional set-ups, viz., Banks, NGOs and NBFCs.

4.4 Research Hypotheses

The following twelve sets of null hypotheses are formulated on the basis of objectives designed for the study:

1. There is no association between economic activity and change in empowerment parameters
a. There is no association between economic activity and change in economic empowerment

b. There is no association between economic activity and change in socio-cultural empowerment

c. There is no association between economic activity and change in interpersonal empowerment

d. There is no association between economic activity and change in psychological empowerment

e. There is no association between economic activity and change in legal & political empowerment

2. **There is no association between educational qualification and change in empowerment parameters**

a. There is no association between educational qualification and change in economic empowerment

b. There is no association between educational qualification and change in socio-cultural empowerment

c. There is no association between educational qualification and change in interpersonal empowerment

d. There is no association between educational qualification and change in psychological empowerment

e. There is no association between educational qualification and change in legal & political empowerment

3. **There is no association between income of respondent and change in empowerment parameters**

a. There is no association between income of respondent and change in economic empowerment
b. There is no association between income of respondent and change in socio-cultural empowerment
c. There is no association between income of respondent and change in interpersonal empowerment
d. There is no association between income of respondent and change in psychological empowerment
e. There is no association between income of respondent and change in legal & political empowerment

4. There is no association between income of household and change in empowerment parameters
a. There is no association between income of household and change in economic empowerment
b. There is no association between income of household and change in socio-cultural empowerment
c. There is no association between income of household and change in interpersonal empowerment
d. There is no association between income of household and change in psychological empowerment
e. There is no association between income of household and change in legal & political empowerment

5. There is no association between caste and change in empowerment parameters
a. There is no association between caste and change in economic empowerment
b. There is no association between caste and change in socio-cultural empowerment
c. There is no association between caste and change in interpersonal empowerment
d. There is no association between caste and change in psychological empowerment
e. There is no association between caste and change in legal & political empowerment

6. **There is no significant difference between the proportion of women experiencing empowerment before and after joining micro-finance institution**

   a. There is no significant difference between the proportion of women experiencing economic empowerment before and after joining micro-finance institution

   b. There is no significant difference between the proportion of women experiencing socio-cultural empowerment before and after joining micro-finance institution

   c. There is no significant difference between the proportion of women experiencing interpersonal empowerment before and after joining micro-finance institution

   d. There is no significant difference between the proportion of women experiencing psychological empowerment before and after joining micro-finance institution

   e. There is no significant difference between the proportion of women experiencing legal & political empowerment before and after joining micro-finance institution

7. **(7.1) There is no association between tenure of membership with MFI and change in empowerment parameters**

   a. There is no association between tenure of membership with MFI and change in economic empowerment

   b. There is no association between tenure of membership with MFI and change in socio-cultural empowerment

   c. There is no association between tenure of membership with MFI and change in interpersonal empowerment

   d. There is no association between tenure of membership with MFI and change in psychological empowerment

   e. There is no association between tenure of membership with MFI and change in legal & political empowerment
(7.2) There is no significant relationship between overall empowerment and tenure of membership with MFI

8. (8.1) There is no association between attending training programs organised by MFI and change in empowerment parameters

   a. There is no association between attending training programs organised by MFI and change in economic empowerment

   b. There is no association between attending training programs organised by MFI and change in socio-cultural empowerment

   c. There is no association between attending training programs organised by MFI and change in interpersonal empowerment

   d. There is no association between attending training programs organised by MFI and change in psychological empowerment

   e. There is no association between attending training programs organised by MFI and change in legal & political empowerment

(8.2) There is no significant relationship between overall empowerment and attending training programs organised by MFI

9. (9.1) There is no association between position held in SHG/JLG and change in empowerment parameters

   a. There is no association between position held in SHG/JLG and change in economic empowerment

   b. There is no association between position held in SHG/JLG and change in socio-cultural empowerment

   c. There is no association between position held in SHG/JLG and change in interpersonal empowerment

   d. There is no association between position held in SHG/JLG and change in psychological empowerment
e. There is no association between position held in SHG/JLG and change in legal & political empowerment

(9.2) There is no significant relationship between overall empowerment and position held in SHG/JLG

10. (10.1) There is no association between loans availed from MFI and change in empowerment parameters

a. There is no association between loans availed from MFI and change in economic empowerment

b. There is no association between loans availed from MFI and change in socio-cultural empowerment

c. There is no association between loans availed from MFI and change in interpersonal empowerment

d. There is no association between loans availed from MFI and change in psychological empowerment

e. There is no association between loans availed from MFI and change in legal & political empowerment

(10.2) There is no significant relationship between overall empowerment and loans availed from MFI

11. (11.1) There is no association between changes in different empowerment parameters after joining micro-finance institution

a. There is no association between change in economic empowerment and change in socio-cultural empowerment

b. There is no association between change in economic empowerment and change in interpersonal empowerment

c. There is no association between change in economic empowerment and change in psychological empowerment
d. There is no association between change in economic empowerment and change in legal and political empowerment

e. There is no association between change in socio-cultural empowerment and change in interpersonal empowerment

f. There is no association between change in socio-cultural empowerment and change in psychological empowerment

g. There is no association between change in socio-cultural empowerment and change in legal and political empowerment

h. There is no association between change in interpersonal empowerment and change in psychological empowerment

i. There is no association between change in interpersonal empowerment and change in legal and political empowerment

j. There is no association between change in psychological empowerment and change in legal and political empowerment

(11.2) There is no significant relationship between overall empowerment and changes in different empowerment parameters after joining micro-finance institution

12. There is no association between Micro-finance Institution and change in empowerment parameters

a. There is no association between Micro-finance Institution and change in economic empowerment

b. There is no association between Micro-finance Institution and change in socio-cultural empowerment

c. There is no association between Micro-finance Institution and change in interpersonal empowerment

d. There is no association between Micro-finance Institution and change in psychological empowerment
e. There is no association between Micro-finance Institution and change in legal & political empowerment

4.5 Rationale

Micro-finance has been extensively studied and celebrated as a tool of poverty alleviation. It is also being viewed as a potential aid in empowering women, as majority beneficiaries of micro-finance are women. Yet the following gaps were observed from the study of literature review:

- Dichotomy in literature regarding the effectiveness of Micro-finance
  Several researchers have raised their doubts as to the efficacy of micro-finance and its impact on women empowerment, either due to lack of proper research or research studies showed mixed results. Khan (2009)\(^1\) points out that other than case studies, there is a shortage of research on the impact of microcredit on clients, which has contributed to doubts about the overall effectiveness of micro-finance. The author is also quick to point out the research conducted by Weiss, Montogomery, and Kurmanalieva in 2003\(^2\), who have examined the current research in this domain and found that the findings are controversial in nature. Asim (2008)\(^3\) states that specialized microcredit institutions providing loans to poor women all over the world, since the 1980s, have been widely associated with their potential to ‘empower’ women. The link between microcredit and empowerment, though repeatedly emphasized by donors and practitioners in conferences and summits, is a controversial area of empirical research. Murthy’s study (2004)\(^4\) in the Indian context also states that the impact of savings and microcredit on women’s empowerment is questionable, as has often been pointed out. Looking at the above comments from the existing literature and the fact that micro-finance is still an evolving stream, it makes a case to study and validate the anecdotal evidences of micro-finance making a favourable impact on women empowerment.

- Current Impact Studies are not comprehensive
  Mayoux (2006)\(^5\) also expresses regret on the information contained in the current impact studies of micro-finance. She states that the most detailed studies have been done in Bangladesh and these are currently contested on conceptual, methodological and analytical grounds. Most studies in Latin America, where there is any
consideration of gender at all, confine themselves to questions of access or more rarely to the activities in which women are involved. Most other studies are short gender impact assessments or contain limited information on empowerment. Researchers have tried to measure empowerment through various models in different context but failed to cover the topic in its entirety.

- Dearth of relevant research in the context of rural areas and specially Gujarat state

The findings of Asim (2008) suggest that micro-finance has limited empowerment potential in the urban areas of Pakistan. He further emphasizes on establishing the link between microcredit and empowerment in the non-urban context. The same can be extended to India as well. There are several definitions for rural areas provided by the Planning Commission, National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) and RBI. As per Planning Commission, town with maximum population of 15,000 is considered to be rural in nature while as per RBI, rural areas are areas with a population of less than 49,000. For the current study, rural areas are identified on the basis of NSSO which is a valid definition for Census Survey as well, which states that rural areas have a population density of up to 400 per square kilometer, they have clear surveyed boundaries but no municipal board, and a minimum of 75% male working population involved in agriculture and allied activities. Moreover, there is dearth of relevant research in the context of Gujarat as most research is skewed in the Southern region of India which was the origin of micro-finance in India.

- Women Empowerment: Importance and an area of concern for India, specially Gujarat

Women empowerment has become a major goal as per the Millennium Development Goals framed by UN. The various indicators of empowerment are considered as literacy (ratio of girls to boys enrolment in school), health and nutrition, opportunity indicator is the female share of non-agricultural wage employment (As noted in UNIFEM’s Progress of the World’s Women 2000, this is an indicator of the extent to which women have equal access to paid jobs in areas of expanding employment) and, the female share of seats in national parliaments. Grown, Gupta and Khan have indicated that India belongs to that cluster of countries which are characterized by low capability of women, low opportunity and medium agency facilities (ICRW, 2003).
Additionally, as per the Global Gender Gap Report\textsuperscript{10} published by the World Economic Forum in 2011, India ranked 113 amongst a total of 135 countries. Further, according to the Census Survey 2011\textsuperscript{11}, Gujarat state ranked 24 out of 35 states and Union Territories as far as male to female ratio is concerned. As a matter of fact, as given in the Socio-Economic Review of Gujarat 2013-14\textsuperscript{12}, since the formation of Gujarat (1961), the sex ratio of the state has a decreasing trend barring the exception of 1981 census. Hence, the above statistics are alarming and put a concern towards the status of women in this region.

- **Volatile Nature of Impact Studies**

Further, impact studies are volatile in nature and they are required on a periodic basis for effective monitoring of the existing system and strategising for the future.

In light of the above gap identified through literature review, an attempt is made to provide a detailed impact assessment of micro-finance on women empowerment especially in the rural areas of Gujarat.

**4.6 Research Design**

A research design is a framework or blue print for conducting the research project. It details the procedures necessary for obtaining the information to structure and/or solve the problems. The research design lays down the base for conducting the project. The following chart shows the process of research done in order to enhance the study.

**FIGURE 4.1**

*Flowchart of Research Design*\textsuperscript{13}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of the variables that lead to women empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design of survey instrument by careful selection of items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

107
4.7 Justification for Paradigm and Methodology

4.7.1 Research Design

The current study addresses a gap in the relevant research domain, and hence, this problem is unstructured in nature. So, initially to gain insights on the dimensions of women empowerment, literature review is done and a model developed by Malhotra et al. (2002) is taken as the base. However, to study the applicability of these variables in the field, depth interviews and case study method of research are employed. Hence, in this sense, the research is exploratory to a certain extent.

Moreover, this research also deals with the description related to impact of micro-finance on empowerment of rural women. This design aims at testing specific hypothesis and examining specific relationships via surveys. Additionally, the research design involves the collection of information from any given sample of population elements only once. Hence, Descriptive cross-sectional research is also used for the study.

4.7.2 Sampling Element

The objective of the research is to obtain information about the characteristics or parameters of population. Population and sample for the study are as follows:

- **Population:** The study has the population base as the women residing in rural areas of Gujarat who have availed micro-finance services.
Sample:

- Based on the rural sex ratio (No. of females per thousand males), five districts which rank poor on the same are identified for sampling purpose and women who have availed micro-finance services form the sampling unit. Data is collected from women residing in rural areas of Rapar, Naliya (District-Kutchch); Kadi, Becharaji (District-Mehsana), Sanand, Nandej, Barejdi (District-Ahmedabad); Umreth, Sojitra, Bedva (District-Anand) and Olpad, Umarpada (District-Surat) in Gujarat who have availed micro-finance services.

- The micro-finance institutions Shri Mahila Sewa Sahakari Bank Ltd. (SEWA Bank), Kaira Social Service Society (KSSS), Light Microfinance Pvt. Ltd. and Pahal Microfinance are selected and their clients are interviewed for the collection of primary data. The above institutions have different institutional set-up and different approach of providing micro-finance services. Moreover, the operational reach of these institutions also covers the districts identified for sampling. Hence, they aptly serve the purpose of comparison for the present research.

- Accordingly, in the present study, from the different credit-lending models adopted by the MFIs, Self-help groups (SHGs) and Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) are selected for the research, as these group based credit programs are more popular in India. Basu and Srivastava (2005)\(^{15}\) indicate that the SHG-bank linkage seems particularly suited to India because the model leverages existing assets broadly within existing regulations by capitalizing on the country’s huge network of rural banks that are otherwise unable to reach out to the poor. The Microfinance State of the Sector Report 2012\(^{16}\) also shows that SHGs are a dominant lending model in the case of India and almost 70% of micro-credit is distributed via SHGs. NABARD has claimed to cover all eligible poor households in India under the SHG-Bank Linkage Program by March 2017 (Status of Microfinance in India, 2012-13)\(^{17}\). Moreover, NABARD announced a major rejuvenation plan in March 2012 to the SHG-Bank Linkage Program, which proposed the formation of JLGs within SHGs, so that the more dynamic members could graduate faster to the second-tier of institutions.\(^{18}\) JLGs are quicker to form and operate, and hence, are now being widely used for credit-delivery by Private Banks like HDFC as well as NBFCs. This was reinforced in a discussion of the researcher with an industry expert, who was of the opinion that although SHGs are large in numbers, most are defunct and have a higher probability of liquidation.\(^{19}\)
the current scenario, JLG has emerged as a dominant model. Hence, looking at the vast usage of SHG and JLG models of credit delivery, both have been studied.

4.7.3 Sampling Size

Sample size has been decided taking both logical and statistical considerations into account.

- Logically

Ideally looking at the respondents’ literacy ratio and the time taken to commute to the sample regions, not more than 5 questionnaires can be filled up on a particular day. Considering that at times, the respondents are not free and cannot be approached without the support of animators, practically in a month, only ten to twelve days are identified as being feasible for carrying out the research. Hence, optimistically approximately 60 to 65 questionnaires can be filled up in a month. In a six months’ time, which is considered an ideal period of data collection, around 390 responses can be recorded.

- Statistically

\[
\text{Sample Size}^{20} = \frac{Z^2 \times (p) \times (1-p)}{c^2}
\]

Z = Z value (e.g. Table value for 95% confidence level = 1.96)  
p = percentage picking choice, expressed as decimal  
(.5 used for sample size needed)  
c = confidence interval, expressed as decimal (0.05)

Hence sample size finalized for the study is 384 women clients. The final sample size for the study after coding and editing is 360. Justification for the same is given in Data Analysis.
Region wise distribution of sample size was done proportionately on the basis of female population in the rural areas of the identified districts as obtained from the Census Survey 2011\textsuperscript{9}. The following table illustrates the working for the same.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Rural Sex-Ratio (No. of females per 1000 males)</th>
<th>Population of Rural Females (2011)</th>
<th>Final Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kutchch</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>6,50,085</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Anand</td>
<td>918</td>
<td>6,97,169</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Surat</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>5,92,682</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mehsana</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>7,30,044</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ahmedabad</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>5,54,342</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32,24,322</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Census Survey, 2011\textsuperscript{9}, Socio-Economic Review, 2011-12\textsuperscript{10})

4.7.4 Sampling Technique

The samples are taken from five districts of Gujarat, viz., Kutchch, Anand, Surat, Mehsana and Ahmedabad districts identified on the basis of lowest rural female to male ratio as per the Socio-Economic Review of 2011-12\textsuperscript{10}. So the groups are heterogenous in nature. Hence at the primary level, cluster sampling\textsuperscript{21} is taken. At the next level, various micro-finance institutions with different legal set-ups were approached and their women clients in the selected districts were interviewed. Hence stratified sampling technique is used as there is homogeneity within groups and heterogeneity between groups and is collective and mutually exclusive in nature. Therefore, the sampling technique used for the study is Cluster followed by Stratified Sampling.
4.7.5 Data Source

Data sources for the current study can be classified into two; primary data and secondary data. Secondary data provides a base and gives a direction to the research, while the primary data which is empirical in nature helps in gaining new insights from the field. Hence, both the sources help in making the study richer.

- Secondary Data

Secondary data was mainly used for understanding the concept of micro-finance, its evolution, various models and spread of micro-finance at the international, national and regional level. Similarly, the concept of women empowerment and related dimensions were also studied through secondary data. The data consisted of prominent articles, research papers, working papers published in refereed journals, periodicals, magazines and books collected from libraries of IIM (A), L.J. Institute of Management (Ahmedabad) and National Institute of Cooperative Management (Gandhinagar). Various summary proceedings of seminars and conferences and Internet web pages were also referred.

For the purpose of preparing cases, secondary data available on the websites of the concerned organisations, their publications, news and annual reports were studied.

- Primary Data

Survey method along with Rapid Rural appraisal techniques (Hulme, 2000)22 with a special focus on Case studies was used to collect primary data.

Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire from women residing in rural areas of Gujarat who were availing micro-finance services. The questionnaire was developed after a thorough study of research papers on related topics. Simultaneously, the questions were also discussed with the experts of the industry, so as to gain more clarity. Moreover, opinions were taken from faculties of marketing research and statistics for lucidity on analysis techniques. This triangular approach helped in designing the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was originally prepared in English but later on, looking at the literacy level of the respondents (rural women), it was translated in Gujarati.
(vernacular language), so that it could be easily comprehended by the respondents. Since, most respondents were either illiterate or had primary formal education, the researcher had to pose questions and explain their meaning in order to collect precise information.

A separate questionnaire was prepared for collecting primary data for the purpose of writing case studies. These questions were framed and validated on the same lines of the structured and detailed questionnaire. However, here the questions were more open-ended in nature, so as to explore the impact of micro-finance in a better manner. Primary data was also collected through discussions with the officials of the concerned micro-finance organisations and their views have also been incorporated in the case studies.

4.7.5.1 Questionnaire Development

The first few questions aimed at understanding the socio-economic background of the women availing micro-finance services. Hence, these questions pertained to demographic information of the respondents like occupation, age, caste/community, marital status, educational qualifications, details of family members (especially children) and monthly income. This primary introduction of the respondent was then followed by general questions pertaining to the micro-finance institution they joined, group details, services availed (micro-loans in details), tenure of membership, trainings availed, frequency of attending meetings, etc. The major independent variables of the study stemmed from this section. The next section of the questionnaire aimed at measuring the empowerment levels of the females. Hulme (2000) has cited that assets are a particularly useful indicator of empowerment as their level does not fluctuate as greatly as other economic indicators (Barnes, 1996). Hence, questions pertaining to ownership of assets after joining micro-finance institutions with details regarding the title of ownership were asked. Next, statements related to various empowerment dimensions, viz. Economic, socio-cultural, interpersonal/familial, psychological and legal & political empowerment were posed in a ‘before-after’ format. Similarly, various household decisions were posed and the women had to respond as to who took those decisions at home, again in the ‘before-after’ format. The final question was a likert scale question based on whether women felt empowered in toto after availing micro-finance services.
All the scales were checked, reliability and content validity of the scales were done. The questionnaire was pretested on a sample of forty women and certain changes were made, the details are shown in the next chapter of Data Analysis. The final questionnaire for survey and case study are attached in the annexure.

4.7.5.2 Scale Development

- **Demographic Details**
  Variables related to demographic information were taken from questionnaires constructed by Veeramani, Selvaraju and Ajithkumar (2009)\(^{24}\) and Saraswathy Amma, Panicker and Sumi (2008)\(^{25}\). Detailed questions pertaining to family details were taken from Asim (2008)\(^{3}\).

- **Empowerment Dimensions**
  At the base, empowerment model developed by Malhotra et al. (2002)\(^{14}\) was taken into consideration. Hence, most statements of the questionnaire pertained to variables identified in this model for measuring women empowerment at the household level. To support these statements, multiple items pertaining to the empowerment dimensions were also taken from Rajendran and Raya (2010)\(^{26}\), Pitt, Khandker and Cartwright (2003)\(^{27}\) and Chen (1997)\(^{28}\). Indicators of empowerment as pointed by Hulme (2000)\(^{22}\) were also taken into consideration while framing the statements. All the statements were dichotomous in nature (Yes/No) and were posed in ‘before-after’ format i.e. whether the decisions were taken by self before and after joining micro-finance institutions.

- **Household Decisions**
  Decisions pertaining to household matters, routine as well as capital in nature were adopted from the scale constructed by Asim (2008)\(^{3}\). The responses were marked on a five-point scale ranging from decision taken by self, in consensus with spouse, jointly with other family members, spouse alone and other family members alone.

- **Case Study Questions**
  Chen (1997)\(^{28}\) has laid down a detailed framework for impact assessment through case study method of research. Hence, the questions for case study were taken from this research paper and modified to the present context.
4.7.6 Data Analysis

The present study involves qualitative as well as quantitative approaches of analysis. Chen (1997)\textsuperscript{28} in her paper which guides on the process of impact studies related to micro-finance recommends a mix of quantitative survey and qualitative case-study methods to test the hypotheses of impact at individual level. She further states that quantitative survey can measure broad patterns and correlates of change while case studies can illuminate the impact process and explain complex phenomena. Hulme (2000)\textsuperscript{16} has also suggested that the initial emphasis on scientific sample surveys and statistical methods has shifted to multi-method Impact Assessments which also focus on Humanities and qualitative techniques of study. Using this two-pronged approach helped in setting off the limitations of one technique by another.

For analyzing the hypothesis using quantitative techniques, parametric as well as non-parametric tests have been used in this research. The collected data has been edited, coded, tabulated, grouped and organized according to the requirement of the study and then entered into SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) for analysis. Different statistical tests have been performed for Nominal, Ordinal and data collected by using Likert scale. The data has been interpreted with the help of various statistical tools like Frequency analysis using Descriptive Statistics, Cross Tabulation for nominal scale data, Chi-Square Test for Independence and test of association like Cramer’s V, Mc Nemar Test and One Way ANOVA.

For each scale, data replicated normal distribution. This was assessed by checking the frequencies and mean, median and mode for all the questions. As the sample size was huge, data showed a bell shaped curve. This was checked mainly as it is one of the key assumptions for conducting parametric analysis.

The data collected through Depth interviews was transcribed. Information extracted through literature, along with direct observation and interview data was combined to develop case studies on the three different organisations under study, namely, SEWA Bank (Bank), Kaira Social Service Society (NGO) and Light Microfinance Pvt. Ltd. (NBFC-MFI). These case studies pertaining to three different legal set-ups of micro-finance institutions have been presented which consist of their services and products in details. Additionally, the interviews conducted with their respective clients have
also been inserted to present insights on empowerment. Moreover, a cross-comparison is done between the case studies to elicit differences in their approach and resultant empowerment felt by the women.

4.7.7 Time Frame for Data Collection

Data collection by way of primary surveys and depth interviews was undertaken during the period of April 2013 to December 2013.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

The ethical issues considered in the research relate both to the participants as well as officials of the micro-finance institutions in question. The informed consent of the female clients to participate in the survey has been obtained by the interviewers, who explained the purpose of the survey, who is conducting the survey and how long will it take. It was made clear that the participation was voluntary. Respondents were also made aware that the details in the questionnaire would remain confidential. Privacy of the data will be further maintained by securing the completed questionnaires and by ensuring the SPSS database file is not shared. With respect to the managers of the micro-finance institutions, permission was obtained to carry out the survey on agreed dates and time. As a matter of fact, the field staff of the institutions accompanied the researchers for the purpose of data collection. However, the survey was conducted privately, so that the responses were not unduly influenced by the presence of the organisation’s employees. The final ethical consideration is related with the accuracy in reporting the findings, which requires that data collected has not been misrepresented or findings have not been altered with. The researcher has taken due care to ensure that all the ethical considerations have been met.

4.9 Limitations

The availability of precise and timely data is of essence to good research. Again the study on Empowerment of Women through Micro-financing has been restricted to rural areas of Gujarat state only because of time constraints and other monetary and non-monetary resources. If carried out nationwide chances of better finding would be possible. In Gujarat state again sample will deal with five main districts namely Kutchch, Mehsana, Ahmedabad, Anand and Surat. Due care has been taken in
selecting the districts as the gender ratio is very poor in these districts, which holds true for Gujarat state and India as well. Also, three micro-finance institutions having different legal set-ups, namely, SEWA Bank, Kaira Social Service Society and Light Micro-finance Pvt. Ltd. are chosen for case study purpose as they fit properly in the present context. However, future studies can increase the scope by selecting more number of organisations.

From the several empowerment paradigms, one of the models is chosen as the base (developed by Malhotra et al.) as it was found to be comprehensive in nature. However, the other models can be studied to increase the scope of decisions measuring empowerment.

The research focuses on Self-Help group and Joint Liability Group mechanisms of credit delivery, both being very popular in the Indian context. However, the other credit delivery models can be studied, whose scope although limited in national context is used in international context.

Future studies could replicate the present study in different geographical as well as institutional context. Moreover, different methodologies could also be used to shed more light on the impact of micro-finance on women empowerment.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter describes the research methodology adopted for the present study. The problem statement has been identified as to study the impact of micro-finance on empowerment of rural women in Gujarat. The objectives and hypotheses have been framed in accordance with the problem statement. A thorough analysis of literature review gave away the gap which also works as the rationale for undertaking the present research. Few major points are the existing dichotomy related to the impact of micro-finance, current studies are not comprehensive in nature, dearth of such studies especially in Gujarat and rural areas, women empowerment is an area of concern especially in Gujarat and impact studies are required on a periodic basis. To plug-in this gap, survey was done using a structured questionnaire on 384 women residing in rural areas of Gujarat and who were availing micro-finance services. Five districts of Gujarat were identified and accordingly, clients of SEWA Bank, KSSS, Light Microfinance and Pahal Microfinance were surveyed. Depth interviews were also
conducted to explore the concept of empowerment in a better manner. The analysis has been carried out using qualitative in addition to quantitative approach. Case study method has been used to record the life history of these women and the changes they experienced after joining micro-finance institutions. This has been related to the services offered by the micro-finance institutions. Simultaneously, quantitative techniques like descriptive statistics, Mc Nemar test, Chi-square test, etc. have also been used for measuring the change in empowerment levels of these women. Ethical considerations were kept on priority while conducting the research. At the end of the chapter, several limitations of the present study as well as scope for future research have been presented.

the Task Force on Education and Gender Equality Of the The Millennium Project:
http://www.princeton.edu/rdps/seminars/pdfs/grown promises to keep.pdf


